

Treasures on Camels' Humps

Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient
Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al

EDITED BY

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THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY MAGNES PRESS, JERUSALEM

On Siege Warfare in Hittite Texts

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General surveys on ancient fortifications and siegecraft seldom refer to information contained in Hittite texts, which have joined relatively late the thesaurus of ancient Near East literature.¹ Yet, as I hope to demonstrate, these texts contain some of the most explicit descriptions of siege warfare and may be of great value for historians and archaeologists. To be sure, the selected examples presented below as a tribute to a leading expert on ancient siege warfare do not exhaust the potential of the Hittite corpus.

One of the earliest descriptions of siege warfare in the ancient Near East is in the Siege of Uršu text.² Written in an Old Babylonian dialect in Old Hittite ductus, this literary composition is attributed to the campaigns of Hattušili I in the late 17th century BCE. It describes in ornate language the ineptitude of some Hittite officers to accomplish the siege of Uršu in southeastern Anatolia and the king's escalating anger over their failure:

They broke the battering-ram. The king became furious, his face became grim.

... The king said: "Construct a battering-ram of Hurrian type and let it be placed! Make a siege ramp (lit. 'mountain') and set it up! Cut a

- 1 See, e.g., Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (Jerusalem 1963); I. Hogg, *The History of Fortification* (New York 1981); A. Mazar, "The Fortification of Cities in the Ancient Near East," in J.M. Sasson, ed. *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East III* (New York 1995), 1523–1537; D. Oredsson, *Moats in Ancient Palestine* (Stockholm 2000). A few references to Hittite texts are found in I. Eph'al, *Siege and Its Ancient Near Eastern Manifestations* (Jerusalem 1996) (Hebrew) and in P.B. Kern, *Ancient Siege Warfare* (Bloomington and Indianapolis 1999).

The following abbreviations are used in this article: CAD = *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*; CHD = *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*; CTH = E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites*; HED = J. Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*; HEG = J. Tischler, *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*; HW = J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*; HW² = J. Friedrich & A. Kammenhuber, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd ed.

- 2 KBo 1.11 = CTH 7; G. Beckman, *JCS* 47 (1995), 23–34; J.L. Miller, *The Expeditions of Hattušili I to the Eastern Frontiers* (M.A. thesis; Tel Aviv University 1999), 4 ff., 44 ff. On the siege described in this and in other Old Hittite texts, see also Ph. H.J. Houwink ten Cate, *Anatolica* 11 (1984), 67 ff.

great battering-ram from the mountains of the city of Ḫaššu and let it be put in place! Commence heaping up the earth! When you (pl.) are finished, let each take his place! Let them make war, but their strategy will be foiled.” Šariwanda said: “Winter has arrived. Let some continually heap up earth, but let others continually excavate.”

The six-month-long siege failed completely. The representatives of the Hurrians and of the king of Aleppo moved freely in and out of the beleaguered city. Eventually, as described in his bilingual annals, Hattušili himself managed to conquer the city before crossing the Euphrates.

The battering-ram is associated here with the Hurrians who may have been known as experts on this type of siegecraft. Incidentally, the Sumerogram ^{GI}ŠGU₄.SI.AŠ, literally ‘one-horned ox’, should in fact be rendered as a ‘battering-bull’.³ The ram-headed battering pole appears much later,⁴ whereas the metal-tipped battering poles depicted in Egyptian and Neo-Assyrian reliefs have a pointed or an axeblade-shaped tip which could be forced in-between the blocks of the wall.⁵ On the other hand, the imagery of the ‘battering-bull’ recalls the symbolic description of the bull goring into a mountain in another Old Hittite text, the so-called Puḫanu Chronicle.⁶

[Beh]ind them he became a bull, and its horns were a little bit bent. I ask [him:] “Why are its horns bent?” And he said: “[...] Whenever I went on campaigns/trips, the mountain was difficult for us. But this bul[l] was [strong]. And when it came, it lifted that mountain and [m]oved it, so that we reached(?) the sea. That is why its horns are bent.”

