Azziya or ÍD-azzi=ya. A Note on KUB 31.101

Izabella Czyzewska

Montreal

KUB 31.101 is a letter dealing with augury, in which a Hittite king reprimands his officials, most probably augurs or "bird observers" (ÍD.MES.MUȘEN.DŬ), for the carelessness demonstrated by them while performing a bird observation (Vs. 6'-18'). He forgives them their negligence (Rd. 19'-20') and, under threat of punishment (Rd. 20'-Rs. 29'), orders them to repeat the observation (Rs. 30'-35'):

30' ki-nu-na ú-wa-at ú-wa-at ma-ah-ha-an
31' I-NA ÍD.Ma-ra-aš-ša-an-da ar-te-ni
32' [nu]-uš-ša-an ÍD-ya kat-ta-an SIG5-an-du-uš
33' [MUȘENH]1A da-iš-tén ÍD Az-zi-ya/ÍD-az-Za=ja ša-ra-qa
34' [ ]x-du-uš MUȘENH1A a-uš-tén
35' [ ]x du-wa-ad-du ÍD-aš me-ik-ki na-aq-ki-iš

This augural observation is geographically set near either the Marasanda River or, possibly, the Marasanda and the Azzi Rivers. Whether the Azzi River in fact appears in the above passage and consequently, whether one or two rivers were used in the augural observation, depends principally upon the interpretation of a single word employed in line 33': ÍD.Az-zi-ja as either ÍD.Az-zi-ja meaning 'to the river Azzi' or ÍD-Az-zi=ja meaning 'and from the river.'

The correct reading of both this word, as well as the above passage, is not only fundamental to the proper understanding of the augural modus operandi, but it also has broader implications for the field of Hittite geography. Based on a reading of ÍD.Az-zi-ja as ÍD.Az-zi-ja, the authors of Répertoire Géographique indicated the river Azzi as being situated in the Hittite geographical landscape. However, if the Azzi River does not appear in KUB 31.101, the entry in Répertoire Géographique is incorrect and the historical record should be rectified.\(^1\) Given the above, it is surprising that the importance of the question of whether the Azzi River can be identified in KUB 31.101 has thus far not been recognized. In addition, the existence or non-

---

existence of the Azzi River has not been addressed in various treatments of that text. This article examines the validity of both the ID Az-zi-ja and ID-az-zi=ja readings and thereby discusses the question of whether or not KUB 31.101 in fact referred to the Azzi River.

The ID Az-zi-ja reading was first suggested by Ahmed Ünal in his article entitled “Zum Status der ‘Augures’ bei den Hethitern”. Ünal justified his interpretation by referring to another letter dealing with bird oracles, namely KBo 15.28, where each of the two rivers Zulija and Imralla appear in one paragraph. KBo 15.28 will be discussed in greater detail later on in this article. Ünal read the entire passage of KUB 31.101 as follows:

30' ki-nu-na ú-wa-at ú-wa-at ma-ah-ha-an
31' I-NA ID Ma-ra-aš-ša-an-du ur-te-ni
32' [nu]-uš-ša-an ID-ya kât-ta-an SIG5-an-du(-)x
33' [MUŠEN]H¹ A da-iš-ten ID Az-zi-ya ša-ra-a
34' [hu-u-ma-a]n-du-uš MUŠEN H² A a-uš-ten
35' [nu UL me-ma-tē]n?? du-wa-ad-du ID-aš me-ik-ki na-qk-ki-iš

According to Ünal’s interpretation, upon reaching the Marassanda River, the augurs should determine, presumably by observation, whether the birds are ‘favourable’. They should then take the birds to the Azzi River and observe them once again. It would thus appear that the Marassanda River played a preliminary role in augural observation while the main bird observation took place at the Azzi River.

