
Since their edition given by L.W. King in his Babylonian/̯32 Magic/̯32and/̯32Sorcery (1896), the Hand-lifting Prayers are well known in Assyriology. The clay tablets have as title Šuilla, "the lifted hand"; the book reviewed here names such titles a "rubric" (p. 1, 107 ff., 122 f.). Since the beginning, the word often was translated "prayer", "supplication" and lifting the hand was seen as no more than just a gesture of praying and many saw no difference between the Šuilla and the very similar "Gebetsbeschwörung" (here "incantation prayer"). Best known are the books by W.G. Kunstmann (1932), W.R. Mayer (1976) and A. Zgoll (2003), gratefully — and critically — used by the author. He takes the "rubric" more literal and sees as background the disrupted relationship with the (personal) god or goddess. Lifting the hand provides "emphasis" to the situation by being a formal salutation to the deity, hoping that a favourable relation will be restored. This emphasis is shown in incantation prayers: the incantation is an address to the deity and provides an exchange of greetings, but not of equality (pp. 15-58). The Incantation Formula of the (praise) prayer is an exchanged prayer which asks (as the worshipper) for something and (as the deity) grants what is asked (pp. 122 ff.). The lifting the hands occurs first in sequence which already shows its importance (p. 17); it is a real act. Further, worshipper is seen as a dependent of god who is seeking restoration to a harmonious relationship (p. 18); an anticipation of prayer (p. 19). The other developes verse offering ("handoffert") that distinguishes the Šuilla from incantation prayers (p. 13-185).

(1) Hand is addressed (or is). (2) The deity is a knight, (3) the introduction of an intermediary is avoided, (4) complaint or expression of guilt is absent, (5) personal welfare is connected with private responsibility, (6) the situation of the incantation is described (p. 149-151) and it is nothing that making a gesture with the hand is merely mentioned. Yet, it was an obvious element prior to the prayer, already evident in the "rubric" (p. 153 f.). (7) Normal rules, especially the number of deities, like 68 (W.G. Kunstmann, Babylonian myth, astral myths, etc. They are given special attention (pp. 189-201). The main theme of this book is the unison salutation and the introductory address of the author, the Šuilla and the offering (p. 225, 226). One quote: Formal obeisance coupled with ritual washing away the destructive power of the miasma that the worshipper has received by the Šuilla. The offering to the deity or deities is paramount in the sacrifice of the Šuilla of the (personal) god and believed to be attended by the gods of the afterlife (p. 226).

The procedure of the ritual is described (p. 149-152) and it is striking that making a gesture with the hand is rarely mentioned: well, it was an obvious element, prior to the prayer (p. 153 f.). The arrangement of the letters of the alphabet is often found in ritual prayers, like Šuilla, ρηζ, ρηζ, ρηζ, ρηζ, ρηζ, ρηζ, etc. They are given special attention (pp. 189-201). The main theme of this book is theincantation salutation and incantation prayers. For any pre-seal it is the Šuilla and the offering (p. 225, 226). One quote: "Formal obeisance coupled with ritual washing away the destructive power of the miasma that the worshipper has received by the Šuilla. The offering to the deity or deities is paramount in the sacrifice of the Šuilla of the (personal) god and believed to be attended by the gods of the afterlife (p. 226).