From literary texts, let us move to the typically Hittite genre of instruction texts, which provide the most detailed information on the military architecture of a Hittite city and are a veritable gold mine for archaeologists who study the everyday life of an ancient Near Eastern city. The detailed descriptions of how structures should be built, maintained and renovated may supply the answers to intriguing questions about edifices unearthed in excavations, and *vice versa*, many philological cruxes pertaining to realia may find their

3 Akkadian (*y*)ašibu; CAD A/II: 428 f.

4 A.M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (Ithaca 1967), 116.

5 See Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 146, 160, 390 ff.; Eph'al, *Siege*, 78, fig. 6; Kern, *Ancient Siege Warfare*, 46 ff.

6 CTH 16; for the latest study of this intriguing text (with refs. to the abundant earlier literature), see A. Gilan, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 31 (2004), 263–296. The translation reproduced here is from H.A. Hoffner, Jr. in W.W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, *The Context of Scripture* I (Leiden 1997), 184 f.

solutions in a thorough comparison with the archaeological data. Most revealing in this respect are the instructions to the ‘mayor’ (*HAZANNU*) of Hattuša⁷ and the instructions to the commander of border garrisons, literally “lord of the watch tower” (Akk. *BĒL MADGALTI*, Hitt. *auriyaš išḫaš*).⁸ Both texts are attributed to Arnuwanda I who ruled at the turn of the 14th century BCE and carried out an extensive administrative reform.⁹

The commanders of the border garrisons were in charge of the administration in outlying provinces of the kingdom, especially in the sensitive northern frontierland that was constantly threatened by the Kaška tribes.¹⁰ A useful comparison may be drawn between the theoretical regulations laid down in the instruction and the roughly contemporary letters from the provincial center at Maşat Hüyük/Tapikka which describe concrete situations (see below).

The text is preserved in several copies and isolated fragments, but even so, several passages are still missing or badly broken, including some pertaining to the topic discussed here. The text abounds in rare technical terms, some of them *hapax*, which are very difficult to interpret. Another major difficulty lies in the still lacunary comprehension of Hittite metrology.¹¹ Whereas it is generally agreed that the *gipeššar* corresponds (more-or-less) to the Akkadian *AMMATU*, ‘cubit’ (ca. 50 cm.), the length of the *šekan* still defies certain definition.¹² Perhaps a comparison with the pertinent archaeological data may bring the solution closer.

7 CTH 257; see I. Singer in J. Goodnick Westenholz, ed. *Capital Cities: Urban Planning and Spiritual Dimensions* (Jerusalem 1998), 169–176 (with refs. to earlier literature).

8 CTH 261; the *editio princeps* is in E. von Schuler, *Hethitische Dienstanweisungen für höhere Hof- und Staatsbeamte* (Graz 1957); translations of the full text were provided by A. Goetze, *ANET*, 210 f. and by G. McMahon in Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture* I, 221–225. Partial translations and studies are numerous and references to them may be found in the new text edition of F. Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo per i governatori di provincia* (Pavia 2003). The following references to line numeration are according to this edition which provides a partiture-like transliteration of all the extant copies. Except for text A, which is written in a Middle Hittite script, all the other fragments are later copies.

9 For an overview on Hittite instructions and their dating, see Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo*, 21–31.

10 For the exact functions of this important provincial official, see R. Beal, *The Organisation of the Hittite Military* (Heidelberg 1992), 426–436.

11 Th. P.J. van den Hout, “Masse und Gewichte bei den Hethitern,” *RLA* VII (1990), 517–527.

12 Ibid, 519 f. ‘Half-cubit’ is apparently contradicted by occurrences such as KUB 40.55 i 9’ (Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo*, 100): 4 *gipeššar* 4 *šekan*=a. A smaller division of the cubit or even a ‘span’ (ca. 22 cm.) seem somewhat too small in certain contexts (see below).

The text opens with paragraphs dealing with the defensive measures to be taken by the guards and the scouts protecting the city and the roads leading to it (ll. 1–72). Then it proceeds to instruct the commander about the building and the maintenance of the defensive architecture in a border town, including exact measurements and construction methods. Unfortunately, the first fourteen lines or so (ll. 78–91) of this valuable manual of military architecture are almost entirely lost in all the duplicates. From isolated words it appears that this long passage deals with the measurements¹³ and construction methods¹⁴ of the main fortification wall surrounding the city.

