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# Sargon, Anitta, and the Hittite Kings against Purušḫanda*

## Abstract

This article aims at showing how the juxtaposition of several manuscripts and oral stories that originated in different cultural and chronological layers formed the Hittite legend of Sargon's expedition to Purušḫanda. Comparing the examples connected with the fall of Purušḫanda in the Hittite historical literature, it is possible to trace back the insertion of the city into the legend. In Hittite sources the conquest of Purušḫanda is evoked in the first lines of the proclamation of Telepinu (CTH 19) and in the historical fragments KBo 3.28 and KBo 3.46+ referring to the military campaigns of the first Hittite kings. The echo of this war is possibly reflected in the Hittite composition of the šar tamḫāri. In particular the choice of inserting the fall of Purušḫanda into the Sargon story could have been stimulated by the narration of the deeds of Anitta in the most ancient Hittite period.

Keywords: Anitta, Hittite Kings, Purušḫanda, *šar tamḫāri*, Sargon

The discovery in Hattuša of legends concerning the expeditions made by Sargon (CTH 310) and his grandchild Naram-Sin (CTH 311) to far-off lands is extremely interesting. G. Beckman has recently stated that the Hittite scribes focused their interest on these two Mesopotamian figures, thus entering them in this way into the large Near-East cultural *koinè* wherein the two kings were transformed respectively into paradigms of pious and impious behavior.[1]

It has been proved that the Hittites adopted the Mesopotamian epic through Hurrian mediation, but it has yet to be fully investigated if or how Hittite scribes used to modify the content of oral and written stories circulating in the Syrian and Anatolian area.[2]

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* I had the idea of the connection between the text of Sargon and the deeds of Anitta in February 2006 when I was dealing with Sargon of Akkad for other reasons. This study was presented during a lecture at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago the same month. I would like to thank Professor Alfonso Archi who gave me then his kind and practical support, and now discussed with me several aspects of this paper.

[1] G. M. Beckman (2001), 89.

[2] See J. Klinger (2005), 103–123, with previous literature. See also the recent contribution of A. Archi (2007), 185–203. G. Beckman acknowledges that the Hittite scribes tied the "adventures" of the kings of Akkad to their local history as much as in adopting the epic of Gilgameš they gave "particular emphasis to the hero's campaign to the Cedar Forest, which was thought to lie in an area of northern Syria now under their control" (G. M. Beckman (2001), 89).

In the Hittite version of the *šar tamḫāri* (CTH 310) there is a description of the expedition of Sargon to Puruš̮ḫanda.[3] The main text of CTH 310 is KBo 22.6 (NH) and was located in Temple 1.[4] Two small fragments, KBo 13.46 and KBo 12.1, written in imperial script, come from the House on the Slope. Three others, KBo 3.9, KBo 3.10 and KUB 49.98, also NH, come from an unknown find spot. An Akkadian version of the text comes from El Amarna (EA 359, 375 and 376).[5] It is probably a school tablet written on the basis of a Hittito-Akkadian (lost for us) recension from Ḫattuša.[6] Two further exemplars are to be dated to the Neo-Assyrian period.[7]

The city of Puruš̮ḫanda is well known from the Old Assyrian colonial period when it was a part of the Anatolian trading network.[8] In the Hittite sources, it has a prominent role as an opponent of the Hittite kings at the beginning of the ancient reign[9], while in the later documents the city has just a minor position in some festival texts.[10] In the "Prayer of Muwatalli to the Assembly of Gods" (CTH 381), it is a cult place of a Storm God.[11]

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[3] J. Goodnick Westenholz (1997), 102–131; H. J. L. Vanstiphout (1998), 573–589; H. G. Güterbock (1938), 44–49; H. G. Güterbock (1969), 14–26; P. Meriggi (1968), 259–267; P. Meriggi (1973), 199–202; E. Rieken (2001), 576–585.

[4] See also the fragment from T1 KBo 54.1.

[5] S. Izre'el (1997), 66–75.

