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## Remarks on the Early Empire Documents

In a recent paper, I argued against a periodization of Hittite history based on three phases, namely: Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom/Empire.<sup>1</sup> This tripartite subdivision derives from the application of linguistic and paleographic considerations to historical events, an erroneous methodological procedure that has been favored by the lack of textual documentation for the central period of Hittite history. Today such evaluation should be revised.

The Edict of Telepinu provides us with a definite sequence for the predecessors of this king as well as marking the conclusion of a relatively well-documented period (also by several other sources), at least insofar as Hattusili I and, to some degree, Mursili I are concerned, apart from Telepinu himself. An obscure phase began after Telepinu, still poorly documented today. Cases of the same name being shared with both previous sovereigns and those of the last phase of Hittite history created confusion in the attribution of textual evidence. Even the sequence of the kings was uncertain and relied only on offering lists to deceased ancestors of the royal family. H. Otten called this phase, which lasted roughly 120 years, the “Mittleres Reich”. According to this historical reconstruction, the Empire began with the glorious reign of Suppiluliuma I.

Intense debate began in 1965, and continued for about two decades, on the validity of spelling, writing and linguistic evidence as tools to employ in dating the texts. The language of those documents which contain various archaic features but which are to be dated, for internal reasons, to the immediate predecessors of Suppiluliuma I, were classified as being Middle Hittite. These are historical texts, instructions, prayers and rituals. Over those same years, attention also turned to paleography. Certain sign forms are distinctive of certain periods; late manuscripts copied from older texts generally preserve some of these sign forms. A distinction was thus drawn between Old, Middle and New Script, documents in Middle Hittite being drawn up using the Middle Script. New sign forms appear beginning with the reign of Suppiluliuma I.

<sup>1</sup> A. Archi (2003), 1–12, where the pertinent literature is quoted.

When O.R. Gurney wrote his first chapter on "Anatolia" for *The Cambridge Ancient History*, he harbored no doubt that "Hittite history, as revealed by the archives, falls into two distinct periods, usually termed the Old Kingdom and the Empire". A further chapter, which was to have concluded his handling of the "Old Hittite Kingdom", was, instead, entitled "The Middle Hittite Kingdom". The explanation for this was that: "(this) period has come to be known, for no very adequate reason, as the Middle Kingdom".<sup>2</sup>

This division of Hittite history into three broad sections was generally accepted amongst German Orientalists, notable exceptions being K. Bittel and P. Neve, the archaeologists who conducted the excavations at Hattusa. Scholars from other nations, such as Italy, linked to German tradition, fell in line with the majority opinion. This state of affairs is seen in the classical work on Hittite history, by Horst Klengel, although not with marked conviction: "Die Zeit zwischen den Regierungen des Telepinu sowie des Suppiluliuma I. wird im folgenden – einer wissenschaftlichen Konvention folgend – als ‚mittleres‘ Reich bezeichnet."<sup>3</sup>

The British and American scholars, including O. Gurney<sup>4</sup>, continued, instead, to use the two-part division: Old Kingdom – Empire. The start of the imperial period is established as being the reign of Tuthalija I/II. It was H. G. Güterbock who approached the problem in clear terms, writing:

„Zwischen dem Alten und Neuen Reich blieb eine Lücke, deren Dauer nur aufgrund der noch immer umstrittenen allgemeinen vorderasiatischen Chronologie bestimmt werden kann. Texte liegen aus dieser Zwischenzeit nicht vor, abgesehen von einigen dürftigen und eben in ihrer historischen Zuweisung umstrittenen Fragmenten. Der seinerzeit für diese Zwischenzeit eingeführte Name ‚Mittleres Reich‘ entspricht keiner greifbaren Realität und sollte ... vermieden werden. ... Aufgrund dieses vermehrten althethitischen Materials wurde dann weiter beobachtet, daß manche der orthographischen und morphologischen Eigentümlichkeiten des Althethischen noch bis in die ersten Generationen des Neuen Reiches fortlebten, d.h. bis zu den Vorgängern des großen Šuppiluliuma. Für diese Sprachstufe verwenden manche Forscher den Ausdruck ‚mittelhethitisch‘. Es muß dabei aber betont werden, daß dieser sprachgeschichtliche Ausdruck nicht mit dem oben erwähnten hypothetischen ‚Mittleren Reich‘ zu tun hat, sich vielmehr auf den frühen Teil des Neuen Reiches bezieht.“<sup>5</sup>

