

HESIOD AND THE LITERARY TRADITIONS OF THE NEAR EAST¹

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1.1. *Proem*

More than any other early Greek text, the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* show widespread parallels with the surviving (therefore written) poetry and literature of Western Asia, Egypt and societies even further East, such as Iran and India. Much light has been shed on the subject in recent decades, thanks primarily to the writings of Martin West, Walter Burkert, Peter Walcot and other scholars, who have succeeded in showing that a large number of themes and motifs important in Hesiod can be paralleled in earlier or contemporary (or in some cases later) literary culture from the Ancient Near East and Egypt.² But huge methodological problems still remain, not least that of how we establish on the basis of parallels that borrowing took places, and how we compensate for the fact that the surviving evidence for ancient poetry is confined to cultures that wrote poetry down.

1.2. *Parallels between Hesiod and the Near East*

Key areas in Hesiod where parallels with the Near East have been found are:

1.2.1. “Kingship in Heaven Cycle”³

Many general parallels exist between the representation of the divine world in Hesiod and Greek mythology on the one hand and Near Eastern

¹ Thanks to Robin Lane-Fox.

² Above all West (1997); Burkert (1992) and (2005); Walcot (1966). Mention should also be made of the important contribution of Dörrie (1956).

³ The principal guides are: Hoffner (1998) 40 ff. (translation with introduction); Haas

religion on the other, such as the idea that there are older and more recent generations of gods,⁴ and that in the pantheon, different gods have roles assigned to them by a central god.⁵ But the most significant parallel between Hesiod and the Near East has for sixty years been that between the succession myth in the *Theogony* and the so-called *Kingship in Heaven Cycle* (KIHC), a term applied by modern scholars to a sequence of several anonymous Hittite “songs” attested in Hittite texts from the Hittite royal archives at Hattusa in central Anatolia, but known to have been derived from the Hurrian civilisation of North Syria in the mid 2nd millennium BC.⁶ The basic points of comparison have been pointed out many times, first by the path-breaking Swiss scholar Emile Forrer in 1936.⁷

The opening “song” in KIHC was probably the *Song of Kumarbi*, which narrated the emasculation of the sky-god Anu by Kumarbi, son of Anu’s rival Alalu. Kumarbi, having bitten off Anu’s genitals, then gives birth to the storm-god Tessub and his siblings. Other songs told of adversaries sent against Tessub by Kumarbi, including the sea-monster Hedammu and Ullikummi, a monster made of stone. The Hurrian and Hesiodic narratives are not identical, but too many points of comparison exist between them for it to be possible to deny that a relationship exists. Specifically, there are several general resemblances in relation to the plot:⁸

- i. the first ruler-deity is the Sky;
- ii. the second ruler-deity emasculates the first, with a scythe in Hesiod, by biting in KIHC. Kumarbi is an agricultural deity, and the use of the scythe by Kronos may indicate that he was associated with agriculture as well, though this has been disputed.⁹

(2006: up-to-date survey); Pecchioli-Daddi and Polvani (1990: translation and commentary); Bernabé (1979: translation); Garcia Trabazo (2002: translation and commentary on parts).

⁴ West (1997) 111.

⁵ West (1997) 107, rightly compares Zeus assigning roles to the gods (*Th.* 73 f., 393, 423–428) with Near Eastern texts, especially *Enki and World Order*, where Enki assigns roles to the gods. Notice, however, that the primeval division of the *kosmos* between three gods, who are allotted sky, earth and underworld, which appears in the Babylonian *Atrahasis* epic, and again in Homer’s *Iliad* (Burkert [1992] 88–95; cf. West [1997] 109–110 and 385), is strikingly absent in Hesiod.

⁶ General introductions to Hurro-Hittite literature: Beckman (2005); Archi (1995); Lebrun (1995).

⁷ Forrer (1936). Passed to classicists in Barrett (1946). This link is generally accepted today; the extreme doubts of Mondy (1990) seem unjustifiable.

⁸ On differences, see further section 2.2.1.

⁹ Kronos is an agricultural deity: Nilsson (1951); Kronos is not an agricultural deity:

- iii. the gods of the present generation emerge from the body of the second ruler deity; in KIHC they were conceived there, while in Hesiod they are swallowed after birth;

We may also add

- iv. that gods of the present generation face a challenge from monsters who want to usurp their position: Typhon in Hesiod, Hedammu, Ullikummi and perhaps others in KIHC, although it must be said that Hesiod's Typhon—a monster with multiple serpent heads—is rather unlike any of the divine adversaries in KIHC, especially Ullikummi, who is an animated lump of rock, deaf and dumb. For a snake as a divine adversary a better Anatolian parallel seems to be the myth of Illuyankas from the Hattic-Hittite tradition of central Anatolia. Later Greek traditions about Typhon do, however, seem to contain reminiscences of the Hurro-Hittite myth of Ullikummi.¹⁰

Between Hesiod and KIHC there are also several striking parallels of detail, namely:

- v. the second ruler-deity spits out a stone, which becomes a cult object. In the *Theogony*, this is localised at Delphi as the *omphalos*; in the KIHC this “kunkunuzzi” or “killing” stone, made of diorite or basalt, may end up in the city of Ebla;¹¹
- vi. a crucial role is played in the story by a sharp metal instrument; in the KIHC the gods neutralize Ullikummi by separating his feet from the earth with a copper cutting tool, the same tool that had been used in primeval times to separate earth and sky. In Hesiod Kronos castrates Ouranos with a scythe, which clearly symbolises the separation of earth and sky, since before that point the children of Gaia had been hidden inside her body; in KIHC, by contrast, the separation of earth and sky must have happened long before Kumarbi's revolt against Anu.

Graf (1985) 93, cited in Bremmer (2003) 43 n. 48; another similarity between Kumarbi and Kronos may be that they are associated with “reversed world” scenarios: see below.

¹⁰ See Section 2.2.1.

¹¹ Haas (2002) 235; cf. also West (1997) 294.

- vii. A further god or gods is/are born from the accidental spillage of blood or semen from the act of emasculation; Aphrodite from spillage of Ouranos' blood in Hesiod, the Tigris River in KIHC from semen spat out by Kumarbi onto Mount Kanzura.
- viii. During the fragmentary birth scene, Kumarbi announces he wants to eat his son Tessub, just as Kronos devours his children in Hesiod's account.¹²

The Hurrian KIHC also shows some similarities to West Semitic sources from the Levant. Hurrian texts have been found at Ugarit, and there may well have been influence in one direction or another between the KIHC and the so-called "Baal Cycle" in which Baal fights various adversaries, including the Sea ("Yamm"). Baal's sacred mountain, Mt. Saphon, also features in the Song of Ullikummi as Mt. Hazzi (known to the Greeks as Mt. Kasios), the place from where the gods organize their defence against the monster.¹³ It has even been suggested that the Greek name Typhon could be derived from the semitic Saphon.¹⁴

There was also a Phoenician version,¹⁵ to judge from the words of Philo of Byblos, who attributes to a certain "Sanchuniathon" a mythological narrative involving four generations of a mortal family who are referred to either by Greek equivalents or slightly garbled semitic names (some scepticism about the reliability of this source would be legitimate, but most scholars give it the benefit of the doubt). First comes Elioun-Hypsistos, who dies after an attack by animals, then his son Epigeios-Ouranos, who has four sons of his own by Ge: El/Kronos, Baitylos, Dagon and Atlas; Kronos drives Ouranos out; a pregnant concubine of Ouranos given to Dagon as wife gives birth to Demarous (which seems roughly to parallel the Kumarbi episode). Demarous then fathers Melkathros/Herakles. Kronos' rule is violent and is resisted by Ouranos whom Kronos attacks and castrates. After this, Astarte (daughter of Ouranos), Demarous and Adodos (= the Syrian god Adad) rule, with the consent of Kronos. Here we seem to see traces of a myth of divine kingship similar to the Hurro-Hittite one and perhaps derived from it. The differences are that we have a single line of descent (as in Hesiod)

¹² Hoffner (1998) § 14 (col. ii.43 and 50).