[6] S. Izre'el (1997), 10 and 71. It is likely that also KBo 22.6 depends (at least in part) on an Akkadian former version. See for example the expression in obv. 24′: LUGAL-*uš za-aḫ-ḫi-ya-aš-≪mi-iš≫ ú-iz-zi*. Leaving out the wrong possessive pronoun (*-miš*) the translation could be: "The King of the Battle (*šar tamḫāri*) comes". See also P. Meriggi (1968), 259–267 and P. Meriggi (1973), 199–202.

[7] J. Goodnick Westenholz (1997), 134–139.

[8] P. Garelli (1989), 149–152; K. Hecker (2006), 119–120. The city is identified with the modern Acemhöyük. About the Hittite period see also G. F. Del Monte – J. Tischler (1978), 323–324. Recently J. D. Hawkins (1995), 173 with n. 176, observes about the location of this city: "Parshunta (alias Parsuhanta, Purushanda etc.), because of its importance in Kültepe period, has been often identified with Acemhöyük. It would however be difficult to locate all these associated places (i. e. Ussa, Parshunta, Mt. Huwatnuwanda, Hulaya river-land) to the south-east of the Salt Lake, so in this context the identification of Parshunta with Karahöyük-Konia, another huge mound of Kültepe period, seems much more plausible". G. Barjamovič suggests placing the city even further in the west (pers. com. 3, 27, 2007). The majority of documents regarding the city pertain to the period of Kaneš II. In the more recent level of Kaneš Ib we have fewer documents. Surely the city was still active on the political and commercial scene, like a letter from Mari (T 135) of the age of Yaḫdun-lim (chronologically after Kaneš II) seems to show (J. M. Durand (2001), 129–130). Dercksen notices that this lack of documents from Kaneš Ib may indicate that the city, still existing, was out of the control of the Assyrian trading network (J. G. Dercksen (2001), 39–66). Massimo Forlanini suggests that the city was in this period included in a Syrian Amorrean network (pers. com.). See also M. Forlanini (1985), 53; M. Forlanini (1995), 130–132): Old Babylonian elements are visible in Kaneš Ib. For seal impressions with the names of the kings of Mari from Acemhöyük see M. J. Mellink (1972), 170.

[9] See below.

[10] See for ex. the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM-Festival: VSNF 12.1 (CTH 604), Obv. 2′–3′: [*lu-u*]*k-kat-ti-ma I-NA* ^URU*A-ri-in-na* EZEN₄ AN.TAḪ.ŠUM^SAR ^URU*Ḫa*[-  ] *I-NA* É *Pu-ru-uš-ḫa-an-da* AN.TAḪ.[Š]UM^SAR *da-a-i* [UD.9.KAM]. See Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate (2003), 210 with n. 17; KBo 13.198 (CTH 670), l. 4′.

[11] KUB 6.45 II 38–40. See I. Singer (1996), 16. The gods of Puruš̮ḫanda are also mentioned in the text KBo 4.13 I 47′ (CTH 625). About this text see now M. Forlanini (2007), 259–280.

As the linguistic and content analysis of H. G. Güterbock and E. Rieken proves [12], the Hittite epic of Sargon must have been composed through the juxtaposition of several manuscripts and oral stories that originated in different cultural and chronological layers. Rieken has shown that the present recension of CTH 310, and in particular the imperial manuscript KBo 22.6, is not older than the middle Hittite period.

The Hurrian and the Assyrian influence on CTH 310 are particularly evident. A. Archi has convincingly argued that the name of the king Nurdaḫḫi can be explained through the Hurrian formation Nawar-taḫe, "The man of Nawar", attested in the prism of Tikunani. [13] So the name of the Akkadian manuscripts, Nur-Dagan (or Nur-Dagal), is not a wrong reading of the Hittite scribe but a Mesopotamian reinterpretation of a Hurrian name. [14]

Also the fact that in this Hittite story Sargon decides to cross the river Tigris, the Aranzaḫ river [15], therefore using an eastern route to reach the city of Purušḫanda far in the west, suggests the trace of the existence of a tradition about Sargon fighting in the eastern Hurrian area. [16]

These two elements are quite awkward in connection with an expedition to western Anatolia, a region where the main cultural component seems to be Luwian [17]: it has never been attested that events narrated in the several other Hurro-Akkadian epics found in Ḫattuša occurred in this region.

