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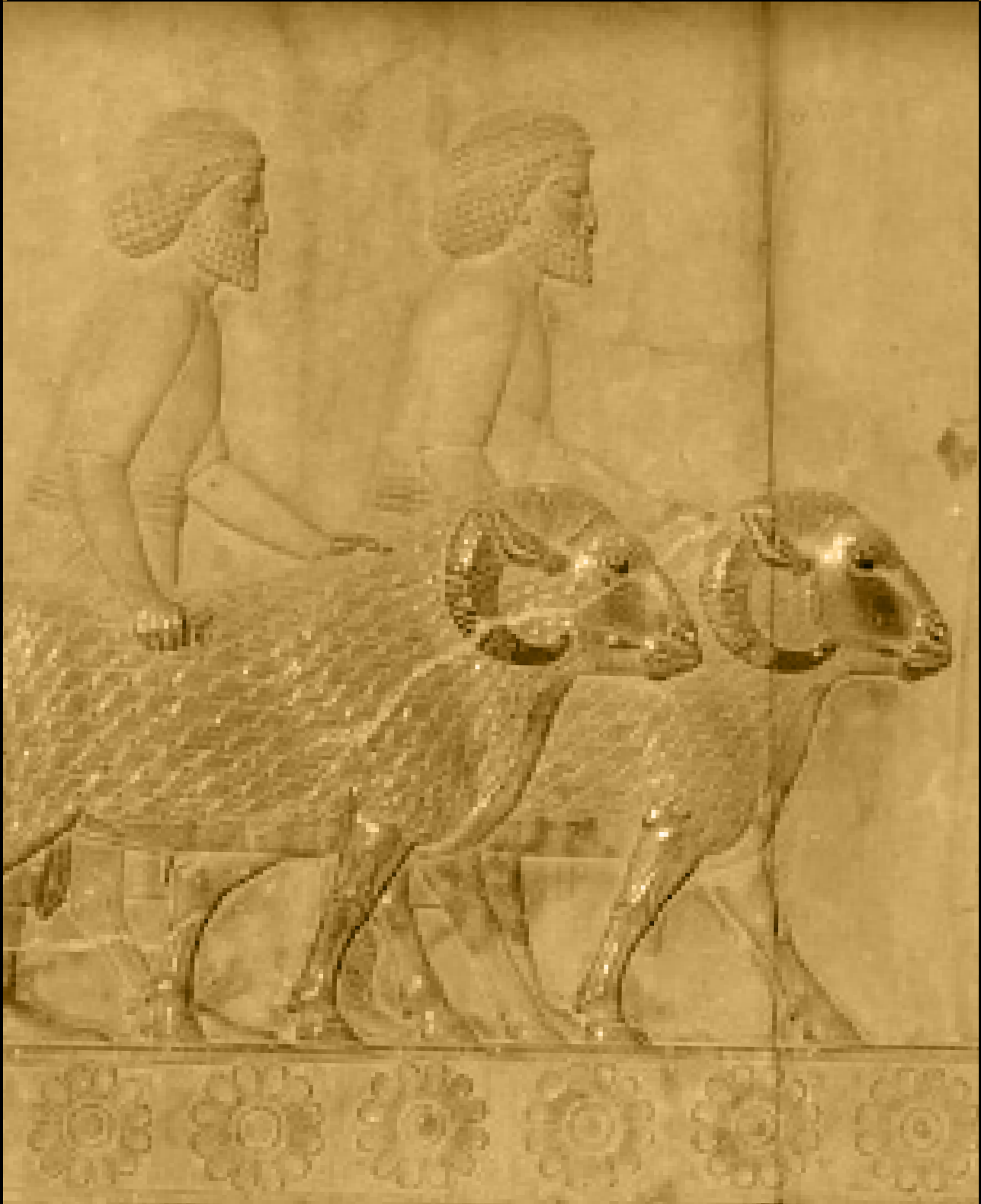
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*xšnaoθrahe ahurahe mazdā*

Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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## Elamo-Hittitica I: An Elamite Goddess in Hittite Court

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### **Introduction**

The so-called “Amarna Age” (ca. 1500-1200 BCE) in the Near East was a crucial era in human career, for it was the first documented exercise in globalization in World history, when some of the major political powers of the ancient Near East at the time (i.e., the Hittite Empire in Anatolia, the Mittanian Empire in northern Mesopotamia and Syria, the Kassite Empire in central and southern Mesopotamia, and the Egyptian Empire) engaged, for the first time, in an extensive and vibrant network of political, economic and military interaction and inter-dynastic marriages (Cohen and Westbrook 2000).

Our primary source of information on “The Amarna Age” is a collection of cuneiform tablets – in Akkadian, the *lingua franca* of the time – collectively called the “Amarna Archive” (Moran 1992). This archive was discovered between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, initially by local Egyptian peasants and later during excavations by the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft) at the archaeological site of Tell el-Amarna (ancient Akhetaten), the short-lived capital of Amenhotep IV (i.e., Akhenaten) (1353-1336 or 1351-1334 BCE), the enigmatic pharaoh of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the New Kingdom Egypt (Aldred 1991; Reeves 2000).

Of the 382 tablets of the “Amarna Archive” now scattered in museums around the world, the largest

collection of some 200 tablets, discovered during German excavations at Tell el-Amarna, is currently housed at Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, while 99 are at the British Museum in London, 49 or 50 at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 7 at the Louvre in Paris, 3 at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, and 1 in the collection of the Oriental Institute in Chicago (Moran 1992).

While a large number of “Amarna Letters” pertain to the interaction between the central administration of the Egyptian Empire with its provinces in Syria-Palestine (Weinstein 1981), some 45 tablets deal with correspondence between the rulers of the aforementioned Empires, shedding much light on international political protocols of the time, and furnishing us with interesting insights into the personalities of some of the greatest monarchs of the time (Bryce 2014).

Conspicuously absent from the “Amarna Archive” is any reference to Elam (G. Beckman, pers. comm. 1/5/2017). Of course this can partially be attributed to the fact that the “Amarna letters” are primarily and predominantly concerned with the western (not eastern) wing of the Near East in the Amarna Age, but Elam had already engaged the global network of the time during the Sukkalmah period (especially from 2000 to 1700 BCE) and later, especially during the Middle Elamite period (ca. 1500-1000 BCE), part of which overlapped with the “Amarna Age,” Elam was an active player on the Mesopotamian scene, at least having some tumultuous relationship with Kassite Babylonia.

The present paper is the first installment in a series of studies that aim to explore Elam’s place in the first age of globalization by investigating Elam’s involvement with other Near Eastern powers engaged in the globalization of the Amarna Age. Apart from relatively well-explored Kassite-Middle Elamite relations (cf. Lambert 1994; Van Dijk 1986; Goldberg 2004), our knowledge of the relations between Elam and the Empires of Hatti, Mitanni, and Egypt is scanty at best, leading at least one authority to believe that the Hittites and Elamites had no direct contact and probably only had rudimentary knowledge of each other (Beckman, pers. comm. 10/12/2016), but a deeper investigation of both written and archaeological sources may suggest otherwise.

We shall begin our investigation with the most ostensible clue, a reference to the Elamite goddess Pinigir (Pinirkir in Hittite) in the context of cultic rituals in the Hittite court at Hattusa (Beckman 1999) and an isolated, but important iconographic piece of evidence from the nearby open-air sanctuary at Yazilikaya (Bittel 1975; Masson 1981; Alexander 1986).

Beckman’s study is explicitly concerned with religious aspect and function of Pinigir/ Pinirkir (Beckman 1999), whereas my goal in this paper is to use the reference to Pinigir/ Pinirkir in the Hittite court as a starting point for exploring the probable, but yet unexplored, contacts between the Elamites and the Hittites as two major players on the Near Eastern scene. The assumed Elamite-Hittite contact laid out in this paper will be delved into in further detail in light of references to Elam in Hittite sources and the land of Hatti in Elamite sources in forthcoming papers.