¹³ Translation in Parker (1997); by Dennis Pardee in COS 1, 241–274.

¹⁴ See Bonnet (1987) 133.

¹⁵ West (1966) 24–28; Baumgarten (1981) 238–239; West (1997) 283–286.

rather than two concurrent ones, and the emergence of a new generation in no way neutralizes the previous generations.

Behind all of these forms some scholars have detected Babylonian models. In the Babylonian creation epic *Enuma Elish*, Ea kills his father Apsu (the Subterranean Waters) and is in turn succeeded by his own son Marduk, who goes on to destroy Tiamat (the sea) and other monsters, to secure the Tablet of Destinies and to create the world (here too we have a single line of descent).¹⁶ This parallel was stated forcefully by F.M. Cornford in his unfinished masterpiece *Principium Sapientiae*, which was written in ignorance of the new discoveries from Hattusa.¹⁷ But these similarities are much more schematic, and only sharpen one's sense of how exact the correspondences are between the *Theogony* and the KIHC. A second Babylonian succession myth, the so-called "Harab Myth" or *Theogony of Dunnu*, narrates a much longer sequence of generational conflict between gods, imagined as living in the town of Dunnu.¹⁸ It culminates with the "present generation of gods" (Enlil and Ninurta; Anu was probably mentioned before them in a lacuna). Jacobsen suggests that it might be seen as the "lost Babylonian source" of the Hurro-Hittite and Greek versions, but its present form—a bare outline of generations and events—makes that hypothesis impossible to confirm.¹⁹

If we focus more narrowly on conflict between the Storm-god and a monster, then a broader range of Near Eastern parallels are available, as Peter Haider has recently shown in an excellent study (2005).²⁰

An alternative would be that this is after all Indo-European: one might argue that both KIHC and the *Theogony* reflect an Indo-European theme of divine succession, with KIHC, as we have it in Hittite sources, showing Babylonian influence, most obviously in the figure of Ea, the god of wisdom (who is lacking in Hesiod's *Theogony*). The problem with that hypothesis is that the kingship-in-heaven theme does not seem

¹⁶ See West (1997) 280–283. Translations of *Enuma Elish* in Dalley (2000) and Foster (2005); Foster's translation also in COS 1, 390–402.

¹⁷ Cornford (1952); cf. also Cornford (1950); the author died in 1943. Cornford's significance is appreciated by Vernant (1983) 344–345.

¹⁸ Jacobsen (1984); translation by W.W. Hallo in COS 1, 402–404; first edition: Lambert and Walcot (1965).

¹⁹ Jacobsen (1984) 19.

²⁰ Cf. also Bonnet (1987); Vian (1976) 25–26 suggests parallels also with the Egyptian myth of Horus and Seth who was identified with Typhon in the standard *interpretatio Graeca*, although that identification may itself have been motivated by the fact that the Egyptians had already identified Seth with Baal, the god of Mt. Saphon, worshipped in the Eastern Delta.

particularly well attested in other Indo-European traditions, with the exception of the Typhon-episode (which could be an instance of the Indo-European dragon-slaying theme).²¹

1.2.2. The Eras of Human History

Divine history and human history can be seen as a continuum in Near Eastern societies, and in the area of human history too we find parallels (to some extent they run in parallel, so that different phases of human history are correlated with different divine ones).²² Hesiod's ideas about human history are less well developed than his ideas about divine history, but he gives us a succinct account in the "Four Ages of Man" in the *Works and Days* (109 ff.), in which the wretched fifth generation of iron is contrasted with a succession of utopic and dystopic eras. The First and Second generations seem to represent the good and bad sides of a true Golden Age; in the first, men lived "like gods", while in the second they chose not to sacrifice. The Third and Fourth could be seen as more and less extreme versions of heroic society. The sequence is thus from good to bad and then from bad to good again (and then to bad again in the present fifth age), and it is no coincidence that it is members of the first and fourth generation that end up immortalized, the first as spirits in the underworld, and the fourth on the isles of the blessed.²³ Alongside this we have the Prometheus narratives in the *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, which seem to imply a two way movement in the history of mankind: Prometheus' attempt to improve the human condition by arranging that men get the better part of the sacrifice, in return for which Zeus hid both livelihood (making agriculture necessary), and fire; Prometheus then stole fire, and in return for that Zeus created Pandora, another evil.

We do not find in the Near East a clear statement of the "Four Ages of Man": there are parallels in ancient Iranian (Zoroastrian) traditions

²¹ For the Indo-European approach, see Wikander (1952); Briquel (1980); Allen (2004). Wikander drew attention to a succession of three mortal Persian rulers (Jamshid, Zohak, Feridun). Littleton (1970) and Puhvel (1987) 31 disagree with this on the grounds that it is not well enough attested in the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European. The dragon-slaying myth may have an Indo-European dimension: see Littleton (1970); West (2007) 257. Janda (2001) argues for Indo-European elements in the myth of Ullikummi, pointing out, for example, that the word *maldani*, to which the growing Ullikummi is likened, may mean "hammer" (Puhvel s.v. but not CHD), which might provide a link to Thor's hammer in Norse mythology.

²² For the relationship between divine history and human history in Near Eastern poetry, see Haubold (2002).

²³ Sourvinou-Inwood (1997).

and also in early Indian mythology, but these are not necessarily earlier than Hesiod.²⁴ The themes of Pandora and Prometheus are also rather difficult to parallel in the Near East,²⁵ although Fred Naiden has recently drawn attention to a parallel for the idea of “concealing livelihood” in the Old Babylonian version of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* where the alewife advises the hero: when the gods created mankind they allotted death to mankind. They kept life (*balatum*) in their own hands.²⁶

Ludwig Koenen has pointed to broad general parallels with Egyptian and Near Eastern literature in the area of the periodization; specifically:

- a. the idea that the present age is bad, and/or the future may be worse, attested strikingly in Egyptian *Prophecy of Nefertiti* (early 2nd millennium BC) and the *Admonitions of Ipuwar* (14th century BC or older).²⁷ The tone of the latter is particularly reminiscent of Hesiod’s Iron Age (4):

Lo, great and small say “I wish I were dead”
Little children say “He should not have made me live”.

- b. the idea of a golden age where gods and men lived together in harmony followed by a crisis where they are separated. Koenen finds this pattern in the Egyptian “Myth of the Heavenly Cow”, where the initial period is brought to an end by a rebellion of mankind; Re then sends Sekhmet to destroy mankind, but ultimately a resolution is produced.²⁸
- c. the idea of a gradual decline in the relations between god and man over period of time, as in the *Atrahasis Epic*, where men are created by the gods to do the work that was originally done by the lesser gods, but subsequently Enlil decided to destroy them because he could not stand the noise they made. His initial attempts failed, because men were aided by Enki, but eventually he succeeded by

²⁴ West (1997) 31; from Reitzenstein (1924–1925). For the Iranian tradition, see Boyce (1991) 385.