The text improves when it gets to the description of the towers (ll. 89–95). The indication of their height is unfortunately broken off.¹⁵ The rest (ll. 92–95) may be restored as following:¹⁶

Let the [wate]h(?)¹⁷ tower be 4 *gipeššar* (ca. 2 m.) around the top, but around the bottom let it be 6 *gipeššar* (ca. 3 m.; var. 3 *gipeššar*); and let it be encircled by a rain drain (^{URUDU}*heyawallit*) and a gallery (^{GIŠ}*maryawannit*). Let the gallery be 6 *gipeššar* (ca. 3 m.) in circumference (*peran arḫa*), and let it protrude 5 *šekan*.

On the assumption that the indicated measurements refer to the entire circumference of the tower (and not to its exterior face only), its size may seem somewhat small.¹⁸ But, of course, the relevant comparison is not with the much larger towers of Boğazköy or other major cities, but with small provincial strongholds about which very little is known at the present.¹⁹ From the two elements encircling the tower the first is obvious: *heyawalli-*, derived

13 Note 4 *gipeššar* 4 *šekan*=a in l. 78. The next line probably mentions *ḫuriptaš*, which according to Pecchioli Daddi refers to the ‘empty’ space between the outer and the inner wall. If so, the text probably describes a so-called ‘casemate wall’, like in the siege description in KBo 18.54 (see below).

14 Note the ‘large stones’ (NA₄^{HIA} GAL) in l. 80. The rare word *ḫunipiš* (=a) in the next line may refer to a ‘rampart’ or ‘glacis’. Earlier interpretations suggested ‘mound’ or ‘ramp’; see C. Kühne, *ZA* 62 (1972), 255 f.; Houwink ten Cate, *Anatolica* 11 (1984), 69; Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo*, 103 n. 351. *išparuzzi*, ‘ridge pole’, in l. 86a may refer to some wooden beam incorporated in the fortification.

15 Line 89: AN.ZA.GÀR^{HIA} *pargašti*

16 Following *CHD*, M: 186b; *CHD*, P: 309, and Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo*, 106 f.;

17 Following Pecchioli Daddi’s restoration of *awariy]aš* AN.ZA.GÀR in l. 92.

18 The variant text must have a wrong figure since most towers were narrowing towards their top.

19 Of smaller proportions than in Hattuša, but still of a city of considerable size, are the recently excavated fortifications of Kuşakli/Şarişsa. See A. Müller-Karpe in *Die Hethiter und Ihr Reich. Das Volk der 1000 Götter. Ausstellung Katalog* (Bonn 2002), 178–181; <http://staff-www.uni-marburg.de/~kusakli>.

from *heyau-* ‘rain’, with ‘copper’ determinative, must be a rain gutter running around the top of the tower. As for the second element, *maryawanna-*, with ‘wood’ determinative, Pecchioli Daddi’s ‘*passerella(?)*’²⁰ may come closer to the meaning than Puhvel’s ‘railing, fence’.²¹ I would suggest ‘gallery’, ‘balcony’ or ‘battlement’,²² referring to the well-known relief pottery fragment from Boğazköy depicting a crenellated wall surmounted by a projecting tower.²³ The wooden beams used in its construction are clearly portrayed. This construction, slightly protruding from the wall, allowed the defenders free movement and a good view for shooting at the enemy. As for etymology, Puhvel suggested a derivation from *māri-*, with the meaning ‘(fence) made of pickets, stockade’.²⁴ I would rather derive *maryawanna-* from the adverb *marri* denoting rash and hasty movements.²⁵ This would appropriately describe the turmoil in which the defenders of the tower must have acted in the heat of the battle. Of course, both attempts may be wrong and we may have here a (Luwian?) loanword.