In “Korrespondenz der Hethiter”, Albertine Hagenbuchner supported Ünal’s reading of ID az-zi-ja, however, her understanding of the passage viewed in its entirety, and hence of the augural protocol, differs from that of Ünal. She interpreted the passage as follows:

30' ki-nu-na ú-wa-at ú-wa-at ma-ah-ha-an

---

4 Ünal, RHA 31 (1973), p. 48, note 33 “KBo XV 28 Vs. Sff. erwähnt Zulija (Sakarya?) und Imralla (Delice Irmak?).”
6 Hagenbuchner, Korrespondenz 2, pp. 37, 39.
According to Hagenbuchner, upon reaching the Marassanda, the augurs should release the ‘favourable’ birds towards that river and observe them as they fly in the direction of the Azzi River. Thus, under Hagenbuchner’s interpretation, the two rivers Marassanda and Azzi demarcated the field of Hittite bird observation.

It follows from the above that both Ünal and Hagenbuchner believed that each of the rivers Marassanda and Azzi were used in the augural observation scene depicted in the KUB 31.101. However, we are of the view that it is worthwhile asking whether in fact two rivers were ever used for performing Hittite bird observations and, consequently, whether Ünal and Hagenbuchner correctly interpreted KUB 31.101 ID.az-zi-ja as ID.Az-zi-ja.

With a view to answer these questions, three other oracular texts should also be examined, namely KUB 18.5, KUB 49.60 and KBo 15.28.

First, KUB 18.5 is a collection of bird observation cases, and it describes the movements of birds behind (EGIR ID) and in front of a river (ID-az šara piran). One example suffices to illustrate the point:

KUB 18.5 ii

44 na-aš-ta ID-az ša-ra-a kal-mu-šši-iš har-ra-ni-iš-ša
45 pl-ra-an aš-šu-wa-az ú-e-ir na-at-kān ID-an a-ap-pa ú-e-ir
46 nam-ma-at-kān EGIR ID EGIR-an ša-ra-a aš-šu-wa-az ú-e-ir
47 nam-ma-at zi-la-wa-an ku-uš pa-a-ir nam-ma-at mu-un-na-an-i[r]

7 KUB 18.5 is one of three Hittite texts that describe an oracular field of bird observation with a river running through the center of the field. The other two texts are 158/w and 173/w: R.H. Beal, “Hittite Oracles” in Magic and Divination in the Ancient World, L. Ciraolo and J. Seidel ed. Leiden 2002, p. 65 n. 70. Unfortunately, the present author did not have an opportunity to examine the 158/w and 173/w texts.
"The kalmušš-bird and haranšš-bird came up in front of the river from favourable (direction) and they came back to the river. Then they came up behind the river from favourable (direction). Then they went zilawan kuš and they disappeared."

Second, the KUB 49.60 text preserves the right half of a roughly sketched plan, which has been considered by scholars as representing the field of bird observation\(^8\). Beal describes this plan as follows: "This shows a rectangle divided diagonally by two sets of double lines intersecting in the middle. The half-rectangle is further divided in half horizontally by a single line\(^9\). Since KUB 18.5 describes a river running longitudinally through the center of a field of bird observation, it is conceivable that the horizontal line of KUB 49.60 represents a river\(^10\). If that is indeed the case, then each of the aforementioned texts attests that a bird observation was performed over one river, which was located in the middle of the field of vision.

\(^8\) Beal, Magic and Divination, p. 65; Archi SMEA 16 (1975), p. 150 n. 87; V. Haas, "Die Orakelprotokolle aus Kuşkli - Ein Überblick", MDOG 128 (1996), p. 108. Since this plan was sketched below a text that describes a bird observation it is conceivable that it indeed represents the augural field of observation.

\(^9\) Beal, Magic and Divination, p. 65.