²⁵ West (1997) 120; Pandora’s jar: Haas (1976) 199–200 and *id.* (1994) 911; first, I think, in Hoffner (1968) 66, who points to the additional parallel in the Hebrew prophet Zechariah ch. 5.5–11. For Prometheus, see below.

²⁶ Naiden (2003). Text in George (2003) 1.278–279 (iii.5).

²⁷ *Prophecy of Nefertiti*: AEL 1, 139–145; *Admonitions of Ipuwar*: AEL 1, 149–162; Cf. also the Akkadian “Shulgi’s” prophecy: BTM 357–359.

²⁸ Koenen (1994) 17; the text in Hornung (1982), esp. 90–94; translation: LOAE 290–298; cf. AEL 2, 198–199; on the Egyptian golden age, Otto (1969); cf. Meek and Favard-Meeks (1997) 25–26.

sending the flood, which only Atrahasis survived.²⁹ Interestingly, the *Atrahasis* Epic is believed independently to have influenced early the Greek poetic tradition.³⁰

- d. the idea that at one point in history the earth was dominated by demigods fathered by gods on mortal women. Koenen finds this theme both in the Hebrew Bible (*Gen.* 6.1–4) and in the Apocrypha where the “Sons of God” (fallen angels?) mate with women, producing a race of giants, which is then wiped out by Yahweh in the Flood,³¹ and he postulates an earlier Near Eastern background. Koenen thinks that in the Hesiodic *Catalogue* the idea that the end of the heroic age and the onset of the present age happened with the death of demigod heroes and the transferal of some of them to the Isles of the Blest represents a sort of contamination with the other Near Eastern traditions of two ages of the world, the present one and the past one in which the gods walked amongst men.
- e. One could perhaps also add the parallel between the creation of Eve and the creation of Pandora in the Hebrew Bible and Hesiod. Eve, unlike Pandora, is not created as an evil, but her role in the story is to catalyse the Fall of Man by allowing herself to be seduced by the snake.

For Koenen, Hesiod’s four ages represent an adaptation of these models. The fact that the sequence of metals is broken in Hesiod indicates that that sequence predates him, but it is likely to emanate from the period after iron became less valuable than other metals, which would be well into the archaeological “Iron Age”. Another difference drawn attention to by Koenen is that in the Near East and Egypt the idea of cultural decline is usually explicitly or implicitly a foil for the theme of a reversion to order, under the leadership of a just ruler, of which there is no sign in Hesiod. These themes are, so to speak, disembedded from their original ritual/political context.³²

²⁹ Haas (2006).

³⁰ Burkert (1992).

³¹ *Genesis* 6.1–4; *Jubilees* 5.1–19 (translation of *Jubilees* is to be found in Charles 1913: vol. 2, 11–82); Joseph, *Ant.* 1.73–74; Hendel (2003) 30–32; Bremmer (2003) suggests a derivation of these from the Hesiodic Titans.

³² Koenen (1994).

1.2.3. Didactic Literature

The prescriptive sections of the *Works and Days* have extensive parallels with the rich didactic literature of the Near Eastern and Egypt.³³ In Egypt didactic literature is attested from the Old Kingdom (3rd millennium BC) until the Hellenistic period, and includes:³⁴ the *Maxims of Ptahhotep* (Old Kingdom); the *Eloquent Peasant* (Middle Kingdom); the *Instructions of Ipuwar* (New Kingdom); the *Instructions of Amenemope* (Ramessid 13th century BC); and the *Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy* (attested only in Demotic, 1st millennium BC).³⁵ Key examples from the Near East include the *Sumerian Instructions of Suruppag* (18th century BC); the *Sumerian Agricultural Handbook*; the *Counsels of Wisdom* (second half of 2nd millennium?); and the *Book of Ahiqar* (5th century BC, purporting to date from the period of Sennacherib).³⁶ Fragments of proverb collections, some of them bilingual, have been found at Ugarit and at the Hittite capital at Hattusa.³⁷

Peter Walcot and Martin West have drawn attention to a wide range of parallels between this material and Eastern wisdom literature, including proverbs and precepts, animal fables (e.g. in the recently published Hittite-Hurrian *Epic of Liberation*), the theme of the justice of the king, and hemerology.³⁸ Some of the parallels are very striking, for example warning against injustice in dividing up inheritances found in *Maxims of Ptahhotep* c. 20, which is comparable to the general theme of the *Works and Days*:

Do not be selfish with the division (of an estate)
But lusting for more than your rightful share
Do not be selfish with respect to your relatives ...

³³ Walcot (1965); West (1997) 76–78.

³⁴ See Lichtheim (1996).

³⁵ *Maxims of Ptahhotep*: AEL 1, 61 ff.; LOAE, 129 ff.; the *Eloquent Peasant*: AEL 1, 169–183, LOAE 25 ff.; the *Instructions of Ipuwar*: AEL 1, 149–163; the *Instructions of Amenemope*, Ramessid: AEL 2, 146 ff., LOAE 223 ff.; the *Instructions of 'Onksheshonqy*: AEL 3, 159–183; LAOE 497 ff.

³⁶ The *Instructions of Suruppag*: BWL 92 ff.; Black–Cunningham–Robson–Zólyomi (2004) 284–292 (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.5.6.1#>); the *Counsels of Wisdom*: BWL, 96 ff.; the *Sumerian Agricultural Handbook*: Salonen (1968); Civil (1994); <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.5.6.3#>; the *Book of Ahiqar*: introduction and translation in Charles (1913) vol. 2, 714–715; relation between Ahiqar and Greek literature: Luzzato (1992) and *id.* (1994).

³⁷ Beckman (1986) 20 n. 6.

³⁸ Fables: West (1997) 319–320; justice of the king: West (1997) 320 ff.; hemerology: West (1997) 328 ff.

Even more striking is the warning against unjust gain in the *Instructions of Amenemope* which finds an exact parallel with *Works and Days* 298 ff. and 320 ff.:³⁹

Plow your fields and you'll receive what you need,
You'll receive bread from the threshing floor.
Better is a bushel given you by the god
Than five thousand through wrongdoing.

It has also been pointed out that the frames of some of these works exhibit similarities to the frame of the *Works and Days*. Thus in the Aramaic *Ahiqar*, a work which came to have a wide influence on the literature of the Mediterranean, the eponymous wise man is represented as having been betrayed by the nephew he advanced.⁴⁰ In the Demotic wisdom text that bears his name, 'Onchsheshonqy was imprisoned because he failed to communicate to the Pharaoh a plot against him, a plot which (interestingly, in view of the *Works and Days*), involved one brother acting against another. Both of these in their attested form are later than Hesiod, and it has been suggested that 'Onchsheshonqy in particular was influenced by Hesiod rather than the other way round.⁴¹ Much earlier, but slightly different, is the frame of the *Eloquent Peasant*, in which the eponymous peasant having been wronged by an unscrupulous official who blocks his right of way, makes a long and eloquent complaint (in a total of nine petitions) and ultimately wins (admittedly, in this case the content of the complaint is not proverbs or wisdom literature).⁴² At any rate, the example of *Ahiqar* proves that this type of frame was around, and it might well have influenced Greek didactic literature, such as Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and also the Aesop tradition.

The frame of the *Theogony*—inspired shepherd reveals order of the universe—does not have such an impressive Near Eastern background, but one can at least point to the prophets in the Hebrew Bible who find revelation in the wilderness, especially the prophetic *Words of Amos* (*dibārê 'āmwōs*).⁴³ The content of Amos' prophecies shares key themes

³⁹ Walcot (1966) 87; AEL 2, 147–163; passage cited here is c. 6.17 ff., p. 152.