A tale about the hero Sargon was found in a house of a merchant, Aḫ-Šalim, at Kaneš. [18] It describes precisely the geographical features of an area that covers Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia, in which the Anatolian kings, including those of Kaneš and Ḫatti, are considered the enemies. [19] There are at least two motifs that recall the Hittite story of Sargon. The first one is the reference in the text from Kaneš to the meal organized by Sargon for the warriors (ll. 19–40). In the rev. of KBo 22.6 a discourse of the warriors of Sargon is preserved:

[12]  H. G. Güterbock (1938), 44–49; E. Rieken (2001), 576–585.

[13]  A. Archi (2000), 61. S. Izre'el (1997), 72, explains some oddities of the Amarna version with a Hurrian interference.

[14]  The later fragment KBo 13.46 preserves in broken context this reinterpreted form (8′: ᵐNu-ur-da-ga[-]. See further.

[15]  Th. Richter (1998), 128: he states that it is a Hurrian word and is present in several personal names, even though an etymology is still not known. See also H. Freydank – M. Salvini (1984), 35–36.

[16]  The model could be in this case the Old Babylonian Sargon Epos (Sargon in the Lands beyond the Cedar Forest) TIM 9, 48. It concerns an expedition of Sargon to *Maldaman*. In III 15 there is the mention of the man of Simurrum, that is located east of the Tigris. It was suggested that this text may represent an antecedent of the Hittite story of Sargon. See J. Goodnick Westenholz (1983), 329 with n. 14.

[17]  I. Singer (1981), 130; H. C. Melchert (2003), 11–14.

[18]  See now B. Alster – T. Oshima (2007), 1–20, with previous bibliography.

[19]  M. van de Mieerop (2000), 146–148; M. Liverani (1993), 41–67. Compare J. Goodnick Westenholz (2007), 21–27. See also W. R. Mayer (2006), 182–183. Already A. Kammenhuber (1976), 93, not excluding a Hurrian interface, suggested that Old Assyrians changed and reworked this tradition coming from the south of Mesopotamia in order to pursue their own political and social purposes, merging the personality of Sargon I of Assyria with that of Sargon of Akkad. Also M. van de Mieerop lately (M. van de Mieerop (2000), 143) observed that the Assyrian kings of the old period clearly imitated the dynasty of Akkad.

16′         …<sup>GIŠ</sup>*ḫi-ik-ka₄-ar-za-ma-wa-ta*

17′     *ku-it* <sup>É</sup>*ḫi-lam-ni ar-ta* nu-*wa-ra-at-ta kar-ša-an-du*

18′     *na-aš-ša-pa* <sup>GIŠ</sup>BANŠUR<sup>MEŠ</sup> *i-ya-an-du ta-aš-za-kán* <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>UR.SAG-*šum-mi-iš*

19′     ⌈*az*⌉-*zi-ik-kán-du*

"Let them cut the *ḫ*.-plant which stands at your gate, and make it into desks, and let our warriors sit to eat".[20]

The second motif can be seen in the temporal development of the two stories. In the Kaneš text we read: (ll. 41–43) "I sat in darkness (or: at the meal) for seven years, a month and fifteen days with my troops".[21] After that Sargon leaves to campaign.

A similar pattern is repeated in the text of Ḫattuša:

KBo 22.6 rev.:

8′     [LUGAL-*g*]*i-na-aš-ta* <sup>URU</sup>*Pu-ru-uš-ḫa-an-da a-aš-ši*[-*ya-at-ta-at*]

9′     [*na-a*]*š* MU.3.KAM 5-*ya* ITU-*mi* <sup>URU</sup>*Pu-ru-uš-ḫa-an-ti*⌈*e*⌉-[*ša-at*]

10′     [LUGAL-]*gi-na-aš* EGIR-*pa* <sup>URU</sup>*A-G*[*A-D*]*È i-ya-an-ne-eš…*

"Sargon enjo[yed] (being) in Purušhanda, [and] resi[ded] in Purušhanda for three years and five months. [Sar]gon set off for Akkad".