### **Pinigir/ Pinirkir at Hattusa**

Excavations at the archaeological site of Boghazköy, i.e., Hattusa, the capital of the mighty Hittite Empire (ca. 1600-1200 BCE) (Bryce 2005), in central Anatolia that began in 1906 by the German Oriental Society and has continued to the present (with intervals during World War I and II and the ensuing financial restraints) by the German Archaeological Institute (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut) has led to unearthing of a large number of structures, including palaces, temples, and administrative buildings (for general overview of the site and excavated structures see Bittel 1970; Schachner 2011)



Of paramount importance among discoveries made during excavations at Hattusa is an archive of some 30,000 tablets in Hittite cuneiform, including a wide range of documents, from royal and official correspondence and treaties, as well as legal codes, procedures for cult ceremonies to oracular prophecies and copies of classic literary works from Mesopotamia (for a survey of the Hittite archive from Hattusa see Haas 2006). These texts have played a fundamental role in our reconstruction of the political history, international relation as well as socio-cultural organization of the Hittite society (Bryce 2004), including Hittite religion and religious ceremonies (Beckman 1989, 2005; Haas 2011).

One of the well-documented religious ceremonies of the Hittites, “The *babili* Ritual” has recently been explored in meticulous detail by Gary Beckman (2014). Of particular interest to the subject of the present inquiry is a reference to the Elamite goddess Pinigir/ Pinirkir in *babili* Ritual (Beckman 1999). Beckman argues that Pinigir/ Pinirkir, as a sexually ambiguous form of Inana/Ištar (Groneberg 1986) was among the universal Near Eastern deities who made her way to the Hittite pantheon through Hurrian World that, presumably, had a much closer contact with the Elamite World, perhaps as a result of closer geographical proximity in the areas east of the Tigris.

Pinigir/ Pinirkir partook in the context of Hittite courtly religious rituals in two ceremonies: “The *babili* Ritual” in the capacity of removing sins from worshippers (Beckman 2014) and another one dealing with Hittite war chariot horses (Beckman 1999). What interests us in the context of the present paper is that as opposed to Anatolian embellishments, Pinigir/ Pinirkir is described with material that are usually associated with her homeland in Elam, including gold, silver, chalcedony, marble, “Babylonian stone,” and most specifically carnelian and lapis lazuli (Beckman 1996: 26). This material may have been underlining her eastern connections. In the Yazilikaya open-air sanctuary, however, Pinigir/ Pinirkir is understandably represented among Hurrian-Hittite deities with a typical Hittite garment on slab No. 55a (Alexander 1985: Pl. 38, Fig. 55a) (Fig. 1).

### Pinigir in Elam

In her homeland, Pinigir (usually spelled <sup>d</sup>Pi-ni/ni-gir or Pi-ni-gir), sometime pronounced Pinikir on phonological values see Tavernier 2007), was a popular and old goddess in Elamite pantheon. In Elamite sources, Pinigir is mentioned for the first time in the so-called “Elam’s Treaty with Naram-Sin,” the emperor of Akkad (ca. 2254-2218 BCE) (Hinz 1967: 91, Col. I):

Heed, O goddess **Pinikir** (and) thou noble deities of heaven, Humban, Amba, Zit, Nahiti, Inšušinak, Simut, SirNapir, Husa, Ugabna, Imitki, [...], Tulat, Hurbi, Hutran, Ninurta, Siašum, Mazizt, Nin-Karak, Narunde, Gugumuktir, Humqat, Ruhuišna, Ruhušak[...]