⁴⁰ Charles (1913) vol. 2, 11–18; Conybeare–Harris–Lewis (1898); for the tradition, Cottini and Grotanelli (2005).

⁴¹ Walcot (1962a); similar patterns of Greek influence on Demotic Egyptian literature have since been identified by many authors.

⁴² West (1978) 28.

⁴³ See Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (1993); Andrews (1943); West (1997) 307 and *id.* (1966) 159. The parallel between Hesiod and Amos seems first to have been observed by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf.

with the Hesiod of the *Works and Days*, namely a concern with the immoral behaviour of the present generation of men, and the ill-treatment of people of his own class; consider for example, *Amos* 5, 7–11, where the prophet rails against: "... You that turn justice upside down / And bring righteousness to the ground / You that hate a man who brings the wrongdoer to court / And loathe him who speaks the whole truth ...". Unlike Amos, though, Hesiod makes no promises about the gods' imminent punishment of mankind. It has been suggested that Hesiod and Amos each presuppose a common type of social crisis in their own country, where the interests of agricultural and farming society came into conflict with those of the developing city-state.⁴⁴

1.3. *What parallels mean*

The large number of parallels would be compatible with either of three general hypotheses:

- i. there was a cultural *koine* in this region, i.e. a process of mutual borrowing or diffusion at a much earlier period (perhaps the Early Bronze Age) had led to the establishment by the Late Bronze Age of a common culture. A common pattern of diffusion is most likely to have gone from the old centres of Mesopotamia to the periphery of Anatolia and the Aegean, but there will have been other patterns as well, such as that associated with the Indo-Europeans.
- ii. it could be argued that many of these parallels are reflections of underlying similarities in the political and social structures of the cultures in question. Thus the similarities between Hesiod and Amos could be explained by the hypothesis that both are symptoms of analogous crises in their respective societies. In that case, the proper object of investigation would be not how literary and religious ideas pass from one culture to another, but broad patterns of transmission and diffusion of political and economic structures.⁴⁵
- iii. transmission of literary forms, narratives or motifs did indeed take place between one culture to another.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Kaiser (1969); Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (1993) 237–239.

⁴⁵ Cf. recently Leroux (2007) 138 on astrometeorological traditions as independent developments.

⁴⁶ On theoretical issues related to borrowing, see Bernabé (1995) and Mondi (1990) ("conceptual foci").

The problem with option iii) is that any individual case is very hard to prove. It is important to remember that the surviving evidence comprises only part of the literary and cultural production of a few societies. Many cultures that had oral poetry probably never recorded it in writing. Surviving evidence creates the impression that Near Eastern and Egyptian literature have priority in all cases, but this may be an illusion. A further problem is that we cannot be sure that borrowing always goes from the East to the Aegean: in some cases, it has been suspected that the route went in the other direction.⁴⁷

A special problem is caused by a number of cases where parallels to Greek religion and literature are found in both the Near East or Egypt and also in Indo-European cultures, such as early India. Symptomatic is the fact that Martin West diagnoses some of the same things as Near Eastern in his 1997 book and Indo-European in his 2007 book.⁴⁸ Some key example are:

- a. the distinction between older and newer generations of gods: we have seen that this is attested for the Near East; and there are also traces of it in the Vedic Indian myth that the Asuras were defeated by the gods.⁴⁹
- b. the theme of the decline of civilisation and the end of the present era, which Koenen has tried to derive from the Near East, but which is also attested in Indo-European cultures, for example in the *Mahabharata*.⁵⁰ The theme might have started out in the Near East and subsequently spread to the East as well as the West, but there are many other possibilities. Similarly, the theme of the Four Ages of Man, which is attested in Greece, Iran and India, could be thought of as a poorly attested Near Eastern theme, which survives only through its diffusion, or as Indo-European theme.
- c. The theme of “justice of kings” in the *Works and Days*, which West (1997) claims as Near Eastern, but it could also be Indo-European, as he argues in West (2007).⁵¹

⁴⁷ Walcot (1962a) on ‘*Onsheshonqy*’; Titans in the *Apocrypha*: Stuckenbruck (2003) 109–110 (on binding of Titans 713–721); Pearson (1999) 38–41; the Four Races from Hesiod to Zoroastrianism: see above.

⁴⁸ West (2007) 23 himself realises the problem.

⁴⁹ West (2007) 162–164.

⁵⁰ Indo-European aspects: Kilmer (1972); O’Brien (1976) 317; cf. article “eschatology” in Mallory and Adams (1997) 180–183.

⁵¹ West (2007) 420–424; see also Martin (1984).

- d. Slightly different is the case of Prometheus. Stephanie West showed in a very persuasive article that the Prometheus of Aeschylus has various features in common with the Babylonian wisdom god Ea, especially in the motif of warning men about the imminent flood, but that this Near Eastern colouring was absent in Hesiod. Martin West ([1997] 295) admits that the Hesiodic Prometheus “shows no features that we can definitely relate to the Babylonian god”, but he includes a section on “The Prometheus Myth” in the *Works and Days* (pp. 310–312) which contains the following claims: i. the theme that the gods have imposed agriculture on mankind is found in Near Eastern sources; ii. the conversation between Zeus and Prometheus (“You rejoice at having outwitted me, but I shall create a greater calamity for man”) resembles the conversation between Anu and Kumarbi in KIHC (do not rejoice at having swallowed my manhood; you are now pregnant); and iii. certain Near Eastern traits in the Pandora story, e.g. the idea that Hermes gave Pandora lies and deceit is paralleled in the creation of man in the “Babylonian Theodicy”.⁵² None of these points has anything to do with Prometheus himself, and we have to face the fact that Hesiod’s Prometheus has no obvious Near Eastern or Egyptian parallel. On the other hand, there are striking parallels with early Indian mythology, and even the name of Prometheus has been traced to an Indo-European root.⁵³ And then again, many scholars have compared Prometheus to a type of figure attested neither in the Near East nor in ancient India, but attested in the mythologies of Africa and the Pacific, namely the “culture hero” or “trickster” figure.⁵⁴

None of these cases (a-d) can be confidently claimed as instances of borrowing from the Near Eastern sources, and they are just as likely to be the result of a more general cultural diffusion and some of them may not be the result of borrowing at all.

It follows that if we want to prove that early Greek literature has been influenced by the Near East, we need to set the bar quite high: vague resemblances of form (literary or lexical) or content are not enough; and

⁵² BWL 88. Another Near Eastern creation of man: Mayer (1987); see in general Pettinato (1971).

⁵³ West (2007).

⁵⁴ Dougherty-Glenn (2006) 33 citing Ricketts (1965).

it will tend to decrease the chances of borrowing of the feature if it is broadly attested in ancient societies outside the Near East.

Of the three areas I discussed in this section, the material relating to “Eras of Human History” seems to me too widely attested in ancient societies for us to be sure that it came to Greece from the Near East, and it might be better to put this down to a general and very ancient diffusion. Similarly, the material I grouped under “didactic literature” is not specific enough for us to be sure that Hesiod or his predecessors drew on specific written or oral works of Near Eastern or Egyptian literature, and it seems possible that we could explain much of this as parallel responses to similar political and social substrata. The only case where we have a strong reason to posit borrowing is the one between the *Theogony* and the KIHC, to which I turn in the next section.

2

The relationship between KIHC and Hesiod’s *Theogony* has been discussed many times already, and it seems unnecessary to go through it again here. A few key issues need to be addressed, however.

