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The Many Faces of Hadad in Aramaean Syria and Anatolia (1st Mill. BCE). Three Case Studies on Hadad at Sikāni, Samʾal, and Damascus

Abstract: A variety of local storm-gods was worshipped in Syria in the 2nd millennium BCE. In the wake of the Aramaization of Syria from the 12th century BCE onwards, which implied the construction of an Aramaean identity and the spread of the Aramaic language, these storm-gods either came to be identified with the dominant storm-god, Hadad, or were replaced by the victorious storm-god of the Aramaean conquerors.

1 Introduction

At the head of the Aramaean panthea[1] of Syria and Anatolia in the 1st mill. BCE stood the storm-god Hadad.[2] As rain-dependent crops predominated in these regions, a decisive role in the provision of rain was appropriate to him. This does not, however, mean that Hadad was the same throughout Syria and Anatolia; rather, different manifestations of Hadad influenced by different cultic traditions, mythologies, and local traits can be distinguished. Beyond Hadad's position as supreme god of the pantheon, he also enjoyed an important role in the royal ideology of the Aramaean kingdoms, as becomes especially clear at Sikāni (Tall Faḫarīya), Samʾal (Zincirli), and Damascus. Hadad was regarded as the father of the reigning king, who was his son. Furthermore, Hadad acted as a warrior god, who protected the kingdom and the king during his lifetime. After his demise, the king was divinized and worshipped together with Hadad.[3]

1 I am obliged to the participants of the meeting in Toulouse for their helpful comments and to Alexander Johannes Edmonds for correcting the English style of this article.

2 For the origin of the names Hadda / Haddu / Hadad / Adad / Addu, see Schwemer 2001, 34–58; Schwemer 2007, 135–137; Schwemer 2016–2018, 72. On Hadad in the religion of the Aramaeans, see Sourdel 1952, 39–44; Hoftijzer 1968, 9–12; Freyberger 1989; Freyberger 2006; Greenfield 1993; Greenfield 1999[2]; Müller-Kessler/Kessler 1995; Haider 1996; Schwemer 2001, 610–618; Schwemer 2007, 160–162; Schwemer 2016–2018, 78–79; Bunnens 2004, 58–65; Bunnens 2006, 33–108; Niehr 2014a, 128–132, 136–140, 154–155, 160–161, 165–166, 171–172, 184–186, 193–198, 200–202; Niehr 2015a; Niehr 2021b.

3 On Hadad's role in the royal ideology, see the overviews in Niehr 2020a, Niehr 2020b, Niehr 2021a.

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Hadad's relationship to other gods remain rather vague, although it is evident that he always stood at the head of the panthea. It is unclear whether Hadad had a paredros at his side in all these panthea. Furthermore, the gods and goddesses of the Aramaean panthea in Syria and Anatolia were not simply the children of Hadad (and his paredros) as is known, for example, from the Ugaritic texts of the Late Bronze Age.

It must be recalled that there was no central Aramaean state uniting the entirety of Syria and Anatolia, but rather several small kingdoms with their cult centers mainly in the capitals, but sometimes in other cities of the kingdom. Consequently, there was no imperial Aramaean pantheon akin to those from the Hittite kingdom of Late Bronze Age Anatolia or Assyria and Babylonia in Mesopotamia during the 1st mill. BCE. Hence, we must to reckon with a diversity of local cults of the storm-god Hadad in Aramaean Syria and Anatolia.

2 Faces of Hadad in Aramaean Syria

In order to examine the many faces of Hadad in Aramaean Syria, this contribution will examine three case studies of manifestations of Hadad as attested in different Aramaean cultic sites of Syria and Anatolia: Sikāni in the kingdom of Gūzāna (north-eastern Syria), Sam'al in the kingdom of Yādiya (north-western Syria), and Damascus in the kingdom of Aram (southern Syria).

As for the written sources on Hadad, the transition from clay tablet to papyrus in the 1st mill. BCE means that no mythical or epical traditions on the panthea in Aramaean Syria and Anatolia have been preserved.[4] Rather, the written evidence on Hadad is restricted to some inscriptions on stone and on ivory. This meagre evidence cannot be supplemented by the Baʿal traditions of Late Bronze Age Ugarit[5] because they do not reflect the mythology of the Aramaeans in Syria and Anatolia. The iconographic sources for the worship of the storm-god in Aramaean Syria and Anatolia need only be mentioned in passing here. They have been recently treated, and it is unnecessary to repeat these insights here.[6]

4 The only exceptions are the Aramaic Aḥiqar (see Niehr 2007) and Papyrus Amherst 63 (see van der Toorn 2018).

5 *Contra* Greenfield 1999², 378, 380.