Posing such a question does not merely mean starting a purely academic debate, but involves weighty problems of historical interpretation. It is true that the tripartite division of Hittite history, coinciding as it does with linguistic

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Gurney, in: *The Cambridge Ancient History*<sup>3</sup>, II,1, Cambridge 1973, 235 and 670. The two chapters were written in different years.

<sup>3</sup> H. Klengel (1999), 85.

<sup>4</sup> O. R. Gurney (1990), 16–32.

<sup>5</sup> H. G. Güterbock (1978), 211–253 (quotations from pp. 215–216).

phases and paleographic classification, appears to satisfy practical needs. Periodization, however, has the aim of casting light upon general characteristics and the pace at which historical experience is changed by a given society. This means identifying and noting the characteristics of a certain period, even when this does not represent a homogenous phase, as the various elements which constitute the organization and functioning of human society develop at different rates.

In attributing the foundation of the empire to Tuthalija I/II, Güterbock grasps to the full the peculiar nature of his reign. Some of this king's achievements went through a temporary period of crisis under Tuthalija II/III. Suppiluliuma I, however, was able to shoulder his ancestor's legacy and extend the borders of the empire in Syria, at the same time providing it with a solid structure.

New data today enables us to appreciate more fully certain aspects of this period. The first treaties between Hatti and Kizzuwatna show that, at the time of some of Telepinu's successors, relations between these two states were on a relatively equal standing. The attribution to Tuthalija I of the Sunassura treaty shows that it was in this period that Kizzuwatna was obliged to accept Hittite dominion. Tuthalija could thus reach northern Syria without fearing being attacked from the rear. Mitanni had to withdraw for the time being. The Hittites thus came into direct contact with the Egyptians, with whom they signed the so-called treaty of Kurustama. The "Annals" of Tuthalija record that this king extended Hittite control also over the western regions of Anatolia. He fought successfully in Arzawa, reached the valley of the Meander, defeated Assuwa together with Wilusija and Taruisa, and came into contact with Ahhijawa.<sup>6</sup>

Both Tuthalija I and Arnuwanda I were fascinated by Hurrian culture, which they came to know through Kizzuwatna and certain centers in northern Syria. Hurrian religious beliefs were introduced at court, possibly also as a result of marriages with two princesses of Kizzuwatna. The library of Arnuwanda I at Sapinuwa (Ortaköy) contained numerous Hurrian rituals, including the *itkalzi* ritual, "washing of the mouth," this version of which was then copied for Hattusa. It was probably Suppiluliuma I who introduced the cult of Teššup of Halab to Hattusa, where a temple was dedicated to the god.

Literary works in Hurrian arrived in the libraries of Hattusa in the original language and were then translated or rewritten in Hittite. Although the documents, which have come down to us, are recent (if we exclude the *Epic of Freeing*, and perhaps *Ea and the Beast*), at least some of these "songs" (*Kumarpi*, *Ullikummi*), are copies of originals written in Middle Hittite.

The conference organized in Trieste has confirmed that, at the start of the empire, the archives and libraries were reorganized, and certain kinds of documents were developed so as to adapt them to new requirements.

<sup>6</sup> See also the Edict by Tuthalija I, CTH 258.1, I 1–3.

Stefano de Martino has identified the letters to be dated to the period of Tuthalija I–Tuthalija III. We do not have any earlier ones. Therefore, either the archives where these were kept date to this period or it was not felt necessary to preserve letters from the earlier period. This kind of document, however, reveals a continuity beginning with the start of the empire, when epistolary communications between the centre and outlying areas appear to have been quite intense. The only archives outside Hattusa (Maşat/Tapigga, Ortaköy/Sapinuwa, Kuşaklı/Sarissa), belong to the same period. They all contain letters and a few officials mentioned in these seem to recur also in the letters of Hattusa.