Archaeological comparisons to this valuable textual portrayal are also available, but not so much from Anatolia itself where the uppermost parts of fortifications are seldom preserved. One of the best-preserved second millennium fortification systems is the fortress of Buhen in Nubia.²⁶ The massive brick construction included ca. 10 meters high walls with crenellations and slanted lower parts, square bastions protruding from it, a lower front wall on a sloping rampart, and a moat 8.4 m. wide and 6.5 m. deep. Similar fortification systems are also portrayed in Egyptian reliefs depicting Syrian cities.²⁷

From lofty towers the text logically proceeds to the deepest defensive elements, the dug out foundation trenches and the moat.²⁸

20 Müller-Karpe, *Hethiter*, 107 with n. 265.

21 *HED*, M: 71.

22 Another similar feature that comes to mind is the Medieval ‘machicolation’, a projecting gallery at the top of the wall with openings in the floor through which stones and boiling liquids could be dropped on the attackers. Although such devices may have existed in the fortress of Buhen in Nubia, there is no evidence for them in Hittite Anatolia.

23 K. Bittel, *Hattusha. The Capital of the Hittites* (New York/Oxford 1970), pl. 10b.

24 *HED*, M: 71.

25 *CHD*, M: 185: “1. in the heat of emotion or passion(?), rashly(?), impetuously(?)” Puhvel drops the ‘rash’ element in his rendering of *marri* (*HED*, M: 69 f.).

26 A. Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture* (Berkeley & Los Angeles 1966), 212 ff.; W.B. Emery, H.S. Smith et al., *The Fortress of Buhen*, 2 vols. (London 1974–1979).

27 Oredson, *Moats*, 160 ff.

28 Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo*, ll. 108–114. The duplicates diverge here into two slightly different versions, β and γ, respectively; the translation below integrates the two versions. For a treatment of this passage, cf. also V. Haas & I. Wegner, “Baugrube und Fundament,” *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 43 (1993), 56 f.

[When] you fortify [a city], let the foundations trenches (*ḫutanueš*; var.: *katapenniš*)²⁹ be dug [x] *gipeššar* deep, and let the width be 2 *gipeššar* (ca. 1 m.). When you finish fortifying a city, its moat (*HERITUM*) should be 6 *gipeššar* (ca. 3 m.) deep and its width should be 4 *gipeššar* (ca. 2 m.). And the water should not get in before they pave it up with stone(s).³⁰

This entry seems to distinguish between a ‘foundation trench for a wall’ (*ḫtanu-*) and a considerably larger ‘moat’ (*HERITUM*). It is remarkable though that in the Hurrian-Hittite bilingual the two vocables seem to be interchangeable: the Hurrian version has *ḫireti*, whereas the Hittite has *ḫtanu-*.³¹ The Hittite term seems to be more appropriate in this context,³² but perhaps Hurrian *ḫireti*, like its Akkadian origin,³³ generally refers to any kind of excavated ditch or canal.

The description of the moat in this instruction text provides a valuable point of reference for archaeological comparisons.³⁴ The issue deserves an in-depth study, but a few preliminary remarks may be suggested here in passing. The moat described in the text is rectangular or U-shaped, ca. 2 m. wide and 3 m. deep. It was coated with stones and then filled with water. The flooding of moats through breaches cut from the Euphrates, the Tigris or their tributaries is mentioned in several Mesopotamian sources.³⁵ Egyptian and Assyrian reliefs also portray cities surrounded by water-filled moats or

29 For *ḫtanu-* see Haas & Wegner, “Baugrube”, 56; Pecchioli Daddi, *Il vincolo*, 108 f.; M.-C. Trémouille, “Hittite *ḫtanu*, Hourrite *ḫirīti*, Akkadien *ḫiritum*”, *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 44 (2002), 145–149. The variant *katapenniš* (sg.), marked with a gloss wedge, is hapax.

30 For the corrected reading of l. 104, see S. Košak, “Die Stadtwerke von Ḫattuša”, *Linguistica* 33 (1993), 110.

31 Haas & Wegner, “Baugrube”, 56.

32 For a translation of the parable on the ungrateful tower, see H.A. Hoffner, Jr., *Hittite Myths* (Atlanta, 2000), no. 18a; id. in Hallo and Younger, *Context of Scripture* I, 217.

