

M. ÇETİN ŞAHİN

NUMBER “NINE” IN AN INSCRIPTION FROM AKSARAY

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In the year 2001 my colleague Prof. Dr. Aliye Öztan of the Department of Near Eastern Archaeology of Ankara University brought me an inscription to read, which she had encountered during her excavation period in Aksaray. It was a very interesting inscription, so I decided to give it to my graduate student from the university in Aydın for publication, thinking that to have an article published in an international periodical would motivate him to search for more inscriptions. The article which was published in EA 34, 2002, pp. 23–27, was re-published by C. P. Jones (see EA 37, 2004, pp. 95–100).

In lines 11–15 of the inscription there is a list of offerings to be offered as penalty to the goddess in Komana, i.e. to the goddess Ma, and the same offerings also to three other local gods, if anyone should violate the tomb. Every person or animal offering had to be each “nine” in number. In both of the publications mentioned above, I could not find a satisfactory explanation for the number nine. In the Hittite myth of Kumarbi, while the succession of Hittite gods are narrated, we learn that the god Anu served the god Alalu for “nine” years,¹ and the god Anu in turn was served by the god Kumarbi for “nine” years. It is clear that these are not actual nine years, but the nine years here mean rather “many” years. I believe, therefore, that the number “nine” in the inscription from Aksaray is the Hittite number “nine”, which means “many”, and not the Turkish number “nine” from central Asia (EA 34, p. 26). It is amazing that the Hittite tradition continued for such a long time in Central Anatolia.

Ankara

M. Çetin Şahin

¹ For the myth of Kumarbi, see Hans G. Güterbock, *The Hittite Version of the Hurrian Kumarbi Myths*, AJA 1948 (Supplement), Volume LII, pp. 123–134, for the number “nine” under discussion see there p. 124.