6 See Bunnens 2006, 109–171, Dietz/Otto 2016–2018 and Herbordt 2016–2018.

2.1 Sikāni

The textual basis for the worship of the god Hadad in Sikāni, a royal residence in the kingdom of Gūzāna, is supplied by an Assyrian-Aramaic bilingual inscription (*KAI* 309) found in 1979 on top of Tall Faḫarīya, ancient Sikāni. Although the Assyrian portion served as the *vorlage* for the translation into the Aramaic language, the Aramaic part is nevertheless to be judged as a text in its own right.[7] The first part of the Aramaic version states the following about the god Hadad (*KAI* 309, 1–12a):

> 1) The statue of Hadda-yithʿī, which he has set up before Hadadsikāni,
> 2) regulator of the waters of heaven and earth, who brings abundance, who gives pasture
> 3) and watering-places to all lands, who gives offering and libation
> 4) to all the gods, his brothers, regulator of all rivers, who enriches
> 5) all lands, the merciful god, to whom it is good to pray, who dwells
> 6) in Sikāni, the great god, his lord, Hadda-yithʿī, king of Gūzāna, son of
> 7) Šešnūrī, king of Gūzāna, for the life of his spirit, and for the length of his days,
> 8) and for the longevity of his years, and for the welfare of his house, and for the welfare of his progeny, and for the welfare
> 9) of his people, and for removing illness from him, and for making his prayer heard and for ac-
> 10) cepting the words of his mouth he erected and gave (it) to him. And whoever later
> 11) transports (this statue), may he erect it anew, and may he place my name on it. And whoever removes my name from it
> 12a) and places his own name, may Hadad, the strong one, be against him.

Several insights into the local manifestation of the god Hadad in Sikāni can be elicited from this first part of the Tall Faḫarīya inscription. Hadad is characterized as the "regulator of the waters of heaven and earth" (l. 1). This epithet is clearly influenced by the Assyrian *vorlage* as this epithet is never used in any other Aramaic attestations of Hadad in Syria. Its use in the Tall Faḫarīya inscription is understandable, because rivers (primarily the Euphrates, Ḫabūr, and Tigris) and water canals irrigated the soil in Mesopotamia. Hadad's titles as "regulator of all rivers" (l. 4) and also as "Lord of the Ḫabūr" (l. 16), i.e. the lord of the river in the immediate vicinity of Sikāni, stand in agreement with this.

The storm-god's name 'Hadadsikāni' is an example of a geographical name appended to that of a deity in order to discern the Hadad from Sikāni from other Hadad-manifestations worshipped by the Aramaeans. Furthermore, this geographical last name is a hint to the god's cult center in Sikāni.[8] The central position as regulator of the waters of heaven and earth enables Hadad to deliver abundance, pasturage,

7 For the Aramaic text, and its translation, and commentary, see Abou-Assaf/Bordreuil/Millard 1982, 23–37; Lipiński 1994, 48–81; Millard 2000; Dušek/Mynářová 2016, 10–19; Fales/Grassi 2016, 69–81; Niehr 2021a. For a comparison of the Akkadian and the Aramaic versions, see esp. Crouch/Hutton 2019, 41–227 and the literature quoted in Niehr 2021a, 164 n. 10.

8 For this, see Allen 2015, 232–237.

and watering-places to all the lands (l. 2–3), and to enrich all lands (l. 4–5). Hadad is praised as the god who makes the land, vegetation, animals, and humankind live. Furthermore, in his capacity as chief of the pantheon, Hadad "gives offering and libation to all the gods, his brothers" (l 3–4). Hadad is also responsible for the well-being of the members of the pantheon. Behind this stands the cult of the temple of Hadad, in which the other gods of Sikāni were worshipped as *theoi sunnaoi* with Hadad supreme. Nevertheless, the other gods are characterized as Hadad's brothers, thus indicating their high rank. No names are given; Hadad's brothers remain anonymous divine beings.

Another important epithet of Hadad is "the merciful god, to whom it is good to pray" (l. 5). At this juncture, the relationship between Hadad and human beings, and above all with the king, enters the inscription's focus. In order to worship Hadad, the god needs an abode on earth, as indicated by the sentence "who dwells in Sikāni" (l. 6; cf. l. 15–16) or in the more abbreviated epithet "Hadadsikāni" (l. 1). This epithet relates to the god's temple at Sikāni, which still eludes archaeological identification on Tall Faḫarīya.[9] The person whose prayer to Hadad is meant, is, of course, the king. First of all, the king's name, Hadda-yithʿī, must be considered, as this theophorous name "Hadad is my salvation" displays an intimate relation between the head of the pantheon of Sikāni and the king. It is open to debate whether the king's name, Hadda-yithʿī, is a throne-name bestowed upon him when he became crown-prince or during the accession ritual, or not. The practice of bestowing throne-names on crown-princes is known from both Neo-Assyrian[10] and Aramaean courts during the 1st mill. BCE.[11]

Regardless, Hadad is the king's "lord" (l. 6; cf. l. 17) and the kings prays "for the life of his spirit, and for the length of his days and for the longevity of his years, and for the welfare of his house, and for the welfare of his progeny, and for the welfare of his people, and for removing illness from him, and for making his prayer heard, and for accepting the words of his mouth" (l. 6–10). This demonstrates that King Hadda-yithʿī, who had erected the statue for Hadad, expects a great deal from the divine overlord of the Ḫabūr region. The statue is the interface between divine and human contact, and this is why the statue may not be removed or Hadda-yithʿī's name erased from it (l. 10–12a). Otherwise Hadad, who is called the "strong one", will be the "adversary", "prosecutor", or "accuser" of the perpetrator, who is certainly a hostile king. In this passage, a legal terminus technicus, *qbl*, is conferred on Hadad,[12] a term also known from the epithets of the Mesopotamian storm-god Adad.[13]