33 *CAD*, Ḫ: 198 s.v. *ḫirīšu* A, *ḫirītu* A; *CAD*, Ḫ: 103 s.v. *ḫarīšu*; all three are referring to both ‘moat’ and ‘ditch’.

34 For a comprehensive study on moats in the biblical period, including a chapter on texts and reliefs, see Oredsson, *Moats*. Cf. also Eph'al, *Siege*, 76 f.

35 E.g.: the moat of the city Ḫiritum described in the Mari text ARM 2.30: 10; J.-M. Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari*, Tome II (Paris 1998), 209; the moat of Dur-Katlimmu described in a Middle Assyrian text from Tell Šēḫ Ḫamad; E.C. Cancik-Kirschbaum, *Die Mittelassyrischen Briefe aus Tall Šēḫ Ḫamad* (Berlin 1996), 135 (8: 33'); the ditch system built by Marduk-apla-iddina in Dur-Yakin; C.J. Gadd, *Iraq* 16 (1954), 187. For the large ditches incorporated in the fortification system of Nineveh, see A.M. Bagg, *Assyrische Wasserbauten* (Mainz 2000), 192 ff.

canals, but it is difficult to tell how accurate these representations are.³⁶ In any case, it is clear that, contrary to some skeptical views,³⁷ at least some moats in the ancient Near East, including in Anatolia, were water-filled and served for defensive purposes.

The dimensions of moats is seldom indicated in texts,³⁸ but they can be measured, if sufficiently preserved, in excavations. Most of them have a different profile, trapezoid or V-shaped, and are more wide than deep.³⁹ The moat on the southern side of Boğazköy, below the Sphinx Gate, is in fact a simple continuation of the glacis covering the huge rampart and does not necessarily have a defensive function.⁴⁰ The roughly contemporary moat in Assur, which was fully developed by Tukulti-Ninurta I, was cut into bedrock and had a rectangular shape; its dimensions were appropriate for an imperial capital – 20 m. wide and 13–15 m. deep.⁴¹ The dry moat at Buhen in Nubia was 7.3 m. wide and 3.1 m. deep.⁴² Other Bronze and Iron Age moats that can be measured are also considerably larger than the dimensions of the moat described in the Hittite instruction. Perhaps the best contemporary⁴³ comparison to the moat described in the text is the recently excavated moat at Tell Sabi Abyad on the Balih River, which surrounds a 80 x 80 m. Middle Assyrian fortress.⁴⁴ It is 4 m. wide and 3.5 m. deep and its steep sides are partly strengthened by heavy walls of clay tiles. One should also mention in this context the recently unearthed defensive ditches at Troy which are attributed to level VI.⁴⁵

36 See Oredsson, *Moats*, chap. V.C.

37 E.g., A. Ünal in *Essays on Anatolian Archaeology. Bulletin of the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan* 7 (1993), 125.

38 A rare exception is the moat of the Aramean city of Nišibin conquered by Adad-Nirari II; it had a moat 9 cubits (ca. 4.5 m.) wide and dug down to water-level.

39 A rare example for a ditch that is more deep than wide (5 x 4 m., respectively) has been discovered at Tell eš-Şafi/Gath. This feature, which surrounds the mound, is interpreted as a siege trench (circumvallation) probably dug by Hazael of Aram; A.M. Maeir, *VT* 54 (2004), 323 ff.

40 Oredsson, *Moats.*, 84 f. (with refs.).

41 Ib. 82 f. (with refs.).

42 Ib. 80 (with refs.).

43 Some Iron Age moats are similar in size and shape to the moat described in the Hittite instruction text. E.g., at Tell Halaf (8 x 5 m.), at Tell en-Naşbeh (5 to 2 x 1.5 to 0.5 m.) and in the fortress of Kadesh-Barnea (4 x 2.5 m.). For Tell Halaf, see R. Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasien* (Tübingen 1971), 306 f. with fig. 411; for the moats in Palestine, see Oredsson, *Moats*, *passim*.