But in fact, persuaded by his warriors, he starts to fight against the same city in which he resided. This part is attested until now, only in the Hittite composition of the *šar tamḫari*.[22]

In the text of Kaneš, however, there is no reference to the city of Purušḫanda. Instead, among others, the city of Ḫaḫḫum is mentioned. The Hittites were aware of the existence of stories in which Sargon crossed the Euphrates in the area of Ḫaḫḫum on the ancient route of the Assyrian merchants to Kaneš.[23] Ḫattušili I celebrates the crossing of the river in this region with these words: "No-one had crossed the Mala (ex. A: Purattu), but I, the Great King Tabarna, crossed it [on foot], and my army crossed it [after me (?)] on foot. Sarg[on (also) crossed it]".[24]

Instead in the Annals (CTH 4) a campaign of Ḫattušili against the city of Purušḫanda is not mentioned. But its conquest in this period is evoked in the first lines of the proclamation of Telepinu (CTH 19), where an overview of the earliest kings is presented: (I 7–12) "He (*i. e.* Labarna) destroyed the lands one by one, he made the lands powerless and made them the borders of the sea. And each time he returns from campaign, each of his sons

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[20]  About this episode see in B. Alster – T. Oshima (2007), 2–3; J. Goodnick Westenholz (2007), 22–25.

[21]  B. Alster – T. Oshima (2007), 10.

[22]  The Amarna text EA 359 closes with the withdrawal of Sargon from Purušḫanda after 3 years (Rev. 27–28), and the colophon: DUB.1.KAM *ša* LUGAL *tam-ha-ri qa-ti*.

[23]  The texts from Cappadocia mention two routes from the Euphrates towards Kaneš: the route of Ḫaḫḫum through Tamilkiya and the route of Uršu, through Unipkum and Mama. See M. Forlanini (1985), 54.

[24]  CTH 4: KBo 10.2 III 29–32. H. G. Güterbock (1964), 1–2. See the remarks of M. van de Mieroop (2000), 135–136.

goes to a country. Ḫupišna, Tuwanuwa, Nenašša, Landa, Zallara, Purušḫanta, Lušna were the countries they each governed, and the great cities made progress".[25]

At the beginning of the Hittite kingdom Purušḫanda had been a powerful and dreadful adversary. The echo of the war is possibly reflected in the Hittite composition of the *šar tamḫāri*. Comparing the examples connected with the fall of Purušḫanda in the Hittite historical literature, it is possible to trace back the insertion of the city into the Hittite legend of Sargon. In the fragment KBo 3.28 (CTH 9) II 5–9 we read about the fall of the prince of Purušḫanda: "The gods put the son of Purušḫanda in my hand. I, the king, said to his wife and to his sisters: 'You shall go to eat and drink! But you shall not look into my royal eyes' ".

Like in the Hittite epic of Sargon, the city is not immediately destroyed. The king, probably Ḫattušili I, tears the city down no earlier than after a second rebellion.[26] The final defeat and the subsequent destruction of Purušḫanda are recorded in the text KBo 3.46+ KUB 26.75 (CTH 13). The king is brought to Ḫattuša and his wife and children are cursed.[27]

In particular the choice of inserting the fall of Purušhanda to the Sargon story could have been stimulated from the narration of the deeds of Anitta in the most ancient Hittite period. A strict correlation can be found between this story and the last part of the text of Anitta.

In the Old Hittite version of the composition (KBo 3.22 rev.) Anitta says[28]:

73    *ma-a-an* x x [                              (*la-aḫ-ḫa pa-a-un*)]
74    *nu* LÚ[29] URU*Pu-ru-uš-ḫa-a*[(*n-da kat-ti-mi ḫé-en-ku-m*)*u-uš ú-da-aš*]
75    *šu-mu* I GIŠŠÚ.A AN.BAR I GIŠGIDRU.GAM AN.BAR [(*ḫé-en-gur ú-da-aš*)]
76    *ma-a-an a-ap-pa-ma* URU*Ne-e-ša* [*ú-wa-n*(*u-un*)]
77    ⌈*nu*⌉ LÚ URU*Pu-ru-uš-ḫa-an-da kat-tim-mi* [(*pé-e-ḫu-te-nu-un*)]

"When […] I went to fight [to Purušhanda,] the man of Purušhanda [brought] presents to me, he brought me an iron throne and an iron scepter. When [I] went back to Neša, I brought with me the man of Purušhanda".