2.1. *Scope and Epic Nature of KIHC*

2.1.1. An Outline of the KIHC

The unifying feature in these songs is conflict between the storm-god Tessub and grain-god Kumarbi. The *Song of Kumarbi* describes Kumarbi’s emasculation of the sky-god Anu and resulting birth from inside Kumarbi of Tessub and several other gods. The lost part of the Song written on tablet II and any subsequent tablets must have described how Tessub established his rule (corresponding, perhaps, to Zeus battle against the Titans in the *Theogony*). Other songs described challenges to Tessub’s rule brought by several other monsters and other figures, some of them clearly created as “rivals” (*tarpanalli’s*) by Kumarbi.⁵⁵ The most important of

⁵⁵ The word *tarpanalli* (“rival”) is related to, or identical to, the word *tarpalli* which occurs in Hittite rituals in the sense of “ritual substitute” corresponding to Akkadian PUHU, Hurrian puhugari; HEG s.v. This is, in fact, part of the Babylonian notion of “ritual substitution”, something which does not exist in the Greek world (Gurney [1977] 52–57). The word *tarpalli* became known to classicists because of the suggestion of Van Brock (1959) that it underlies the use of θεράπων in Homer, a suggestion popularised in Nagy

these is the *Song of Ullikummi*, which describes at almost epic length the birth of the stone monster Ullikummi (made of *kunkunuzzi* stone, like the stone that Kumarbi spits out in the *Song of Kumarbi*), his challenge to the divine order, and the gods' defeat of him by cutting his feet from the ground with a primeval copper "cutting tool", the same one that was supposed to have been used in primeval times to separate earth from heaven (just as Kronos' scythe separates Ouranos from Gaia).

In the *Song of Ullikummi* the goddess Sauska (the Hurrian Ishtar) contemplates seducing the monster with music, but is advised against it by an ocean wave, which points out that Ullikummi is blind and deaf. This passage probably alludes to an earlier passage in another song, which described how Sauska successfully charmed the sea monster Hedammu, another of Kumarbi's creations. Nothing proves that these three songs are part of one song-cycle, but modern scholars have been tempted to see it this way, with a continuous development of certain themes; for example, Harry Hoffner has claimed that over the course of the cycle the god Ea, who was initially not specially well disposed towards Tessub, ends up assisting him in the war against Ullikummi.⁵⁶

Several other songs have also been assigned to the sequence. The very fragmentary *Song of Silver* consists of mysterious narrative about a divinity called "Silver", apparently a son of Kumarbi, though raised as an orphan. The proem claims that "Silver" is greater than any other god in the pantheon. In the so-called *Song of LAMMA*, the protagonist is the deity known by the sumerograms ³LAMMA or ³KAL, probably to be identified with the deer-god Kurunta. In col. i of this song LAMMA defeats Tessub, and becomes king, apparently for nine years;⁵⁷ in col. ii that seems to result in a sort of Golden Age in which the land flowed with beer-wine and other desirable drinks; in col. iii LAMMA explains to Kubaba that he does not respect the elder gods:

The primeval gods are great. The w[inds] have arisen. But [I do not fear] them at all. [Do I] not [put] bread in their mouths? The paths which the winds] are to go and come on, these I, LAMMA, king of heaven, allot to the gods.

The result of this policy is that men no longer offer sacrifices; and Ea (and perhaps Kumarbi as well) decide to depose him. Finally, in col. iv after his defeat LAMMA's body is divided up by the other gods, perhaps a

(1979). Soysal (2004) 105 n. 12 suggests that *tarpanalli* ("opponent, rival") and *tarpalli* ("substitute") are in fact different words.

⁵⁶ Hoffner (1998).

⁵⁷ Blam (2005).

sort of primeval sacrifice.⁵⁸ The apparent reference to the Golden Age reminds Hellenists of the myth of the Four Ages in the *Works and Days*, though as far as we can see it is not the original state of things in the Hittite text but an episode that takes place during Tessub's reign. If LAMMA is another *tarpanalli* of Kumarbi, this would create an interesting analogy to the association between Kronos and the Golden Age in Hesiod.⁵⁹

2.1.2. New Discoveries

There have been two very recent additions to the sequence. The first is the *Song of the Sea*, preserved only in Hurrian, which apparently described the triumph of the storm god over the Sea.⁶⁰ Two aspects of it are important:

- i. The theme bears a striking similarity to the Ugaritic epic of Baal and Yamm.⁶¹ One of them may well have been the model for the other, but which? (the same issue arises for the pivotal position of Mount Hazzi in the *Song of Ullikummi*, since that was also a sacred mountain in West semitic religion).
- ii. While we know very little about how these songs were performed,⁶² there is some reason to think that they were performed in rituals. Hittite ritual texts relating to the cult of Mount Hazzi refer to the performance of the *Song of the Sea* and the *Song of Kingship* (where "kingship" is the Hurrian word "*sarasse*"). It is a tempting idea that the *Song of Kingship* may be the Hittite name for the *Song of Kumarbi*, or even the whole cycle.⁶³ If the Hurro-Hittite KHC had such a politico-religious function, they would arguably be continuing the practice of the Babylonians who scheduled the *Enuma Elish* for performance at the New Year festival at Babylon.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Haas (2003), Haas (2006) 145 sees Kurunta as a sort of dying-god of the Near Eastern type, or in Hellenic terms something like Dionysus.

⁵⁹ The ritual correlate of Kronos association with the Golden Age is his association with festivals of reversal, and these are well attested for the Near East: see Burkert (1993).

⁶⁰ Rutherford (2001); Salvini and Wegner (2004) 21; Haas (2006).

⁶¹ See Parker (1997). Another myth that belongs in the same group of the Egyptian legend of Astarte and the Tribute of the Sea (COS 1, 35–36), which has been claimed to be influenced by the Hurrian *Song of Ullikummi* (Helck 1983).

⁶² On song in Hittite culture in general, see now Schul (2004).

⁶³ KUB 44.7, obv. 11 and KBo 8.88, obv. 8 f. (Haas–Wilhelm: 1974, 260 ff.); see Rutherford (2001).

⁶⁴ Auffarth (1991).

The other new discovery is the fragmentary text *Ea and the Beast*, in which an animal of an unknown type (referred to as a “*suppala(nt-)*” animal) prophesies to Ea the coming triumph of a still unnamed weather god, described apparently as a *tarpala* (col. 2.23), which seems to be the same word as *tarpanalli*.⁶⁵ It is unclear whether the deity referred to here is Tessub, which would make the narrative a doublet of the *Song of Kumarbi*, or another weather-god (in which case the Beast’s prophetic knowledge would presumably have to turn out to be thwarted in some way). It is surely significant that similar prophecies are found in Hesiod and other Greek sources: in Hesiod, the prophecies comes from Gaia and Ouranos who advise Kronos to swallow his children (463–465), and Zeus to swallow Metis (889–900).⁶⁶ The swallowing of Metis seems to be a doublet of Kronos’ swallowing of his children, and the ensuing birth of Athena seems to incorporate the “birth through the head” motif from Kumarbi.⁶⁷

2.1.3. Nature of the Songs

Comparatively little of the Hurrian originals of the songs survives, and what does is difficult to understand, though Hurrian is now clearer than it was thanks to the publication of the Hurrian-Hittite bilingual of the *Epic of Liberation* in 1996.⁶⁸ One of the few passages of KIHC where we have the Hurrian original is the episode where Kumarbi places the young (and still nameless) Ullikummi on his knee, and names him as the future destroyer of Tessub’s seat in the city of Kumme.⁶⁹

tiie=i=a Ull=i-Kummi=[n Let his name be Ullikummi

Kumme=n=i=m ull=o=l=ez And let Kumme be destroyed

For the most part we rely on the Hittite adaptations, many of which are poorly preserved, presenting to editors similar problems to those classicists find in editing fragmentary literary papyri. A good example

⁶⁵ Archi (2002); see Rutherford (forthcoming).