44 Reported on the Internet site of the excavation (season 2002): [http:// www.sabi-abyad.nl](http://www.sabi-abyad.nl).

45 M. Korfmann et al., *Troia – Traum und Wirklichkeit. Ausstellung Katalog* (Stuttgart 2001), 70 fig. 73; D.F. Easton et al., *Anatolian Studies* 52 (2002), 83.

After the ditches the instruction continues with the description of gates, posterns, staircases, windows and many more topics pertaining to the everyday life in a Hittite border town. Hopefully, one day this unique manual of military architecture will be fully restored through new joins and duplicates.

Now, from theory to praxis. The defensive devices prescribed in the instruction for the commander of the border garrisons were put to test in concrete situations, one of which is described in a remarkable letter sent by the Hittite commander Kaššu to His Majesty.⁴⁶ Several military persons bearing this name are attested in the texts, but the ductus clearly favors a 14th century dating and, in fact, this Kaššu is most probably identical with his namesake, the overseer of military heralds (UGULA NIMGIR. ÉRIN^{MEŠ}), who is the addressee of more than half of the letters from Mašat Hüyük/Tapikka.⁴⁷ Only the reverse of the partially preserved letter is relevant to the subject discussed here, but for the sake of completeness it will be presented in full. In fact, this is a double letter, with Zarna-ziti's brief message following after Kaššu's report. The lower right corner of the tablet is missing, considerably damaging a dozen lines, in addition to an indefinite number of missing lines on the lower edge.

1 A-NA ^DUTUŠI EN-YA QÍ-BÍ-MA

2 UM-MA ^mKaš-šu-ú ÌR-KA-MA

3 MA-~~Ḫ~~AR ^DUTUŠI SAL.LUGAL aš-šu-ul

4 ku-it ma-aḫ-ḫa-an ŠA ÉRIN^{MEŠ} ša-ri-ku-wa-ia-kán

5 Û ŠA ÉRIN^{MEŠ} UKU.UŠ ḫa-ad-du-la-an-na-za

6 ku-it ma-aḫ-ḫa-an nu-mu EN-YA EGIR-pa ŠU-PUR

46 KBo 18.54 (807/w). For full treatments of the text, see F. Pecchioli Daddi, *Mesopotamia* 13–14 (1978–79), 203 ff.; A. Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter*, 2. Teil (Heidelberg 1989), 57 ff. (with refs. to other partial studies of the letter). M. Marizza, *Dignitari ittiti del tempo di Tuthaliya I/II, Arnuwanda I, Tuthaliya III* (Eothen 15), Firenze 2007, 101–111.

47 A. Ünal, “Kaššu,” *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* V (1976–80), 473 ff.; Th. P.J. van den Hout, *Studien zum spätjunghethitischen Texte der Zeit Tudhalijas IV. KBo IV 10 +* (PhD diss.; Amsterdam 1989), 193; *Der Ulmitešub-Vertrag* (Wiesbaden 1995), 170 f., 229. For the letters of Kaššu from Mašat Hüyük/Tapikka, see S. Alp, *Hethitische Briefe aus Mašat Hüyük* (Ankara 1991), 70–75; Beal, *The Organisation of the Hittite Military*, 396–407; S. de Martino & F. Imparati, “Aspects of Hittite Correspondence: Problems of Form and Content,” in O. Carruba et al., eds. *Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Hittitologia, Pavia 1993* (Pavia 1995), 112 ff.; H.A. Hoffner, Jr. in W.W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, *The Context of Scripture* III (Leiden 2002), 45–51.

7 ^mWa-an-da-pa-LÚ ku-it MA-ḪAR EN-YA
 8 pá-r-ḫi-iš-na-za u-un-ni-eš-ta
 9 nu TUP-PU ku-it MA-ḪAR EN-YA pé-e ḫar-da
 10 na-at ar-ḫa pé-eš-ši-ya-at
 11 ar-ḫa-ma-at ku-e-da-ni me-mi-e-ni
 12 pé-eš-ši-ia-at na-at A-NA EN-YA
 13 Ú-UL ka-ru-ú ḫa-at-ra-a-nu-u[n]
 14 TUP-PU-ma ma-aḫ-ḫa-an ^{UR}[^{U?}]a-an e-eš-ta
 15 nu-mu ^{LÚ}DUB.SAR ku-i[š TUP-PA ḫatrait]
 16 nu-za pa-pi-li x[ḫatrait na-at-za]
 17 Ú-UL ša-a[k-ta
 18 x[-x-x]x[