The second part of the inscription states (*KAI* 309, 12b–23):

9 For the archaeology of Tall Faḫarīya, see Bonatz 2013.

10 See Radner 2005, 33–35.

11 See Niehr 2020a, 286–289 and Niehr 2021a, 166. See also below for the bestowal of throne-names in Damascus; for Sam'al cf. the royal name Bar-Rakkab.

12 Thus Abou-Assaf/Bordreuil/Millard 1982, 24, 33; Lipiński 1994, 49.62; Fales/Grassi 2016, 71, 76–77.

13 See Greenfield/Shaffer 1983, 115.

12b) Statue of Hadda-yithʿī,
13) king of Gūzāna, of Sikāni and of Azran. For the stability of his throne,
14) that his life may be long, for the utterance of his mouth towards gods and towards men
15) is pleasing he has made this statue, better than the old one he has made it. Before Hadad
16) dwelling in Sikāni, lord of the Ḫabūr, he has erected his statue. Whoever removes my name from the vessels
17) of the house of Hadad, my lord: My lord Hadad shall not accept his bread and his water from
18) his hand. Šuwala, my lady, shall not accept his bread and his water from his hand. And may he
19) sow, but let him not harvest. And thousand barley (measures) may he sow and a half measure may he take from it.
20) And may one hundred ewes suckle a lamb, but let it not be satisfied. And may one hundred cows suckle
21) a calf, but let it not be satisfied. And may one hundred women suckle a child, but let it not be satisfied.
22) And may one hundred women bake bread in an oven, but let them not fill it. And from a cesspit may his men glean barley, may they eat it.
23) And the plague, the rod of Nergal, shall not be cut off from his land.

The second part of the inscription continues with the purpose of erecting a statue for the god Hadad. King Hadda-yithʿī stresses that the statue had been bequeathed by him (l. 12b–13), and as the reason for this votive act he adduces "that his life may be long, for the utterance of his mouth towards gods and towards men is pleasing" (l. 13–15). That the king's name is engraved on the vessels of the temple of Hadad (l. 16–17) means that his name is always mentioned when these holy vessels are in cultic use. Hence, the king's name is closely linked to the cult of Hadad. Should a hostile king remove the king's name from the cultic vessels, the storm-god would cause the end of his dynasty and bring about serious trouble for his population. These futility curses are well-known in the Ancient Near East; in the case of the Tall Faḫarīya inscription, the realization of the curses is ascribed to Hadadsikāni, the protector of the king.[14] A clear contradiction is hereby established: One the one hand, the storm-god Hadad is the god who brings about well-being and fertility for gods and men; on the other, he can deny all this to the adversaries of his protégé, King Hadda-yithʿī.

The only divine names which occur besides Hadad are those of the goddess Šuwala and the god Nergal. Contrary to what has often been claimed, the Aramaic text does not mention the goddess Šala as the paredros of the god Hadad, thus displaying a divine couple at the head of Sikāni's pantheon. The correct reading of the female divine name is Šuwala, a goddess of the netherworld.[15] King Hadda-yithʿī says about Hadad and Šuwala that they shall not accept bread and his water from the hand of the king who removes Hadda-yithʿi's name from the vessels of the temple of Hadad. As water and bread are the basic elements of mortuary offerings, this part of the inscription deals

14 See esp. Greenfield/Shaffer 1983; Morrow 2017; Quick 2018, 68–158; Niehr 2021a, 169–170.
15 See Lipiński 1994, 31–33; Lipiński 2009a; Lipiński 2009b, 134.246–247; Niehr 2014b, 348–349.

with the cult of the dead kings. By not accepting their offerings, the cult of the dynastic ancestors is abolished, and they cannot act on behalf of the living offspring.[16]

The god Nergal, also, has netherworld connotations,[17] and the combination of Šuwala and Nergal is already attested in a Late Bronze Age ritual from Emar.[18]

All in all, there is a clear contrast between Hadad with his positive connotations of saviour, donor of life, guarantor of stability and well-being, and merciful royal personal god, who listens the prayer of the king worshipping him, on the one hand, and the gods Šuwala and Nergal with their negative connotation of netherworld and pestilence, on the other. Hadad represents life, whereas Šuwala and Nergal bring death. Hence, they do not carry positive epithets; nonetheless, Šuwala is called the lady of King Hadda-yithʿī (l. 18), whereas Nergal is solely referred to negatively (l. 23).