⁶⁶ The detail of the birth of the subsequent Athene through his head is not in the *Theogony*, though it is found in a Hesiodic fragment (fr. 343) from Chrysippus.

⁶⁷ West (1966) 401. So in Pindar Zeus does not marry Thetis because of a prophecy: *Isthm.* 8.30–45; Gantz (1996) 52, although in the *Cypria* Thetis declines the union out of fear of Hera.

⁶⁸ Neu (1996). For the Hurrian texts, see Salvini and Wegner (2004) n. 8–18 with pp. 17–22. Specific texts: Giorgieri (2001) and Dijkstra (2006). For the Hurrian language, Wegner (2000).

⁶⁹ Giorgieri (2001) 144–145.

is the passage in col. ii of the *Song of Kumarbi*, where the gods are born from Kumarbi's body, and Kumarbi seems to announce that he desires to eat the Storm-god. This section shows a particularly dense assemblage of parallels with the *Theogony*. Unfortunately, the text is poorly preserved, and, to make it worse, there is uncertainty about which gods are involved: first, a deity called A.GILIM speaks from inside Kumarbi's body, then another deity called KA.ZAL emerges from his skull. Volkert Haas takes both of these names as epithets of Tessub, so that the whole passage describes the birth of Tessub, who is not called "Tessub" until the moment of his birth, but it is impossible to be certain.⁷⁰

One of the features that stands out is the considerable scale of the songs. The well-preserved *Song of Ullikummi* was written in three tablets, which must have comprised about 600 lines of text in all. The others were probably of a similar length. In fact, the general tone of KIHC seems epic to someone familiar with Greek poetry. There are regularly repeated formulas and themes, as we have come to expect from orally composed poetry.⁷¹ Furthermore, the scale is decidedly epic. Thus, when Ullikummi is on the rampage, the KIHC does not merely state the fact that Tessub has been defeated, but describes its affect on his wife Hebat (44–47):

... she almost fell down from the roof. Had she taken a step, she would have fallen down from the roof. But her female attendants seized her and didn't let go of her.

Students of Greek literature are reminded perhaps of Andromache watching the Greek forces in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 6.371–373).

2.1.4. Trans-cultural status

Like a few other works of Near Eastern literature, KIHC seems to have transcended the confines of any one culture. Its transition from Hurrian culture to the Hittites was not a process of translation, but rather one of adaptation, perhaps the result of oral performances in Hittite based on the Hurrian models (cf. Archi [2007]). There are parallels also in West-Semitic (Ugaritic and Phoenician) mythology, as I showed in 1.2.1A, and these are probably to be explained as influence of Hurrian mythology on West-Semitic culture, although it is possible that there was also some

⁷⁰ Haas (2006) 138. A.GILIM may also be taken as the Babylonian god Marduk (Pecchioli-Daddi and Polvani 1990: 120), and KA.ZAL has been taken as Ishtar.

⁷¹ Haas (2006); Archi (2007).

influence in the other direction, at least at an early stage. As we saw, the Phoenician tradition differs in one crucial respect, namely that it has a single line of descent, as opposed to the two lines of the Hurrian version.

The supraregional quality of KIHC may be a much older feature: the Hurrians, who in the Late Bronze Age inhabited the state of Mitanni in North Syria, seem to have migrated from further East, possibly the area of Lake Van. Although their language is non-Indo-European, some divine names, proper names and technical terms seem to be of Indo-European origin, which, it is suggested, might be the remnant of contact with Indo-Iranians to the East.⁷² We have already considered the possibility that the KIHC might contain a deeper thematic Indo-European stratum.

We also have to take account of the fact that by the Late Bronze Age Hurrian culture had absorbed religious ideas and practices and literary forms from the ancient civilisations of Syria and Mesopotamia.⁷³ As we saw, it is also possible that there has been some interaction with West Semitic mythology as well. Geoffrey Kirk in his study *Greek Myths* postulates a “pre-Hurrian koine” version of the KIHC, from which both the Hurrian and the Greek versions would be secondary developments; this would presumably be North Syrian and related to West Semitic sources.⁷⁴

2.2. *The KIHC and Hesiod*

2.2.1. Similarities and Differences

I set out the principal similarities between the *Theogony* and KIHC in 1.2.1. Some of them are general features that we might expect to show up in any succession narrative, but others are much more specific, particularly the role of the stone which ends up with a cult function in both traditions. We may also add now that the theme of a prophecy about the imminent arrival of a new supreme god is part of both traditions. There are also significant differences between the two traditions, and I would single out three principal ones:

⁷² Wilhelm (1989) 18.

⁷³ Cf. 1.2.1A above.

⁷⁴ Kirk (1970) 219, citing Fontenrose (1959) 212 for the view that “the Hurrian version resembles an earlier and cruder version of the Greek myth”. So Wilhelm (1989) 58 for the suggestion that the Hurrian KIHC was originally in Akkadian.

- a. Lines of descent. Hesiod's royal family has a single line of descent: Ouranos-Kronos-Zeus; in KIHC there are two lines, although they come together in the "marriage of Anu and Tessub" (see below). The Phoenician mythological tradition, as reported in Philo of Byblos, is a better parallel in this respect.
- b. Pregnant Gods. Hesiod Zeus' siblings are the children of Kronos and Rhea, and Kronos' swallowing of them and subsequent disgorgement, though it could be seen as a sort of perverted second birth, is really just a convenient way of holding back the next generation (analogous to Ouranos keeping his offspring hidden in Gaia). In the KIHC, on the other hand, Kumarbi takes on the role of Anu's wife and the mother of Tessub and his siblings (he is invoked as Tessub's mother in an extant Hurrian hymn).⁷⁵ For Kumarbi his act of emasculating Anu is also an act of copulation, and for Tessub and his siblings, their exit from Kumarbi's body is their real birth, not a secondary birth as in the corresponding section of Hesiod. Thus, both Hesiod and KIHC represent a sort of perverted version of the pregnancy and birth, but they do so in different ways: Hesiod has Kronos repress the development of his children by subjecting them to a forced second pregnancy; Kumarbi is himself forced to take on the role of mother to Anu's children.⁷⁶
- c. Zeus temporally defeated. Hesiod's accounts of Zeus' wars against challengers to his authority—the Titans and Typhon—are brief in comparison to the long Hurro-Hittite narratives of Tessub's conflicts with the various *tarpanalli's* Kumarbi throws at him. In particular, Zeus never shows signs of having to give up his royal authority, whereas Tessub loses his several times.

Two more contrasts may be added:

- d. Alternation rather than succession? In KIHC there may be a regular temporal or ritual structure in the background in which Tessub yields to a sequence of challengers for a sort of interregnum, so that the pattern would be not one of succession at all, but rather

⁷⁵ See above.

