

Nahhunte

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NAME AND SPELLINGS

Nahhunte is an Elamite compound name, consisting of the elements *Nah* and *hunte* (Stolper 1998–2001: 82–3). The first element is attested in an Achaemenid administrative tablet from Persepolis as an abbreviation for Nahhunte. The second element can be isolated through the divine name Zabaḥunde = Zammaḥunde (An = Anum VI 185 and 194) and the personal names Teda-hunti/Teduhunti and Zit-hunti. In addition, there is the Assyrian rendering Ishtar-ḥundu of the royal name for Shutur-Nahhunte.

The etymology of the name is still unresolved. Four etymologies/interpretations have been proposed:

1. *Na(n)* “day” and *hunti* “turning” (Jensen 1892: 221).
2. *Na(n)* “day” and *hunti* “brilliant; splendor.” This leads to a meaning “Day-illuminator” (Scheil 1925: 160, n.3; Hinz and Koch 1987: 720, 979).
3. *Na(n)* “day” and “creator,” i.e., “Creator of the day” (Hinz 1972: 48; Leick 1991: 124).
4. *Na(n)* and *hun.te* “Word of Justice” (Grillot 1984: 188).

In any case, the name is homophonous with the Elamite word for “sun,” and Akkadian is similar. In that language the name of the sun god, Shamash, is a mere absolute state of the Akkadian word for “sun,” *šamšu*. According to Vallat (2011), Nahhunte is an originally Awanite divinity.

As both Elamite and Mesopotamian texts mention Nahhunte, his name is transmitted through various spellings, both logographically and syllabographically. The logographic spelling is, as would be expected, UTU, the Sumerian word for “sun.” In Elamite texts, it

only occurs in the Neo-Elamite period (most frequently), where the sign PÍR is sometimes erroneously used for UTU. It also occurs in Akkadian texts from Old Elamite Susa (mostly written PÍR) and in one Akkadian text from Chogha Zanbil.

The syllabographic spellings are diverse: Old Elamite texts have Na-hi-ti and Na-hu-te. In Middle Elamite texts, the divinity appears as Na-ah-hu-te, Na-ah-hu-un-te, Na-ah-ú-te (in a place name), Nah-hu-un-te (also in proper names), and Na-hu-ti (in a place name). Neo-Elamite texts have Nah-hu-un-te and Na-hu-du (in a royal name).

The Akkadian texts from Susa also contain the name, as an element of royal and personal names: Na-ah-hu-de, Na-ah-hu-un-de, Na-hu-de, Na-hu-ti, and Na-hu-un-de. Mesopotamian documents prefer Na-an-ḫu-un-de (Neo-Assyrian), Na-ḫu-du (Neo-Assyrian), Na-ḫu-un-de (Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian), and Na-ḫu-un-du (Neo-Assyrian). On one occasion the ancient Mesopotamian scribes made use of Na-an-de and once of ḫu-un-du.

The most frequent spellings are those explicitly indicating the nasal /n/ before the dental /t/. The exception is the Old Elamite texts, where this nasal is never rendered graphically.

HISTORY AND ROLE

The information on Nahhunte is not very abundant. As already mentioned, Nahhunte does not only appear in texts from Elam, but also in Mesopotamian documents. In the god-list An = Anum (VI 181), he figures as the sixth divinity in a group of seven deities, called the “Seven of Elam,” of whom Narunde is the sister. A second attestation of Nahhunte in a Mesopotamian text is in BAM 248, a medical text. Here Nahhunte and again Narunde are invoked in a context of childbirth. Interestingly, a commentary on this text wrongly identifies Nahhunte with Sin and Narunde with Shamash. Finally, in another incantation,

Nahhunte appears, together with other Elamite deities, as an evil element (KAR 88; cf. Ebeling 1953: 419, n.203). It is not entirely certain whether his name can be restored in CT 25 34:14, another god-list: []-*hu-un-di* = MIN.

The textual sources from Susiana and Elam (both in Elamite and Akkadian) confirm that Nahhunte was already an important god in the Old Elamite period: he appears a couple of times in the so-called Treaty of Naram-Sin, the oldest text recorded in Elamite (^d*Na-hi-ti*). In the list of gods invoked at the beginning of the treaty, he is the fifth divinity, just before Inshushinak. Elsewhere, he appears as the first god in a shorter group of divinities. A third time he appears in the phrase *Nahhunte hatir zukir* “The king loves Nahhunte” (cf. Koch 2011: 63).

When Nahhunte appears logographically in the Akkadian texts from Old Babylonian Susa and Haft Tappeh, it is not always clear whether one should read Nahhunte (Elamite) or Shamash (Akkadian). Sometimes he appears together with other Elamite divinities (e.g., with Napirisha, Inshushinak, and Ishme-karab in a curse on a seal impressed on a litigation tablet from Susa and on two tablets from Haft Tappeh (Haft Tepe); cf. Stolper 1998–2001: 83). In such cases, it is advisable to read Nahhunte. In these texts, his function clearly lies in the domain of justice and law. He regularly functions as a witness, together with Inshushinak or sometimes with other Elamite deities. He may also appear as a creditor, along with a mortal partner (Koch 2011: 63). A particular example is the mention of the “garden; grove” of Nahhunte (MDP 23 325) as the site where a legal decision was taken: *i-na kirî* (^{giš}KIRI₆) ^dPÍR. A royal inscription of Attahushu (IRS 12; cf. Hinz 1972: 106; Potts 2016: 163) mentions him as the guardian of economic justice: “He who does not know the just price, may the Sun inform him.”