2.2 Samʾal

Here, the god Hadad is first mentioned in the royal inscriptions from the reign of King Panamuwa I (*ca.* 790–750 BCE) onward. In the earlier inscription from Ördek Burnu (9th cent. BCE)[19] and in the inscription of King Kulamuwa (*ca.* 840–810 BCE), Hadad is not mentioned (*KAI* 24).[20] This does not, however, indicate Hadad's absence from Samʾal's pantheon in its early stages, as the inscription from Ördek Burnu hails from a necropolis and mentions only two dynastic gods. In turn, the inscription of King Kulamuwa is focused on royal achievements, only mentioning local and dynastic gods.

Should we include the Luwian inscriptions from the vicinity of Samʾal, then we come to the inscription from Pancarlı Höyük (10th century BCE) mentioning the storm-god Tarḫunzas as a patron deity of a Luwian dynasty. This dynasty was replaced shortly afterwards by the dynasty of the Aramaean kings of Yādiya.[21] This fact clearly demonstrates continuity in the worship of the storm-god in Yādiya from the Luwian to the Aramaean period.[22] The main inscription mentioning the role of Hadad is King Panamuwa I's memorial inscription. This inscription (*KAI* 214) is incised on the monumental statue of the god Hadad found at Gerçin, the royal necropolis situated ca. 8 km to the north of the capital Samʾal.[23] The text states the following about Hadad (*KAI* 214, 1–9):

16 See Niehr 2021a, 168–169.

17 For Nergal, see Livingstone 1999[2].

18 See Lipiński 2009b, 134.

19 For the inscription, see Lemaire/Sass 2012 and Lemaire/Sass 2013.

20 For the inscription, see Tropper 1993, 27–46, 153–154.

21 See Herrmann/van den Hout/Beyazlar 2016, 61.

22 See Herrmann/van den Hout/Beyazlar 2016, 69.

23 For the Samʾalian text and its modern translations, see Donner/Röllig 2002[5], 49–50; Donner/Röllig 1973[3], 214–223; Tropper 1993, 54–97, 154–159; Younger 2000; Green 2010, 175–193; Fales/Grassi 2016, 166–191.

> 1) I am Panamuwa, son of Qarli, king of Yādiya. I raised this statue for Hadad at my necropolis.
> 2) The gods Hadad, El, Rešep, Rakkab-ʾel and Šamaš stood with me and into my hands did Hadad and El
> 3) and Rakkab-ʾel and Šamaš and Rešep give the sceptre of authority. So whatever I took hold of
> 4) with my hand [. . .] and whatever I requested from the gods, they gave to me. And they brought the wasteland to life
> 5) [. . . .] a land of barley [. . .]
> 6) [. . .] a land of wheat and a land of garlic
> 7) and a land of fruit. [. . .] They cultivated the soil and the vineyard.
> 8) They lived there [. . .].
> 9) And in my days, indeed, Yādiya ate and drank.

In these lines, the five most influential deities of the pantheon at Samʾal are listed. The supreme position is always held by Hadad, while the position of Rešep and Arq-Rešep, in particular, can change:[24]

> Hadad and El and Rešep and Rakkab-ʾel and Šamaš (l. 2)
> Hadad and El and Rakkab-ʾel and Šamaš and Rešep (l. 2–3)
> Hadad [and] El and Rakkab-ʾel and Šamaš and Arq-Rešep (l. 11)
> Hadad and El and Rakkab-ʾel and Šamaš [and Rešep] (l. 18–19)

The task of these five divinities is closely linked to royal authority; by placing the sceptre in the hand of the king, he is legitimized. This is reminiscent of the famous letter of the Aleppine tradition from the first quarter of the 2nd mill. BCE describing an installation ceremony, during which the king was given the weapons, with which the storm-god had fought the sea.[25] Furthermore, good royal governance guaranties the welfare of the whole country. Then, the inscription continues with the king's care for his afterlife and the continuity of his dynasty (*KAI* 214, 13–18):

> 13) Hadad indeed gave [. . .] he chose me to build. And because of my dominion
> 14) Hadad indeed gave [. . .] to build. So I indeed built and I [erec]ted this statue of Hadad and the necropolis of Panamuwa, son of Qarli, king
> 15) of Yādiya, next to the statue (in) the cham[ber]. Whosoever from my sons should grasp the [scep]tre and sit on my throne and maintain power and do sacrifice
> 16) to this Hadad [. . .]
> 17) let him say: "[May] the spirit of Panamuwa [eat] with thee, and may the spirit of Panamuwa dri[nk] with thee." Let him keep remembering the spirit of Panamuwa with
> 18) [Had]ad.