Donations of land date to the period following Telepinu, and relate to a fairly brief span of time, as Gernot Wilhelm has shown thanks to a prosopographic study. These were written in Akkadian and employed a very spare, stereotypical formula. Only one document of this kind can be dated to a later period, to Arnuwanda and Asmunikal. Although employing the same Akkadian technical formula, it differs from the earlier examples in that it is written in Hittite and is more detailed.

The paper by Jörg Klinger takes up once more the question of dating the treaties with the Kaska folk. These have their own structure and formula as they served to regulate relations with a population that represented a threat to the central region of the Hittite state and which had its own specific social organisation. The historical conditions necessitating these treaties go back to the start of the empire, and no earlier. It is to this period that the vast majority of the manuscripts are to be dated.

Some “obligations,” *išhiul*-documents were addressed already to officials of the Old Hittite period. The first kings of the empire made extensive use of this juridical instrument, far more so than in the following period. In this way they were able to reform the state by creating more appropriate administrative structures. As Franca Pecchioli has noted, these kings succeeded in replacing the oligarchy of Hattusa, which wielded power almost like an “extended family”, with institutions that transferred absolute power to the sovereign. The greater unity and solidity of the state in turn furnished the conditions for the creation of the empire.

Some of these obligations related to the reorganisation of the capital itself, and could serve as a model also for other major centres. The best-preserved documents are the *Instructions to the Royal Guard* (MEŠEDI; represented by only one Middle Hittite manuscript; CTH 262); the *Instructions for the Mayor* (HAZANNU) of Hattusa (Arnuwanda I; CTH 257); the *Instructions to the Priests and Temple Officials* (CTH 264). The last two documents were copied, and therefore used, throughout the succeeding period.

Other *išhiul*-documents were, instead, addressed to officials in control of the territory. There are the particularly complex *Instructions to Commanders of Border Garrisons* (BEL MADGALTI; CTH 261; most of the manuscripts are in N[ew] S[cript]); the documents for the Lord (BELU) of a provincial district (CTH

266) and for the Lord of [...] (CTH 275; Arnuwanda I, NS); the *Instructions for the UKU.UŠ-troops* (CTH 267; NS).

A further group of documents, which established the obligations in relation to the category of officials, provided the obligation for an “oath,” *lingai*-, of loyalty to the king, the appointed heir and their descendants. Mauro Giorgieri has studied certain formal and structural elements of these oaths. There are the *Oaths for Dynastic Succession* (CTH 271; KUB 36.114: Tuthalija I ?; MS); the *Oath of whole Hattusa* (*pankuš<sup>URU</sup>Hattušaš*; CTH 251; only one manuscript is in MS); the *Military Instructions by a Tuthalija* (CTH 259; all the manuscripts in NS); the *Oath of the UGULA<sup>LIM</sup> ŠERI and LÜ.MEŠDUGUD Officers* (CTH 260; Arnuwanda I; all manuscripts in NS); the *Oath of Ashapala* (CTH 270; this concerns the protection of the border with the Kaska folk; MS); the *Oath for the Administration of Justice* (CTH 258.2; NS); the *Oath for the Kitchen Personnel* (CTH 265.1; MH?, MS).

Suppiluliuma I used this kind of oath less frequently (CTH 253 and perhaps CTH 268). Hattusili III employed it when the unity of his reign began to waver (CTH 85.2 and 254). Faced with a worsening political situation, the oaths employed by Tuthalija IV and Suppilulijama II sometimes include quite dramatic expressions.

With political consolidation, there was an opening up towards well-established cultural experiences. The topic dealt with by Volkert Haas provides a good example of how literary motifs that were widespread in cosmopolitan Syrian milieux, reached the Hittites thanks to the Hurrian “songs” taken to Hattusa at the time of Hittite expansion in Syria, that is to say, at the start of the empire.

The only systematic work on linguistic data in Middle Hittite, by Ph. Houwink ten Cate and drawing its inspiration from Güterbock, bore the significant title: “The Records of the Early Hittite Empire.”<sup>7</sup> The historical evaluation of the documentary evidence obliges us to accept the analysis implied by such a title.

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<sup>7</sup> Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate (1970).