\(^10\) Many augural texts, other than KUB 18.5, 158/w and 173/w, mention a road (KASKAL) instead of a river, which also seems to divide the field of vision in half, therefore a horizontal line may have also represented a road. For an entirely different interpretation of the plan of augural field of observation, according to which the two diagonal lines that run through the half-rectangle represented both a river and a road, and for the assessment of its validity see Haas, MDOG 128 (1996), p. 108, and Beal, Magic and Divination, p. 66.
Finally, KBo 15.28, a letter sent by the “bird observers” to a Hittite queen, contains a passage that was used by Ünal to support his view that augural observation was performed at two rivers:

Vš.
4 URU Ha-it-ta-z[a-kā]n ar-ha u-ri-an-ni-ès MUŠEN
5 šar-u I-NA ID Zu-li-aš-ša-an kat-ta
6 [TI₈ MUŠEN] GUN-eš₁₄ zi SIG₅ -az-ma-an-kān
7 [ a]n-da hu-ê-ku-wa-ni EGIR-an-na-kān
8 [ r]a²-za TI₈ MUŠEN pî-ra-an SIG₅-za
9 [pa-it u-ri-a]n-ès MUŠEN tar-u pa-ri pa-it
10 [ ]x-lu-ya ID jm-ra-al-la-ya-aš-ša-an
11 [ ]x a-li-la-qš-[š]a GUN-eš₁₄

(4) Away from the city of Haitta (came) the urchin-bird (5) in taru manner. Down, to the river Zulija, (6) [an eagle] (came) GUN zilawan. From the favourable direction; however, (we saw) it. (7) [The]n we swore to it. And then (8) [ ] the eagle [went] in front from favorable (direction). (9) [The] uria]nni-bird went across in tarwiyallian manner. (10) [ ] to the river Imralla (11) [ ] and the alilas-bird GUN.

While two rivers do indeed appear in one paragraph in KBo 15.28, the above passage describes two, not one, bird observations. Both the urchin-bird and the eagle are observed over the river Zulija. Before the river Imralla appears in line 10, the urchin-bird is described as pait “went”, which indicates that it flew out of the field of vision

11. Since it appears that another bird allias (line 11) is observed at the river Imralla (line 10), it is hereby proposed that the end of the sentence that begins in line 8 and describes the movement of the eagle [ r]a²-za TI₈ MUŠEN pî-ra-an SIG₅-za should be reconstructed as (9) [ pa-it ]

12. Thus, the urchin-bird and the eagle were observed in the oracular field that included only the river Zulija. A separate bird observation involving different birds was performed at the river Imralla. Neither did the Zulija River serve as the preliminary place of bird observation nor did the river Zulija and Imralla demarcate the field of vision.

Since neither of the above texts suggests that two rivers were necessary or even used for a single bird observation, it is difficult to assert with any degree of certainty that KUB 31.101 in fact referred to two rivers. Moreover, a philological analysis of Ünal’s and Hagenbuchner’s readings of the relevant passage demonstrates that a certain amount of manipulation on the part of the reader/interpreter is required in order to incorporate the reading ID Az-zi-ya ‘to the river

11 The Hittite augury texts show that bird observation began when a bird(s) flew into the field of vision, which was described using the verb uwa- ‘to come.’ The flight of bird/birds out of the oracular field and thus the end of bird observation was described with the verb pai- ‘to go.’

12 See Ünal for similar reconstruction. Ünal, RHA 31 (1973), p. 53 n. 34.
Azzi’ into the passage Rs. 30’-35’. We would make the following observations on Ünal’s and Hagenbuchner’s interpretations.

First, Ünal reads the last word in line 32’ as SIG5-an-du(-)x, taking it to be the third person plural imperative verb meaning “let (them) be good/favourable”. However, a careful examination of the autograph and the photograph of KUB 31.101 reveals that the sign which follows SIG5-an-d¥ is -uš, and the word viewed as a whole is not a verb but rather an adjective in the accusative plural meaning ‘good/favourable’.

Second, the verb in line 33’ da-iš-ten is not the second person plural imperative of the verb dâ- ‘to take’ but rather the second person plural imperative of dâi- meaning ‘to put, to place’. Thus, [nu]-uš-ša-an ÍD-ja kât-ta-an SIG5-an-du-uš and [MUŠEN H]1a da-iš-tén form a single sentence, which translates as “place the good/favorable birds down to the river”, and not two sentences, “the birds must be favorable on the river” and “take the birds (from there)”.