⁷⁶ Kirk (1970) 215–219 on gender aspects. Jacobsen (1984) 19–20: "it ignores completely the marriage-cosmogonic aspect of the tale, omitting all references to marriage and wives, and to any father-son relationship between the successive contenders for cosmic rule".

one of alternation between Tessub and the forces of disorder.⁷⁷ In the case of LAMMA the *interregnum* seems to have lasted nine years—the same period as the reign of each of Anu and Alalu had lasted. As Alberto Bernabé suggested twenty years ago, the successive nine-year rules of Anu and Alalu seem to resemble an alternation between two cosmic forces rather than a linear succession, and that would be another difference from Hesiod.⁷⁸

- e. Rituals of kingship? The Babylonian *Enuma Elish* seems to have had a ritual function, performed to inaugurate the new year, and we saw that the performance of the KIHC may have been linked to Hurrian rituals of royal authority. The theme of divine succession could then be thought of as reflecting on an imaginary level the political reality of ritualized kingship in the Near East.⁷⁹ We do not know how the *Theogony* was performed, but it certainly contains no sign that it was performed in such a context. Kings are part of the frame of the *Works and Days*, of course, but there too we lack the sense of a single royal authority; and we saw earlier that whereas in Near Eastern sources, the theme of the decline of human civilisation seems generally to be a foil for the idea of the imminent emergence of a new ruler destined to restore civilization to its pristine condition, that element is absent from Hesiod's account of the four races (cf. 1.2.2).⁸⁰

2.2.2. Parallels between KIHC and the Greek Succession Myth Outside Hesiod

These differences become less clearly demarcated if we take into account the whole of Greek mythology rather than just Hesiod's *Theogony*. For example, in the case of point e., notice that an association between the kingship-in-heaven theme and the rituals of kingship cannot be

⁷⁷ Blam (2005); Bernabé (1989) NB: in rituals of kingship the king is replaced by a *tarpalli*, and that structure seems to be dimly reflected in the myths of the *tarpanallis* to divine authority; both *tarpalli* and *tarpanalli* replace the king, but whereas the *tarpalli* replaces him to shield him as a sort of body-double the *tarpanalli* aims to replace by way of usurping power from him; the *tarpanalli*'s relation to Kumarbi is in fact perhaps closer to the ritual role of *tarpalli* as a double who works on behalf of the agent.

⁷⁸ Haas (1994) 85–86 tried to connect these nine year periods with calendrical structures from the Near East with the main periods representing stages of the year, though it's unclear whether that's right. Speculation on calendrical implications in Haas (1994).

⁷⁹ Hooke (1960), Frankfort (1948).

⁸⁰ Koenen (1994).

excluded for the whole Greek poetic tradition, since Pindar associates Zeus' conquest over Typhon with Hieron's founding of the city of Aitna.⁸¹

As for the idea of Kumarbi's oral coupling with Anu and his pregnancy, there seems to be a parallel for this in the Orphic cosmogony reported in the Derveni Papyrus. In this the earliest stage is the generation of a demiurge figure called Phanes or Protogonos, also called Eros, who engenders a whole family of gods: Ouranos, then Kronos, and finally Zeus. Zeus, once king, swallows Protogonos/Phanes, so that "everything is reunited within him" (West [1982] 73), and then he brings it all forth again, and so becomes the second creator. In the course of the cosmogony Zeus swallows something called (an) αἰδοῖον (fr. 8 Bernabé), which many commentators have taken as the *phallos* of Ouranos. This motif obviously resembles the behaviour of Kumarbi in KHC, although Ouranos is also castrated by Kronos, so the motif is doubled and split between generations.⁸² The composition of the Derveni poem is now usually placed in the 6th century BC, but that does not mean the motif of divine fellation was already established in Greece before then.

In the case of point c., notice that other versions of the Typhon myth in Greek mythology represent Zeus and the gods as having been temporarily defeated by Typhon. Apollodorus the mythographer (*Bibl.* 1.6.3) reports that Typhon stole the sinews of Zeus and hid them in a bear-skin, giving them to the she-dragon Delphyne to guard at Corycus in Cilicia; but Hermes and Aigipan restored them to Zeus. The combat took place at Mt. Kasion, precisely the point from where the gods observed Ullikummi in the KHC.⁸³ Oppian, *Halieutica* 3.15–28 says that Pan of Corycus in Cilicia saved Zeus by tricking Typhon with a banquet of fish. Cilicia is already associated with Typhon by Pindar and Aeschylus.⁸⁴ And according to Nonnus, *Dion.* 1.481 ff. Kadmos retrieved the sinews, claiming he would use them to string his lyre. Kadmos' charming of the Typhon seems to replicate Sauska's role as a charmer of Hedammu.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Dealt with in Trümpf (1958).

⁸² Relevant bibliography: Lopez-Ruiz (2006); Bernabé (1989); Betegh (2004) 119–120 170–172; Burkert (2005) 90–92; West (1982) had interpreted *aidōion* in a different way.

⁸³ See Koch 1993.

⁸⁴ Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.19; Aesch. *PV* 351.

⁸⁵ Silván Rodríguez (2002) 151 n. 10. For another Anatolian echo in Nonnus see Bernabé (1988), who suggests that Nonnus might have used the epic poet Nestor of Laranda. It has also been noticed that Nonnos' description of Typhon standing in the sea (Nonnos 1.266–268) is eerily close to the description of Ullikummi in KHC (§ 22 Aiv 27–32; Güterbock [1946] 104–105; Littleton [1970] 92). And a scholion on Homer reports

The idea of the storm-god being temporarily defeated by the monster also has a parallel in the myth of the serpent Illuyankas, known as the “Hattic” stratum of central Anatolia, and associated with the new-year “purulli” festival there.⁸⁶ In the first of the two versions of the myth that are known, the goddess Inara and a mortal Hupasiya trick the serpent into getting drunk at a feast where the Storm-god kills him (cf. Oppian’s account, or the role of the mortal Kadmos in Nonnos); in the second version, the Storm-god is initially defeated by Illuyankas, losing his heart and eyes, but eventually gets them back with the help of his son (cf. the sinews in Apollodorus).⁸⁷

It is thus clear, then, that the story of divine succession existed in variant forms in Greek tradition, as indeed it existed in variant forms in Anatolian and West Semitic traditions. It follows that it is exceedingly difficult to plot the relationship between Greek versions and Near Eastern versions beyond the bland statement that the process of borrowing between these zones was most likely not confined to one version alone, but probably extended to a number of variants, and may have taken place in several stages over many centuries.

2.2.3. How KIHC came to Greece

The problem of the relationship between KIHC and Hesiod thus comes down to three issues: a. what version/versions of the myth was/were transmitted from the Near East to Greece; b. how did transmission come about? What route did it follow and when and who was responsible? And c. what role in the process did Hesiod play?

To start with issue b., various directions of diffusion are possible:⁸⁸

- i. Through Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age, perhaps passing to Western Anatolia and through centres such as Ephesos (Hittite Apasa) and Miletus (Hittite Millawanda); that route would be less likely after the Hittite kingdom collapses at the start of the 12th century BC. Factors that point faintly in that direction are: the tradition

that Typhon was the offspring of Kronos, the product of one of two eggs, buried in Cilicia (sch. on *Il.* B 783; ed. Dindorf III S. 148 f.; Güterbock [1946] 104; Gantz [1996] 50–51).

⁸⁶ Watkins (1995) 448–459; Katz (1998) connects the name with Latin “anguilla” = eel.

⁸⁷ Hoffner (1998) 11–13.