According to this passage, the god Hadad has two important roles concerning the afterlife of the king and the continuity of the dynasty. The deceased king was divinized

24 Cf. also Tropper 1993, 20–21.

25 For this motif, see Durand 1993; Töyräänvuori 2018, 125–222; Ayali-Darshan 2020, 204–211.

after his death, being entitled to receive offerings together with Hadad. Whosoever of the deceased king's sons seized the scepter was obliged to present offerings before the spirit of his father and Hadad and several other high-ranking gods of Samʾal at the royal necropolis of Gerçin in order that Hadad's benevolence would descend upon the successor to Samʾal's throne. If he denied these offerings, then Hadad would cause him and his family harm.[26]

Several conclusions elucidating the local manifestation of Hadad in Samʾal can be drawn from the inscription on the statue: Hadad was the utmost god in the pantheon (*KAI* 214, 1–2, 11, 18; cf. also *KAI* 215, 22) and the god of the kingdom (*KAI* 214, 8–9; cf. 215, 2). Hadad ordered the king to build a necropolis for the deceased members of the dynasty (*KAI* 214, 1, 13–14). The royal heir was obliged to celebrate the royal cult of the dead in front of the statue of Hadad (*KAI* 214, 15–18, 21–22). Should this cult be neglected, then Hadad would severely punish the royal heir (*KAI* 214, 20–24). These insights into the position and role of Hadad in the religion and politics of the kingdom of Yādiya were deepened by the discovery of the inscription on the Katumuwa stele found in 2008 in the lower town of Samʾal.[27] In its first part, the inscription in Samʾalian language says:

> 1) I am Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa, who commissioned for myself (this) stele during
> 2) my lifetime. I placed it in my mortuary chamber and I consecrated
> 3) this chamber: A bull for Hadad Qarpatalli, a ram for Nikaru-
> 4) was, a ram for Šamaš, a ram for Hadad of the vineyards,
> 5) a ram for Kubaba, and a ram for my spirit in this stele.

The most interesting feature of this inscription is the mention of two manifestations of the god Hadad, unknown until the stele's discovery: Hadad Qarpatalli (l. 3) and Hadad of the vineyards (l. 4), which has provoked intense discussion. As for Hadad Qarpatalli, it remains unclear, whether this Luwian epithet *qrptl* refers to a presently otherwise unattested place name ("Hadad of Qarpatalli"),[28] or if it means "companion".[29] The Luwian background of Hadad Qarpatalli is also underlined by the gods Nikaruwas[30] and Kubaba (l. 3 and 5).[31] It is very likely that Hadad Qarpatalli was worshipped in the neighborhood temple to the west of Katumuwa's mortuary chapel, which was erected as an annex building to the Hadad sanctuary.[32]

26 For the royal cult of the dead at Gerçin, see Niehr 2014a, 185–187 with further literature.

27 For the stele and its inscription, see esp., Pardee 2014, Fales/Grassi 2016, 204–213, Herrmann 2019, Younger 2020, 7–16 and the contributions in Herrmann/Schloen (eds.) 2014.

28 Thus Younger 2020, 10.

29 Thus, *e.g.*, Yakubovitch 2010, 396 with n. 7 and Fales/Grassi 2016, 205, 207. Consider, however, the critique from Younger 2020, 20–21.

30 For Nikaruwas in the Katumuwa inscription, see Masson 2010, 53 and for the god Nikaruwas in general, see Hutter-Braunsar 2020.

31 For Kubaba in the Katumuwa inscription, see Masson 2010, 53.

32 See Herrmann 2014, 53.

Hadad of the vineyards is much easier to understand; the presently unattested Aramaic form *hdd krmn* is a calque of Luwian *tuwarsis Tarḫunzas* ("Tarḫunzas of the vineyard").[33] This manifestation of Hadad is not only explained by several earlier and contemporaneous Hittite and Luwian texts, but also by iconographic representations of Anatolian storm-gods holding grapes in their hands.[34] Both texts and iconography depict Tarḫunzas as the god of fertility.

That two manifestations of Hadad, Hadad Qarpatalli and Hadad of the vineyards, are mentioned by Katumuwa does not simply display his personal piety; rather, this must be understood within the royal context of the Katumuwa stele. Katumuwa was a high-ranking official or vassal in the kingdom of Yādiya during the reign of King Panamuwa II (*ca.* 743–733 BCE), and Hadad was the supreme god both of the kingdom and the dynasty. Hence, the piety towards Hadad displayed by Katumuwa demonstrates his loyalty to the king and also emulates the royal cult of the dead.[35]

2.3 Damascus

Only very scattered Aramaic epigraphic evidence can be adduced from Damascus, capital of the kingdom of Aram, none of which has been found in Damascus itself. These inscriptions, which must be ascribed to the royal chancellery of Damascus, comprise the Tel Dan inscription (*KAI* 309), one inscription from Nimrud and another from Arslan-Tash, and two more from Eretria and Samos respectively (*KAI* 311). All these hail from the era of King Hazael (*ca.* 843–803 BCE).[36] The main insights into the storm-god Hadad and his role for the king and the kingdom are contained in the Aramaic inscription found at Tel Dan (Tall al-Qāḍi), which is ascribed to King Hazael of Damascus (*KAI* 310). This only fragmentarily preserved inscription says:

1) [. . . . . .] and cut [. . .]
2) [. . .] my father went up [against him when] he fought in [his] l[and].
3) And my father lay down, he went to his [fathers]. And the king of I[s-]
4) rael entered previously in my father's land. [And] Hadad made me, myself, king.
5) And Hadad went in front of me, [and] I departed from [the] sev[en . . .]
6) of my kingdom. And I killed [seven]ty kin[gs], who harnessed thou[sands of chari-]
7) ots and thousands of horses. [I killed Jeho]ram, son of [Ahab],
8) king of Israel. And [I] killed [Ahaz]iahu, son of [Jehoram], [kin-]
9) g of the House of David. And I set [their towns into ruins and turned]
10) their land into [desolation . . . . . .].