Third, 1b Az-zi-ja ša-ra-a “(and go) up to the Azzi river” cannot be considered as a complete sentence since it lacks both subject and verb. It is argued here that this noun phrase should be read as forming part of the sentence [SIG5-a]n-d¥-uš MUŠENHtA a-uš-ten.

In addition, the interpretation of line 35’ as meaning either [Saget nicht o.ä.] “Erbarmung! Der Fluß (ist) sehr schwer zugänglich”13 or “[uwa]t duwaddu. Der Fluß ist sehr schwer (unzugänglich?)”14 is problematic. The noun ÍD-aš appears in the nominative singular case. Thus if two rivers are named in the passage, Maraššanda and Azzi, it would be difficult to ascertain which of these two rivers is hard to access. By the mere fact that the Azzi River was mentioned in the text last, one may assume that ÍD-aš of the line 35’ refers to that river. That in turn would imply that the augurs, as a part of their protocol, were required to proceed to the Azzi River in order to perform their observation there. However, this interpretation cannot be supported by the text itself. Perhaps, then, ÍD-aš of line 35’ refers to the Maraššanda River?15

The re-interpretation of merely two words in the relevant passage would potentially resolve these interpretive difficulties. First, the adjective nakis, in addition to ‘difficult, hard to reach, inaccessible’, can also mean ‘important’. Thus the sentence in line 35’ may be translated as “[uwa]t duwaddu! (The matter of) the river is very important!” Second, the word in line 33’ ID.az-zi-ja can be interpreted as ÍD-az-zi=ya “and from the river”. The above accords with the interpretation espoused by Alfonso Archi, who read the passage as follows16:

30’ ki-nu-na ú-wa-at ú-wa-at ma-ah-ha-an
31’ I-NA 1b Ma-ra-aš-ša-an-da ar-te-ni

14 Hagenbuchner, Korrespondenz 2, p. 39.
15 The passage Rs. 30’-35’ bears the characteristics of an instructive text, the main characteristic of which is the clarity of the message. Great efforts would have been made by the king to avoid any omissions of words or any phrasal ambiguities that could result in misapprehension and hence in errors being committed by officials charged with carrying out the orders. Consequently, we believe that any reading of the passage Rs. 30’-35’ that results in an ambiguous interpretation should, in principle, be incorrect.
32' [nu]-uš-ša-an İD-ja kat-ta-an SIG₂-an-du-uš
33' [MUŞEN]₃ [da-iš-tēn İD-az-zi-ya ša-ra-q]
34' [SIG₂-a]n-du-uš MUŞEN₃ a-uš-tēn
35' [ū-wa-a]t du-wa-ad-du İD-aš me-ek-ki na-ak-ki-uš

30 E ora, su, su! Quando
31 giungerete al fiume Marassanda (scil. Halys)
32 allora disponete [uccelli]i favorevoli,
33 giù nel fiume, e su dal fiume
34 osservate uccelli [favorevoli].
35 [Su,] di grazia, (la questione della consultazione) del fiume è molto importante!

Not only is this interpretation - that upon reaching the Marassanda River the augurs are to release the birds and then observe them as they fly upwards from the same river - clearer, it is also supported by linguistic, stylistic and contextual arguments.

Accordingly, İD-az-zi-ya would be the common noun 'river' in the ablative case with the enclitically attached conjunction -ya ‘and’. Certain features of Hittite phonology can indeed support such an interpretation.

First, the Hittite ablative ending -z [ts], spelled either as -az or -za, reflects an earlier ending *-(an)ti.

Second, although the Anatolian *ti gives /-ts/ in final position in Hittite, as is proven by the reflexive particle *-ti > -z(a) [-ts] or the ablative ending *-ti > -z(a) [-ts], the inherited final *i was retained before the enclitic conjunction -ya ‘and’. Accordingly, the ablative ending -az regularly appears as -azzi before -ya. This phenomenon has been observed by Friedrich and Oettinger and was expounded upon by Melchert.

Although it would seem that Hittite phonology provides convincing arguments supporting the reading İD-az-zi-ya, the İD-Az-zi-ja interpretation is also entirely possible. It is conceivable that İD-az-zi-ya is the dative-locative case of the river name Azzi, as nouns of the i-stem form the dative-locative case by adding the ending -ya. Therefore, non-linguistic arguments supporting the İD-az-zi-ya reading would be required.