In the first lines of KBo 22.6 IV there is, unfortunately only in a fragmentary context, the mention of a crown and of a golden throne of the royalty:

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[25] CTH 19. The lines I 13–20 repeat in an almost identical way even though the cities' names are not listed. See the translation of P. M. Goedegebuure (2006), 229–230.

[26] As I already remarked (see over), the Amarna version of *šar tamḫāri* finishes with the departure of Sargon from Purušḫanda. In the Hittite version CTH 310 two phases are narrated (KBo 22.6 IV 8′–12′): the first one describes the stay of Sargon in the city after its conquest. In a following part there is the narration of the destruction of the city. Sargon destroys the city incited by his warriors.

[27] About these texts and their interpretation see now P. Dardano (2004), 238–251. For the dating of CTH 13 to the period of Ḫattušili I see A. Kempinski – S. Košak (1982), 87–116. About CTH 13 see also S. de Martino (2003), 127–153.

[28] O. Carruba (2003), 50–52 and 128–131.

[29] In the later version B 16 LÚMEŠ URU*Purušḫanda* is attested (See O. Carruba (2003), 50).

Rev. IV (// KUB 48.98 rev. IV)

3′      *pí-ra-an a-še-eš-tén :ku-pa-hi*[(-*in-ši-*)*in* (?)
4′      LUGAL-*iz-na-aš-wa-ta* KÙ.GI-*aš* ⌈GIŠŠÚ.A⌉ *k*[*u-* (?)
5′      *nu-wa-ra-aš-ši kat-ta-an-ši-it pé-da* x[
6′      EN^MEŠ-*aš ku-iš* KÙ.GI-*aš-kán* GIŠŠÚ.A^HI.A-*aš* [
7′      ⌈*e*⌉-*ša-an-ta ne-et-ta kat-ta-an-ši-it* x[

"You shall sit down before [him], [his] crown [......], the golden throne of royalty to you [......] and you shall bring it by him [......]. The Lords who seat on the golden thrones, [they shall bring] these things to you <<by him¹>>".

These lines may have referred to the transmission of the royalty symbols from Nurdaḫḫi to Sargon. KBo 22.6 (Rev. // Par. KBo 12.1 IV 4–7) ends with the destruction of the city and the last surrender of its king Nurdaḫḫi:

23′     [^URU*Pu-*]*ru-uš-ḫa-an-da-aš* BÀD-*eš-šar* KÁ.GAL *ḫa-an-ti pí-ip-pa-an-du*
24′     [*eš-š*]*a-ri-iš-me-et i-ya ne* KÁ.GAL-*aš a-še-eš-ḫu-ut* ^m*Nur-da-aḫ-ḫi-ma-ta*
25′     [*eš-*]*ša-ri-ši-it pí-ra-an še-er ar-ta-ru ne-et-ta* GAL-*in ḫar-du*

"Let them knock down the walls (and) the gate of [Pur]ušḫanda separately, make their (your ?) [st]atue(s) and put them (it?) in the gate, let Nurdahhi stand for you before your [st]atue, let him adore you!"[30]

Of course there is an open question: were these lines of the Anitta text composed using the story of Sargon as a model, or had the Hittites already developed in ancient times the legend of the military expedition of Sargon to Purušhanda, creating it by the use of the historical facts described in the deeds of Anitta? This second hypothesis is quite realistic.

Anitta is a real historical personality.[31] His enterprises in the area could have inspired the creation of several legends during the decades between his reign and the rise of Ḫattuša in Anatolia.