33 See Masson 2010, 53.

34 For recent overviews, see Bunnens 2006, 58–59, 163 with fig. 84–88 and Weeden 2018.

35 See Niehr 2014c.

36 For a bibliography of these inscriptions, see Niehr 2020a, 283–284, n. 4; for the royal chancellery of Damascus, see Gzella 2015, 78–93.

11) Other [. . . . . and Jehu ru-]
12) led over Is[rael . . . . . and I laid]
13) siege upon [. . .].[37]

This inscription permits the drawing of several conclusions shedding light upon the local manifestation of Hadad at Damascus:

As it was Hadad who had made Hazael king, Hadad can be understood as the protective god of the dynasty ruling over Damascus. This hardly surprises considering that three kings of Damascus, Hadad-ʿezer I (3rd quarter 10th cent. BCE), Bar-Hadad I (*ca.* 900–880 BCE), and Hadad-ʿezer II (*ca.* 880–843 BCE) already display Hadad as theophoric element in their (throne-)names. Furthermore, the name of King Ṭāb-Rammān (end of the 10th cent. BCE), sports the most important epithet of Hadad of Damascus. That Hadad went before Hazael, demonstrates him to be a warrior god carried on a standard before the king and his army when they left for a campaign, much like the god Assur. The king's victory over his enemies and his conquests were ascribed to Hadad.

Akin to the bilingual from Tall Faḫarīya, the Tel Dan inscription also demonstrates the close relationship between the king and the god Hadad in political and military affairs. Neither a pardedros of Hadad, nor a pantheon or any other deities are mentioned in this inscription. The theme of the king's conquests and victory over his enemies being granted by his god Hadad also furnishes the background to the two booty-inscriptions with an identical text found at Eretria and in Samos respectively.[38] The inscription reads (*KAI* 311):

> (This is) What Hadad has given from Unqi to our lord Hazael in the year when our lord had crossed the river.

As for the historical context of these inscriptions, it is clear that they mention a campaign of King Hazael, which led from Damascus via the Orontes to the kingdom of Unqi (Pattina) in the lower Orontes valley. The spoils which Hazael here took belonged first and foremost to the god Hadad, who then gave some of them to King Hazael. Later on, this plunder was given as *ex voto* to the temple of Hadad in Damascus, from whence it was robbed and brought to Eretria and Samos.[39]

These three inscriptions of King Hazael evidence a close connection between Hadad and the king. This connection is also transparent in the names of kings from Damascus who lived before and after King Hazael, namely Hadad-ʿezer and

37 Adapted from the text and translation by Biran/Naveh 1995, 12–13. For the epigraphy, reconstruction, and different translations of the Tel Dan inscription, see esp. Biran/Naveh 1993; Biran/Naveh 1995; Lipiński 1994, 83–101; Fales/Grassi 2016, 136–143; Younger 2016, 593–597.

38 For the text, translation, and a commentary of these inscriptions, see Fales/Grassi 2016, 132–135 and Younger 2016, 627–630; for the two booty objects and their findspots at Eretria and Samos, see the information by Niehr 2011, 349–350.

39 See Lipiński 2000, 214, 389; Niehr 2011, 349–350; Fales/Grassi 2016, 132–133.

Bar-Hadad. As for this last-mentioned name, F.M. Cross submitted a plausible explanation for the royal name borne by the kings Bar-Hadad I (*ca.* 900–880 BCE) and Bar-Hadad II (*ca.* 803–775 BCE):[40] "We are inclined to believe that *Bir-hadad* is a title received as the adopted son of the god when designated crown-prince or king. The ideology of the adoption of the royal son by the patron god is well known from Canaanite (and biblical) material."[41] Unfortunately, in this case, we do not know the mythology behind this tradition, which could explain the concept of the king's divine sonship. Contrary to what F.M. Cross presumed, Bar-Hadad was not a title, but a royal throne-name in Damascus, which demonstrates the close connection between these kings and the god Hadad. That throne-names were bestowed in Damascus is plausible as King Bar-Hadad II was known by the name Mariʾ prior to his accession.[42]

As already mentioned in the introduction, the cult of Hadad in Damascus was influenced by the cult of the storm-god of Aleppo. According to the royal ideology from Aleppo in the 2nd mill. BCE, "the Addu of Aleppo was seen as the adoptive father of the king."[43] This ideology survived the political upheavals of 1200 BCE and traces of it can perhaps be detected in a Hieroglyphic-Luwian inscription of ca. 900 BCE according to which the king mentions "my fathers the gods" who had seated him on his father's throne (*MARAŞ* 1 § 2).[44]