In fact, the way the goddess Pinigir is mentioned individually and first among the thirty-seven Elamite deities in the latter document as a guarantor of the ‘Treaty’ strongly suggests that, at least during the early Old Elamite period, Pinigir was the highest goddess in the Elamite pantheon. Reference to Pinigir in such esteemed position has been considered as a key evidence for the so-called ‘residual matriarchy’ or matrilineality in Elam (Yusivov 1977; Vallat 1994). However, this view cannot be substantiated by other sources. In contrast, in later times, Pinigir has been attested relatively infrequently and can only be seen in a few personal names (Hinz and Koch 1987: I, 206).

Middle Elamite documents provide us with some information on Pinigir’s function. For instance,

in his newly-established temple complex of Dur-Untaš (modern Chogha Zanbil), Untaš-Napiriša (ca. 1275-1240 BCE) of the Ige-Halkid dynasty, informs us that he built a sanctuary for Pinigir adjacent to the central ziggurat (dedicated to Inšušinak and Napiriša, the major deities of lowland and highland Elam) and donated a golden statue to her temple (Vallat 1981). Furthermore, Untaš-Napiriša established for Pinigir an *aštam* (an endowed tavern, from the Akkadian loanword *ašammu* (see CAD A/2: 474). According to this endowment, beer was to be served, and a brothel was also set up in honor of Pinigir.

Pinigir can therefore be assumed to have been the Elamite goddess of love and sex, syncretized due to these two interrelated function with the Sumerian goddess Inanna (Akkadian Ištar) (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983; see also Harris 2000: 228, n. 27 and Van Wyk 2015: 145).

While primarily the goddess of love and sex, Pinigir also appears as a warrior among the seven warrior gods – including Nahunte, Lagamar, Pinigir, Kiririša – on a one-of-a-kind bronze relief discovered in the temple of Inšušinak at Susa (exact date unknown, but probably dating to the Šutrukid dynasty, ca. 1200-1000 BCE) (Álvarez-Mon 2014).

The seemingly contradictory functions of Pinigir as goddess of love and sex while assuming a warlike posture is not unheard of, for it immediately brings to mind many goddesses who imbued both capacities, most noteworthy Inana/Ištar in Mesopotamia, Aštar in Syria-Palestine, Hurrian-Hittite Šaušga, Athena in Greece, and Ašghik in Armenia (on love/warrior goddesses in general see Campbell 1976: 70).

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Later, in Neo-Elamite period, Pinigir is particularly revered by two Elamite kings, Šutruk-Nahunte II (ca. 717-699 BCE), who calls Pinigir “lady of heaven, my goddess” (König 1965: 146, 71A+B: IV) and Tepti-Humban-Inšušinak (date uncertain, ca. 660 or 520 BCE) who calls Pinigir “my supreme deity” (König 1965: 171, 80a-b: V-VI). During his sack of Susa in 647 (not 646 as usually cited in the literature, see Reade 2000), Aššurbanipal refers to Pinigir as “Pa-ni-in-TIM-ri, among the Elamite deities whose temples or sanctuaries he plundered and razed to the ground (Streck 1916: 41).

It is plausible that Pinigir was a counterpart to Kiririša, another major Elamite goddess who had a temple at Liyan in Bushire on the Persian Gulf coast (Vallat 1984; Wagensohn 2014), leading to the argument that she may have been a water-goddess (Hinz 1976-80; Grilot 1986). It is conceivable that while Kiririša maintained her status as a water-goddess in Elam, Pinigir, in accordance with her primary role as the goddess of love and sex and affinity with Inana/Ištar made her way into Mesopotamia proper and the Hurrian lands and, perhaps via Nineveh (Beckman 1998) ultimately arrived in central Anatolia where she partook in the *babili* Ritual at Hattusa.

**Acknowledgment:** I am grateful to Gary Beckman and Wouter Henkelman for providing many bibliographic references, as well as reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this paper.



*Fig. 1. Pinigir/Pinirkir at Yazilikaya*



*Fig. 2. The bronze relief from Susa with images of the seven warrior deities, Pinigir is presumably the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> deity from the left.*

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