(1–2) To His Majesty, my lord, say: Thus speaks Kaššu, your servant. /
 (3–6) Write back to me, my lord, how it is concerning the well-being
 of His Majesty and the Queen, and how it is concerning the health of
 the *šarikuwa*-troops and the UKU.UŠ-troops. /
 (7–17) Since Wandapa-ziti drove to my lord in haste, the tablet that
 he had for my lord he had declined (or: thrown away). I did not
 previously write to my lord the reason why he declined it. When the
 tablet was [inscrib]ed(?)/[rea]dy(?)⁴⁸ in the town [...], then the scribe
 wh[o wrote the tablet] for me, he [wrote] in Babylonian [and he(?)
 did] not un[derstand it]. ...

After the opening greetings to the royal couple and to the main units of
 the royal army,⁴⁹ the first subject introduced by Kaššu is the case of a lost
 letter that should have arrived to the king.⁵⁰ If I restore and understand the
 fragmentary passage correctly, the messenger Wandapa-ziti, who left in
 haste, declined⁵¹ to take the tablet to His Majesty, probably because it was

48 Either *ḫa-at-ra-]a-an(?)* or *ḫa-an-da-]a-an*, respectively.

49 For the *šarikuwa*- and the UKU.UŠ troops, see Beal, *The Organisation of the Hittite Military*, 37 ff.

50 My interpretation of the passage differs slightly from those of Pecchioli Daddi, op. cit., 203 ff. and G. Beckman, *JCS* 35 (1983), 110 with n. 59.

51 *CHD*, P: 321a, 4c, 5: *arḫa peššiya*- in the sense “disregard”, “repudiate”. Differently in *CHD*, L-M: 274; P: 148, 255: “the tablet that he had brought to my lord he has (now) thrown away.” I cannot see how could Wandapa-ziti throw away the tablet which he had already presented to His Majesty and, in any case, what would be the point of the entire explanation if the tablet had reached its destination. Rather, I think that the tablet that Wandapa-ziti ‘kept’ (*pe ḫarta*; cf. *CHD*, P: 253, meanings 1 and 2) for His Majesty was never presented to him, for reasons explained in the next lines. They seem

written in Akkadian which he could not understand (and read out before the addressee). If so, this incident presents a highly interesting facet of the writing practices in a Hittite provincial town. In the Mašat letter HKM 72 sent to Kaššu by the Chief of the Scribes,⁵² the latter adds a note to the scribe (rev. 34–36): “You Zū, [my] sweet brother, answer me (in the matter of) the ^{GiS}*murta*- in Babylonian.”⁵³ There is a good chance that the Akkadian letter mentioned in KBo 18.54 obv. 14 ff. was written by the very same scribe, Zū, who was apparently active in the northern provinces. Note that the Chief of the Scribes is also mentioned, unfortunately in broken context, in KBo 18.54 rev. 6’.⁵⁴

The size of the gap between the obverse and the reverse, including the inscribed lower edge, is not known. Regrettably, the first seven lines on the reverse have only their beginnings left. They apparently dealt with a supply of grains urgently needed to relieve the hunger in the army, a topic frequently recurring in the Mašat letters.⁵⁵ Alternatively, the starvation could describe the situation of the defenders within the beleaguered city, which would tally with the continuation of the letter dealing with an unsuccessful siege:

x+1 *ku-i*[š
 2’ *nu-mu* x[

 3’ *ka-a-ša-ká*[n
 4’ *Ṭ A-NA ÉRIN*^{ME}[š
 5’ *ka-a-aš-ti* x[
 6’ *A-NA GAL DUB.SAR*^{ME}[š
 7’ *nu-uš-ma-aš ḫal-ki-in*[
 (8’)

to be connected to a scribe (^{LÜ}DUB.SAR) who could not(?) / only(?) write in Babylonian. Despite the aberrant writing, *pabili* (written over an erasure) must be the same as the regular *pabilili*.