---

17 A. Garrett, „Wackernagel’s Law and Unaccusativity in Hittite”, pp. 85-133 (see p. 125 n. 21).
20 C. H. Craig, Anatolian Historical Phonology. Amsterdam - Atlanta 1994, p. 181; idem, Ablative and Instrumental in Hittite. Harvard University 1977, pp. 439-42. The best example that can support the reading İD-az-zi-ja ‘and from the river’ is GÜB-la-az-zi-ja (KUB 55.28 ii 4) ‘and from the left’ contrasted with GÜB-la-aš (VS NF 12.21 ii 16 = VAT 15604) ‘from the left’.
If one is to validate the ÏD-az-zi-ya reading, other augural texts should be examined to establish whether they use the expression ÏD-az-zi-ya ša-ra-a 'up from the river'. KUB 18.5, which is one of the three texts that describe bird observations performed at a river, abounds in such noun phrases. One augural observation case is particularly interesting, in that it includes a sentence that demonstrates striking similarities to lines 33'-34' of our passage:

KUB 18.5 i:

13 na-aš-ta mar-ša-na[ša-ši-in] TI₈\textsuperscript{MUŞEN} \textsuperscript{N} šal-u-i-ni-na
14 ÏD-az ša-ra-a tar-u-an [a-ú-me-en…

"Then up from the river we observed the maršanšiš-bird, an eagle and the šaluiniš-bird taruan".

KUB 31.101 Rs.:

33 .......................ÏD-az-zi-ja ša-ra-q
34 [SIG₅-a]n-du-uš MUŞEN\textsuperscript{HIL\textsuperscript{A}} a-uš-tén

“And up from the river observe the [favo]rable birds”

The verb au(š)- meaning ‘to observe,’ first person plural preterit aúmen in KUB 18.5, and second person plural imperative ausťén in KUB 31.101, appears in each of the above sentences, as does the expression ÏD-az ša-ra-a “upwards from the river”. It would also appear that generally designated birds of KUB 31.101 SIG₅-a]n-du-uš MUŞEN\textsuperscript{HIL\textsuperscript{A}} are specified in KUB 18.5 as mar-ša-na-aš-ši-in, TI₈\textsuperscript{MUŞEN}, šal-u-i-ni-in. The similarities between these two sentences are so striking that it would be possible to postulate that the instructions of a king given in KUB 31.101 were carried out and recorded in KUB 18.5.

Furthermore, if one is to interpret ÏD.az-zi-ya as meaning “and from the river”, the relevant passage would have to be concerned with one river only. The structure of the paragraph provides sufficient evidence that such is indeed the case.

First, the paragraph begins and ends with a similar phrase:

30' ki-nu-na ú-wa-at ú-wa-at ma-ah-ha-an
31' I-NA IDMa-ra-aš-ša-an-da ar-te-ni

“Now, ú-wa-at ú-wa-at. As soon as you reach the Marasšanda river”

35' ú-wa-a]t du-wa-ad-du ÏD-aš me-ik-ki na-ak-ki-iš
"ú-wa-a]t du-wa-ad-du (the matter of) the river (is) very important"

This stylistic device of *ring-composition* serves to demarcate and form a closed and coherent textual unit. Therefore, since the river Marassanda is mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph, the ÍD-aš at the end of the paragraph in line 35' should, in principle, refer to the same river. The same could be applied to ÍD-ya in line 32' and ÍD-az-zi-ya in line 33'. It is our view that if a new river were to be introduced in the paragraph, the river in line 35' would be expressly named.

Second, if one reconstructs MUŠENHLA in line 33' and SIGš-an-du-ūš in line 34', one arrives at two parallel sentences that include noun-adverb-verb formulaic figures:

ÍD-ya kattan SIGš-an-du-ūš [MUŠENHLA] daϊšten “down to the river release the favourable birds”

ÍD-az-zi=ya šara [SIGš-a]n-du-ūš MUŠENHLA auşten “and up from the river observe the favourable birds.”