Closely connected with the theme of kings as divine offspring is the topic of royal divinization after the king's demise. At Samʾal, both King Panamuwa and the royal vassal Katumuwa displayed a very close proximity to Hadad after their death (see above 2.2). In contrast to these contemporaneous sources from the 8th cent. BCE, the sources from Damascus on the relationship of the dead kings to Hadad are rather late in date. It is Flavius Josephus to whom we must turn for pertinent material in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* in the 1st cent. CE. He reports on the common cult of Adados and Azaelos in Damascus (*AJ.* 9.93–94):

> Then he (Azaelos) took over the royal power himself, being a man of action and in great favour with the Syrians and the people of Damascus, by whom Adados and Azaelos who ruled after him are to this day honoured as gods because of their benefactions and the building of temples with which they adorned the city of Damascus. And they have processions every day in honour of these kings and glory in their antiquity, not knowing that these kings are rather recent and lived less than eleven hundred years ago.[45]

40 Along with King Bar-Hadad from Bit Agusi (*ca.* 800 BCE); cf. his inscription *KAI* 201.

41 Cross 1972, 42 n. 22.

42 For the discussion of throne-names at Damascus, see Younger 2016, 583–590 and Niehr 2020a, 286–289.

43 Töyräänvuori 2017, 252.

44 For the discussion, see Hawkins 2000, 263 and Niehr 2020a, 288.

45 For the text and its translation, see Marcus 1966, 48–51.

In this passage, Josephus tries to explain the genesis of the gods of Damascus and their cults in an euhemeristic manner. The god Hadad is easily recognized in the name Adados, while Azaelos is none other than King Hazael. This mention of a common cult of the pantheon's chief deity, Hadad, and a deceased king is reminiscent of the royal funerary cult of Samʾal in the second half of the 8th century BCE.[46] In Damascus, it is very likely that Bar-Hadad II, the son and successor of Hazael, was responsible for the divinization of his deceased ancestor. Josephus' source is the historian Nicholas of Damascus who was well-versed in the religious traditions of his hometown.[47] Thus, there is evidence of rituals from the 1st century BCE. This means that the cult of the deified King Hazael was practised in Damascus together with the cult of the god Hadad. It is very likely that this cult took place in the city's temple of Hadad.[48] Hadad of Damascus is known by his epithet *rammon* or *rimmon* ("thunderer"), an epithet also known in the Old Testament (2 Kgs 5:18; cf. Zach 12:11). Rammānu had previously been a divinity in his own right, but was later identified with Hadad of Damascus and thus reduced to a divine epithet excellently matching.[49]

The attribution of Greek votive inscriptions from Damascus to either Baʿalšamayin or Hadad is still disputed. An altar of the 2nd or 3rd century BCE found close to the House of Ananias is devoted to Θεῷ οὐρανίῳ πατρῴῳ τῷ Κυρίῳ ("God of Heaven Paternal the Lord"). This votive's divine addressee is unclear.[50]

A tomb inscription from Deir Kanoun near Damascus mentions a ἱερεὺ[ς] Διὸς Κεραυνί[ου] ("priest of Thundering Zeus"). The attribution of this epithet to either Baʿalšamayin or Hadad is equally possible.[51]

Further epithets of Hadad in Greek and in Latin from the Hellenistic-Roman period are attested outside Damascus. In an inscription from Bosra in the Hauran, Hadad of Damascus is called Zeus Damascenos.[52] This is further attested in an inscription from Heit in the Bashan.[53] In Rome and Puteoli, two inscriptions mention Jupiter Damascenus.[54] These epithets, Damascenos and Damascenus, demonstrate precisely which manifestation of Hadad is meant. This is especially important for cults outside the temple of Damascus. Nevertheless, there are several dedications to Zeus in the

46 See above ch. 2.2.

47 On Nicholas of Damascus, see Parmentier/Barone 2011.

48 See Niehr 2020a, 299–300.

49 For Rammānu, see Greenfield 1976, Mulder 1990–1993, Lipiński 2000, 627–630 and Schwemer 2006–2008. For Hadadrimmon in the Old Testament, see Niehr 2015b.

50 For the inscription and its discussion, see Niehr 2003, 101–102 and Freyberger 2006, 168–169.

51 For the inscription and its discussion, see Niehr 2003, 102.

52 *IGLS* XIII 1, 9013 = *DB MAP* S#2249; see Sourdel 1952, 44.

53 See Sartre-Fauriat 2015, 300 with n. 28 and fig. 22, 4.

54 See Freyberger 2006, 168.

Hauran, where an attribution to either Baʿalšamayin or to Hadad cannot be proven.[55] There is, nevertheless, one explicit dedication in Greek of an altar to Hadad.[56]

As for the temple of Hadad in Damascus, the early structures of the Iron Age are completely unknown. The temple and its temenos are better known from later times. The sanctuary remained in use until the Christianization of Damascus, when it was replaced by the cathedral of St. John the Baptist.[57] Unfortunately, there are no Aramaic inscriptions affording insight into the cult and the theology of Hadad in Damascus preserved from this temple. However, some Greek inscriptions from the Hellenistic-Roman period provide information, according to which Hadad is called Kyrios Zeus.[58]