⁸⁸ West (1997) 626–627 on the route.

of the stone-monster Agdistis at Pessinous, which has been linked to Ullikummi;⁸⁹ the presence in later Greek accounts about Typhon of two motifs—Typhon’s being deceived by an invitation to a feast and Zeus temporarily losing his “sinews”—seems to be paralleled by the central Anatolian Hattic myth of Illuyanka;⁹⁰ and the association of Typhon with the Katakekaumene area of Lydia.⁹¹

- ii. Since Hurrians exerted a wide influence in the areas of North Syria and South East Asia Minor (“Kizzuwatna”) in the middle of the 2nd millennium BC, contact could have happened through the Levant either in the Late Bronze Age or the Iron Age, if knowledge of these songs had survived in the Neo-Hittite kingdoms of North Syria, such as Carchemish. We know that Greeks were active in this region at this time, for example at the site of Al Mina, only a few miles to the North of Mons Kasios (Mt. Hazzi in the *Song of Ullikummi*). As Robin Lane-Fox points out, the fact that the Greeks know Mt. Hazzi by its Hurro-Hittite name rather than by its Phoenician one may provide a clue as to the process of transmission.⁹²
- iii. The Greeks tended to associate Typhon with Corycus in Western Cilicia, and one of the later sources for the myth—the poet Oppian (2nd century CE)—seems to have had knowledge of the local mythology. We know nothing about the LBA background of Corycus or the nearby sanctuary of Olba, where native Anatolian traditions were still alive in the Hellenistic period, although it should be noted that these sites were close to Kizzuwatna, where Hurrian influence is known to have been strong. All things being equal, Corycus is a good candidate for being the conduit through which LBA myths about the Storm-god and the Monster passed from the East to Greece, and possibly also for being the place where

⁸⁹ Burkert (1979); Haas (2006) 172–174. Another possible case is the Lydian myth of Tylos and Masnes, on which see Hanfmann (1958) 68–72; also Chuvin (1991).

⁹⁰ Watkins (1995).

⁹¹ Xanthos of Lydia, summarised by Strabo, describing “changes” that happened to Lydia (Strabo 12.8.19 = *FGrHist* 765F13a); Chuvin (1991) 105.

⁹² Lane-Fox (2008). Lopez-Ruiz (2006) has pointed out other points of contact between Greek theogonies and West semitic material, e.g. between Kronos and the Ugaritic deity El, the father of Baal, who, she suggests, like Kronos is not entirely removed from the scene after the coming to power of Baal, but retains some authority, and is also associated with the carnivalesque themes of drunkenness and excess. There seems to have been a general awareness in Greek writers that the name Kronos could be understood as Khronos (“Time”), and it is can be shown that Time (*’Ulom*) played an important role in early Phoenician cosmogonies.

Hurrian storm-god myths underwent a degree of syncretism with native Anatolian ones.⁹³

- iv. To complicate matters, it is possible that transmission from East to West happened *via* an intermediary culture. A likely intermediary would be Crete. Again, that could have happened in the Bronze Age or the Iron Age, or perhaps it passed to Crete in the LBA and then on to Greece (Delphi? Cf. the Cretan origin of Delphic priesthood in the *Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo*) in the Iron Age.

Of these, possibilities ii. and iii. seem the likeliest, partly because KHC is best attested in this region and partly because Greek sources later than Hesiod associate Typhon with Mons Kasios and with Corycus. Which of these routes we choose affects our view of the date of transmission: via Anatolia and it is probably Late Bronze Age, via the Levant or Cilicia and it is more likely (but not necessarily) the 1st millennium.

As to the agents of transmission, a strong possibility is that transmitters were religious experts, and possibly singers. The idea that the myth passes from the Near East to Greece in a non-poetic form and is subsequently set to verse by Greek poets, so that we end up with songs in the two traditions is surely less likely than that bilingual singers, used to a performance tradition in one culture, gave rise to a similar form of theogonic song for Greece. Bilingual singers are no surprise: we have to postulate them anyway for Bronze Age Anatolia (cf. Archi [2007]), and they are attested in recent history.⁹⁴ The context could be either cult or political authority (in so far as these can be distinguished). In a recent article Mary Bachvarova suggests singers passed from one culture to another with the importation of cult-personnel, while Carolina Lopez-Ruiz (2006) suggests that theogonic poetry might have passed from country to country in spells.⁹⁵ As well as the cultic dimension, it is also worth considering the possibility that the motivation for importing this sort of material was that songs about primeval divine succession were felt to be an important part of state-ritual.⁹⁶

⁹³ Notice, however, that Houwink ten Cate (1961) 205–215, thinks that Corycus was traditionally associated with the Illuyankas myth.

⁹⁴ Kolsti (1990) on Bosnian singers able to compose orally in Serbo-Croatian or Albanian.

⁹⁵ Bachvarova (2009); Lopez-Ruiz (2006).

⁹⁶ Cf. Auffahrt (1991) on kingly renewal and Kristiansen and Larsson (2005) 62–107 on how cultural exchange was motivated by elites.

As to what version of the Near Eastern myth was transmitted, it is difficult to do anything more precise than to list possibilities. The chief ones are: i) something very close to the Hurrian KIHC; ii) a hypothetical “pre-Hurrian koine” of the sort postulated by Kirk; iii) the Phoenician version, as described by Philo, which may itself be derived from the Hurrian KIHC; iv) a hypothetical Luvian version current in SE Anatolia in the first millennium BC (cf. the importance of Corycus in the Greek tradition); v) a sort of Anatolian synthesis of the Hurrian KIHC and the Hattic-Hittite Illuyanka-story. There are other possibilities as well, and, to make things even more complex, several phases of transmission may be in play: for example, as well as a transmission before Hesiod, we might also postulate a secondary transmission in the 6th century BC (for the Orphic cosmogony) and another one in the Roman period (Oppian, perhaps Nonnus or his source).

In favour of i. is the transregional status that we know the KIHC enjoyed in Syria and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age; it was clearly a work of great significance for the cultures of the time, resembling in that respect the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, so that it is in principle more likely that Greek singers would have looked to this very work rather than some lost archetype. However, if we want to go for i) (and we accept the authenticity of Philo’s Phoenician version), we would have also to accept that both Hesiodic and Phoenician versions simplified the double line of descent to a single one. For that reason, it might be better to work on the assumption that the Near Eastern myth that the Greeks encountered was already one with a single line of development, e.g. the Phoenician one. Kirk has argued that aspects of the Hurrian and Hesiodic versions are so different that the latter cannot have evolved from the former, so that it is necessary to postulate a “pre-Hurrian koine”; thus, the Hesiodic mythological schema of Kronos swallowing his children to conceal them is not derived from the Hurrian mythological schema of Kumarbi’s pregnancy, but rather both evolve from an original schema: young god emerges from the body of older god. Kirk may, however, have underestimated the creativity of Greek poets, and it could be that they introduced changes themselves, either to fit in with established Greek religious traditions, or (as in the case of Kumarbi’s oral coupling with Anu) out of a sense of religious decorum (cf. the stance Pindar takes towards imputing cannibalism to the gods in the *First Olympian*).

Against a background of such uncertainty, we cannot hope to give a precise account of Hesiod’s position in the process of transmission. In principle, two factors are compatible with a close involvement of Hesiod

in the reception of Near Eastern mythology, namely first that he was a singer (for the idea that singers might have been agents in transmission, see above), and, second, his links to the emerging trade networks of the Eastern Mediterranean in the 8th century BC. Robin Lane Fox has recently argued eloquently that Hesiod's Euboean connections gave him access to the accounts of the Greeks who colonized Al Mina in the 8th century BC, and many have heard of performances of the KIHC, or a later version of it, which were still going on at nearby Mt. Hazzzi/Kasios.⁹⁷ This would make Hesiod more or less contemporaneous with the moment that the Near Eastern myth reached the Greek world. But there are many other possibilities, and it is just as likely that the myth had been known in Greece for several generations before Hesiod, perhaps even from as early as the Late Bronze Age.

⁹⁷ Lane-Fox. (2008), especially ch. 20.

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