The mention of an expedition of Sargon to Purušanda is also preserved in a letter from Ur, UET 7, 73 dated by his editor Gurney to the Old Babylonian period. The text, written on four columns, seems to be a scribal exercise tablet containing in the first lines (1–17) a fictitious letter of Sargon about conquering Purušḫanda[32], followed by a list of professions

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[30] Note also the expression used by the warriors of Sargon seeking to destroy the city (KBo 22.6 rev. IV: "We conquered (for ourselves) the lands, but we didn't make anything to it", (*ut-ne-e-wa-an-na-a*[*š-za*] *tar-ḫu-u-en i-ya-u-e*[*n-m*]*a-wa-ra-at Ú-UL ku-it-ki*). It resembles the text of Anitta KBo 3.22 obv. 7–8: '(The king of Kuššara) captured the king of Neša, but he didn't make anything bad happen to the inhabitants of Neša)'.

[31] See now M. Forlanini (2004), 368–374.

[32] J. Goodnick Westenholz (1997), 148–151; the list of professions is edited in Å. Sjöberg (1996), 117–139.

(18 ff.).[33] For what concerns the mention of Purušḫanda, the name of the city is not spelled in the Old Assyrian way.[34] At the line 13 is attested the spelling *Pu-ru-uš-ḫa-an-da*, like in the Hittite and late Mesopotamian sources.[35] Some of the signs are not written in the regular script of the Old Babylonian period, but they seem more typical for later phases.[36] The text was probably composed at the end of the time, in the late 17th century. It is not possible to establish if it was produced on the basis of a Syrian-Amorrean tradition connected with Purušḫanda. In this case the Hittites may have also adopted this legend in the period of their hostilities with the city. On the other side it is also likely that the letter was composed after that the Hittites created the epic of Sargon, in the period of Ḫattušili I and Muršili I. The fact that in few decades the tradition of Sargon against the western Anatolian city may have reached the south of Mesopotamia should not be surprising[37], if we consider that, for example, already the Hittites included in their legend of Sargon CTH 310 the Akkadian adaptation of the Hurrian name Nurdaḫḫi. In fact the late form Nur-Dagan(/Dagal) appears in the fragment KBo 13.46 (8′).[38]

In the construction of the Hittite kingdom, Ḫattuša prevailed over many political entities of Anatolia. Parallel to the political rise was the formation of the ideology of the monarchy. The wars with Purušḫanda probably found a mythical justification in the hostility of Anitta against the city. The Hittites considered Anitta and the dynasty of Kuššara their own predecessors. That is why the Hittite *šar tamḫāri* was neither the epic of their settling in Anatolia[39], nor the remake of an Assyrian poem formed in the period of Šamši-Adad of Assyria[40], and not even an attempt to present themselves as outsiders in comparisons with the local people. It was an original creation of the Hittite scribal school, using of course Mesopotamian and Hurrian models, oral stories about Sargon existing in the Syrian and Anatolian region, but also its own historical tradition. The innovation of this version of the legend is that it was developed on the basis of the true historical facts described in the deeds of Anitta.

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[33]  C. Wilcke (1982), 51 with n. 67. Wilcke suggests that the letter and the list belong together. Compare Å. Sjöberg (1996), 117. See also J. Goodnick Westnholz (1997), 141–149. The text presents several problems. First of all it is not clear if the letter of Sargon is connected with the long list of professions following in the next lines. The second problem is represented by the unclear language and by the difficult syntax of the text.

[34]  In the Old Assyrian texts the city is always *Purušḫattum* (see also the Mari Text T 135, 16–17: *ù-bu-uṭ-na-tim pu-ru-úš-ḫa-de-tim*, J. M. Durand (2001), 129). For the attestations of the name in the Old Assyrian period see K. Nashef (1991), 29–31.

[35]  See K. Hecker (2006), 119–120.

[36]  J. Goodnick Westenholz (1997), 149.

[37]  About contacts between Hatti and Mesopotamia already in Old Hittite period see G. M. Beckman (1983), 101.

[38]  See n. 13 and 14.

[39]  M. van de Mieerop (2000), 143.

[40]  M. Liverani (1993), 52–56.

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