Of course, the Elamite texts also mention Nahhunte, but, again, not often. He appears in the Treaty of Naram-Sin and in some Middle and Neo-Elamite inscriptions. Part of the

official royal title of the Middle Elamite king Shilhak-Inshushinak I (ca. 1150–1120 BCE) is *patek Nahhuntek* “Servant of Nahhunte” (e.g., EKI 44, 48, 54; IrAnt 19 22:12–13). In a long inscription (EKI 54), the same king invokes Nahhunte together with Inshushinak, Kiririsha, Humban, Nannara (the moon god), and some other divinities. Another inscription (EKI 68), without royal name but most likely to be attributed to Shilhak-Inshushinak I (Stolper 1998–2001: 83), has a similar passage, but now with, among others, Inshushinak, Kiririsha, and Nannara.

Nahhunte has not enjoyed many epithets. In a Middle Elamite inscription from Chogha Zanbil (king Untash-Napirisha), the god is called “He who answers my prayers for me when I pray to him and who fulfils when I express a word.” Next to that, Nahhunte bears the epithet *temti palar*, meaning “Lord who protects” or “Just Lord” (EKI 54 and 68; Shilhak-Inshushinak I).

An interesting context in which Nahhunte appears, possibly as metaphor for the divine sun, is curse formulas. A Middle Elamite bilingual inscription from Untash-Napirisha (MDP 41 32) has *Nahhunte ir šara par ani i kutun* “May he have no progeny under Nahhunte” (Elamite) and *ina šupāl* ^dUtu *zērušu* [*lā išarri*] “May his offspring not prosper under the sun” (Akkadian). Other Middle Elamite and Neo-Elamite curses also mention Nahhunte, on one occasion as the deity that should execute the curse: *Nahhunte ir šara ani uzzun* “He will not walk as one under the sun” (EKI 45 § 21, 48b § 9, 75:24; Medio- and Neo-Elamite), *hiše Nahhunte lahašni* “May Nahhunte destroy his name” (EKI 74 § 43; Neo-Elamite).

Nahhunte gradually disappears from the source material in the later periods of Elamite history. As well as the mention of him in EKI 74, 75, and 76 and in the Neo-Elamite Omen text, he may also be mentioned in the late Neo-Elamite Persepolis bronze plaque (Potts 2016: 289). In the Achaemenid period, he appears just once, in an abbreviated form Na-ah^{meš} in PF 1802, a letter-order mentioning

barley as a sacrifice for him (Koch 1977: 59–60; Henkelman 2008: 526).

Mention of sanctuaries dedicated to, as well as statues of, Nahhunte, are extremely rare in the documents. One text (MDP 41 27; Untash-Napirisha) mentions the installation of a golden statue of Nahhunte in the Middle Elamite temple complex of Chogha Zanbil, where a sanctuary for this deity was probably built (cf. Malbran-Labat 1995: 74; Potts 2016: 206). An Old Babylonian Akkadian text from Susa mentions a grove of Nahhunte and there was also a “Gate of Justice” (*abul mišari*), perhaps dedicated to Nahhunte (Malbran-Labat 1995: 196), in Susa.

Interestingly, Nahhunte does not occur outside Susiana and Mesopotamia. He is totally absent in the texts from Anshan.

NAHHUNTE IN ONOMASTICS

As is to be expected, the Elamite sun god Nahhunte also appears in Elamite onomastics, but not as frequently as Humpan and Inshushinak (cf. Zadok 1984: 29–30). He was popular in Middle Elamite royal circles, especially with the Shutrukid Dynasty: Shutruk-Nahhunte I and Kutir-Nahhunte II as royal names, Nahhunte-utu as a queen’s name, and Melir-Nahhunte as the name of a princess. The late Middle Elamite texts from Anshan also mention a further unknown king Aksir-Nahhunte. There are only two Old Elamite kings named after Nahhunte: Kuk-Nahhunte and Kutir-Nahhunte I. The Neo-Elamite period has more royal names including Nahhunte: Kutir-Nahhunte, Shutruk-Nahhunte and Shutur-Nahhunte.

As a part of the personal names of non-royal individuals Nahhunte is quite rare. Old Elamite Susian texts have Nahuter(?), Puzur-Nahhunte, Tan-Nahhunte, Tan-Nahhunter, and Tuli-Nahhunte, and the name Īr-Nahhunte appears on an Old Babylonian seal. The most recent name in this category is Kar-Nahhunte (Susa Apadana Texts; ca. 600–575 BCE). Sometimes

it is not clear whether the Sumerogram ^dUTU should be read as Nahhunte or Shamash, e.g., in the personal names from Middle Elamite Haft Tappeh.

Like Inshushinak, Nahhunte could also appear in an abbreviated form in personal names. Three names, one of which occurs in a Middle Elamite tablet from Haft Tappeh and two of which are attested in the Neo-Elamite Susa Acropolis Archive (ca. 600–575 BCE), end in *-na*, which may be an abbreviation of Nahhunte (Hinz and Koch 1987: 471, 550, 556): Kittah-Nahhunte (Ki-it-ta-ah-na), Kuk-Nahhunte (^mKu-uk-na), and Kutir-Nahhunte (Ku-tur-na). Alternatively, however, *-na* might be a genitive ending, since Kutur and Kuk also exist as separate personal names.

Unlike other Elamite divinities, the name Nahhunte is also an element in two place names: Dur-Nahhunte (Middle Elamite) and Nahhunter (Middle Elamite and Neo-Elamite).

SEE ALSO: Inshushinak; Ishme-karab;
Shilhak-Inshushinak I; Shutruk-Nahhunte I;
Shutrukid Dynasty.

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