The iconography of Hadad is preserved on coins from Damascus. Tetradrachms from the period of Antiochus XII (87–84 BCE) depict a standing god accompanied by two bulls. Under his coat the god is wearing a long garment with a solar emblem on his breast, he sports a *polos* on his head, and holds a bundle of ears in his left hand. These coins are replicas of the cult image in the Hadad temple in Damascus.[59] Furthermore, the temple of Baalbek with its statue of the god Jupiter Heliopolitanus is also of interest for the iconography of Hadad of Damascus. At Baalbek, Zeus Heliopolitanus is represented as a storm-god holding ears in his right hand and accompanied by two bulls. Thus, Zeus Heliopolitanus is a god bestowing life and fertility and a cosmic deity.[60] This is also the case for Hadad in Damascus.

The pantheon of Damascus comprised further deities, but only Atargatis, Adonis, Barada, and Theandrios are known by name, although the cults of further deities can be presumed. The goddess Atargatis was Hadad's paredros. Her cult image in the temple of Zeus Damascenos is also known from coins bearing replicas of it. Atargatis also wears a long garment, a veil or a crown on her head, and a lunar symbol on her breast. In her left hand, she carries a fruit or a blossom, and ears of corn stand on both sides of her.[61] Hadad and Atargatis are together mentioned in inscriptions from the Hauran.[62] The cult of the Byblian god Adonis in Damascus is attested by a votive relief from 213/214 CE, which represents the type of the dying and rising god.[63] The river god Barada is only represented on coins from Damascus.[64] The same applies for

55 See Mazzilli 2018, 64–67 and the sources and their discussion in Sartre-Fauriat/Sartre 2020a and Sartre-Fauriat/Sartre 2020b and the recension by Kubiak-Schneider 2022, 124–125.

56 See Sourdel 1952, 41, 51 and Mazzilli 2018, 171–172.

57 See Watzinger/Wulzinger 1921; Freyberger 1989; Freyberger 2006.

58 Jalabert 1912, 150–151.

59 See Haider 1996, 189–190 and Freyberger 2006, 167 with fig. 12 and 13.

60 For the iconography of Zeus Heliopolitanus, see Hajjar 1977; for his quality as fertility god, see Kreutz 2006, 174–177; for the Sursock statue, see Bel 2012; for the lead figurines from Baalbek, see Hitzl/Kurzmann/Niehr/Petersen 2015.

61 See Haider 1996, 190 and Freyberger 2006, 168 with fig. 14 and 15.

62 See Sourdel 1952, 39–42 and Sartre-Fauriat 2015, 297–298 with n. 9.

63 See Seyrig 1950.

64 See Haider 1996, 193.

Tyche in Damascus, who is also only found on coins.[65] Only once attested in Damascus is Theandrios, whose altar was found in the precinct of the Hadad temple.[66] The cult of Theandrios is better known from the Hauran.[67]

3 Conclusion

A superficial examination of the religion of the Aramaeans in Syria and Anatolia garners the impression that each of the Aramaean kingdoms had its own storm-god, Hadad, at the head of its pantheon, implying the cult of about a dozen different Hadads all over Syria and Anatolia. In order to understand this fact, two approaches can be adduced.

The first approach departs from the manifold manifestations of Hadad. A comparable phenomenon is given with the cult of the god Baʿalšamem in Phoenicia and in Syria. O. Eissfeldt explained the spread of his cult in the following manner: "Offenbar wurde der *eine* Baʿalšamēm an seinen verschiedenen Kultstätten doch als jeweilig besondere Größe empfunden, nicht anders als Jahwe, der auch mehrere Jahwes, etwa den in Hebron, umfaßt, so daß das Deuteronomium mit dem Satz ‚Jahwe unser Gott, ist *ein* Jahwe' seine Einheit einschärfen muß, oder wie die Maria der katholischen Kirche, die für den Glauben des Volkes in Lourdes eine andere ist als in Loreto und sonstwo."[68] Applied to the cultic situation in Syria and Anatolia, there was one storm-god Hadad at the outset, who later on underwent a differentiation for reasons no longer known to us.

More convincing, however, is a second approach. According to this, a variety of local storm-gods was worshipped in Syria in the 2nd mill. BCE. In the wake of the Aramaization of Syria from the 12th cent. BCE onward, which implied the construction of an Aramaean identity[69] and the spread of the Aramaic language,[70] these local storm-gods were identified with the dominant storm-god Hadad, or they were replaced by the victorious storm-god of the Aramaean conquerors. The common denominator of this procedure is the "thundering" of the storm-god, which supported the Aramaization of the different local storm-gods. We must, nevertheless, remember that in spite of this Aramaization, all these manifestations of Hadad had still preserved their own specific cult places and also statues displaying their various visual differences.

65 See Balty 1986.
66 See Saad 2018.
67 See Sourdel 1952, 78–81 and Mazzilli 2018, 165.
68 Eissfeldt 1963, 176; see also Allen 2015, 59–70.
69 See Bunnens 2016 and Bunnens 2019.
70 See Gzella 2015.

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