The use of such parallel sentences and formulaic figures was intentional and served to emphasize the equal importance of releasing and observing the birds at one and the same river.

Finally, a brief analysis of another passage from the same letter (Vs. 6'-15') indicates that the correct reading of ÍD.az-zi-ya should be ÍD-az-zi=ya and not ÍD Az-zi-ja. The passage reads as follows:

6' šu-me-ša-an pa-ra-a da-a-at'-ten na-aš-ta
7' ÍD-an za-it-te-en a-pu-ū-un-na
8' an-da da-a-li-eš-te-en nam-ma-an-na
9' ki-iš-ša-an ha-at-ú-ra-at-ten MUŠENHLA-wa-an-na-aš-kán
10' wa-ar-pi(-)la-a-e-iř24 nu-wa-kán ÍD a-pád-da
11' za-i-ú-en nu LUMES MUŠEN DÛTIM QA-TAM-MA iš-ša-an-zí
12' na-aš-ta ŠÁ ÍD MUŠENHLA an-da da-a-li-iš-kán-zí


23 According to Hagenbuchner, the expressions *uwat úwat* and *uwat duwaddu* are probably similar to the encouraging call *ehu ‘come!’* Hagenbuchner, *Korrespondenz 2*, p. 40. However, the present author is of the view that in this passage both expressions serve to emphasize the importance of the proper bird observation that is to take place at the Marassanda River.

24 Ünal, Hagenbuchner and Archi read here *wa-ar-pi da-a-e-iř*, assuming that the sign *la* is an error. Ünal, *RHA* 31 (1973), p. 49; Hagenbuchner, *Korrespondenz 2*, p. 37; Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975), p. 137. Other reading was proposed in CHD. Under the verb *la-*, *lai-* we read: MUŠENHLA-wannaškan warpi la-a-e-er “They released for us the birds in/from the enclosure (?)” There is no space division between *warpi* and *la-a-e-ir*, which could imply that it is one word. CHD, vol., L-N, fasc. 1, p. 2.
6' You, select it (the eagle). Then,
7' cross the river and abandon
8' it/let it fly! And then, you
9' wrote about it as follows: “They released for us the birds
10' from the enclosure (?)25; at that point
11' we crossed the river.” Do the augurs do just that?
12' Do they forsake the birds of the river?
13' If at anytime a bird (appears) to the augurs in a place
14' in which it flies upwards, do they not wait for it right there?
15' So, why did you not wait for the eagle?

In the above paragraph, the king refers to a bird observation performed by his augurs at some time in the recent past, during which errors were committed since the king reminds his officials that a proper bird observation involves waiting for the birds in the same place in which they were released (Vs. 13'-14'). However, the augurs crossed the river without doing that (Vs. 9'-11', 15').

In paragraph Rs. 30'-35', the officials are sent to perform another bird observation. This time the king gives them clear instructions: they must travel to the Marāššanda River, and as soon as they arrive, they must release the birds towards the river and observe them as they fly up from the river. These two augural activities, releasing the birds and observing them, are equally important and must take place at the Marāššanda River. Neither is any other river mentioned nor was another such river necessary to the augural observation.

It has been argued in this article that ID-az-zi-ya “and from the river” is the correct reading of the word ID.az-zi-ya. Consequently, the question posed at the beginning of this article, namely whether the Azzi River can be identified in KUB 31.101, must be answered in the negative. Unless a text is uncovered that specifically names a river Azzi in a case other than the dative-locative, one is led to the conclusion that the Azzi River located in the Hittite territory did not in fact exist and thus could not have appeared in KUB 31.101. Therefore, the entry in the Répertoire Géographique should be deleted. Furthermore, the analysis of the paragraph Rs. 30'-35' in the context of other augural texts, such as KUB 18.5, KUB 49.60, KBo 15.28, and even the earlier passage of the letter KUB 31.101 (Vs. 6'-15'), shows that the augural protocol required that the birds were observed over a single river.

References