52 Cf. also HKM 73 sent to Kaššu by the Chief of the Scribes-on-Wood, who could in fact be the same person as the Chief of the Scribes. For these important officials see I. Singer in G. Beckman et al., eds. *Hittite Studies in Honor of Harry A. Hoffner Jr.* (Winona Lake 2003), 341–348.

53 Alp, *Briefe*, 258: (34) *zi-ik-mu* ^m*Zu-u-uš* ŠEŠ.DÜG.G[A-YA] (35) ^{GiS}*mu-úr-ta-an-za EGIR-pa* (36) *PA-BI-LA-Ṭ ḫa-at-ra-a-i*. For the unusual gentilicon *PABILAU* (instead of the customary *babilili*), see Alp, *ib.*, 341.

54 De Martino & Imparati, *op. cit.*, 114. We can only guess the reason for this side-track Akkadian correspondence between Hattuša and Tapikka. Perhaps the Chief of the Scribes, a highly influential official at the Hittite court, was interested to maintain a secret source of information in the northern province, which would be incomprehensible to other officials.

55 For refs. see Alp, *Briefe*, 371; de Martino & Imparati, “Aspects,” 114.

- 9' EN-YA-ia-kán ku-it ^mDu-ut-t[u-un]
 10' e-pu-ra-wa-an-zi pa-ra-a na-^ra[-it-ta/ti]
 11' BÀD-ma pí-ip-pa-wa-an-zi
 12' Ú-UL tar-na-aš nu ka-a-ša
 13' ma-aḥ-ḥa-an e-pu-re-eš-ga-u-en
 14' nu-un-na-aš-kán e-pu-ra-wa-an-zi
 15' Ú-UL ḥa-ap-da-at nu-kán BÀD [GIM-a]_n
 16' kat-ta-an ar-ḥa ḥa-ad-da-an-ni-eš-ki-u-en
 17' na-at Ú-UL ZAG-na-aḥ-ḥu-u-en
 18' nu ma-a-an BÀD ku-wa-pí ar-ḥa Ú-UL pí-ip-pa-an-zi
 19' e-pu-ra-wa-an-zi-ma-kán Ú-UL ḥa-ap-da-ri
 20' ma-a-an EN-YA-ma ki-iš-ša-an te-ši
 21' ku-e-ez-za-wa-kán Ú-UL ḥa-ap-da-ri
 22' nu-kán BÀD ku-it iš-tar-na
 23' E-GA-RU-ma ku-iš 4 še-e-kán
 24' ku-iš-ma 3 še-e-kán
 25' ke-e-ez-za-ma-kán e-pu-re-eš-šar-ra
 26' []¹-e-da-za A-NA ḤI-RI-TI
 left edge
 1 [kat-t]a/[kat-ta-an-d]a pa-it nu-un-na-aš-kán a-pé-ez-za Ú-UL ḥa-ap-da-ri
 2 [k]a-a-aš-ma ^mDu-ut-tu-uš ku-it ú-iz-zi
 3 [x] ma-aḥ-ḥa-an nu e-pu-re-eš-šar ú-da-i
 4 [na-at EN-Y]A a-ú
-
- 5 [A-NA ^DUTU^Š E]N-YA QÍ-BÍ-MA UM-MA ^mZa-ar-na-LÚ ÌR-KA-MA
-
- 6 [MA-ḤAR EN-YA aš-šu-u]l ku-it ma-aḥ-ḥa-an nu-mu EN-YA EGIR-pa ŠU-PUR

(x+1) wh[o/wh[at ... (2') (to) me [... / (3') Behold, [... (4') to the troops[... (5') in hunger [... (6') the Chief of the Scribes [... (7')[... send] them grain [... / (9'–10') Since (you), my lord, have sen[t]/will sen[d]⁵⁶ Dud[u] to besiege, (11'–12') but you did not allow to breach the wall, behold: (13'–15') When we repeatedly laid siege, the besieging was unsuccessful for us; (15'–17') and [when] we tried to undermine the wall we did not manage it (either).

56 The verbal form should probably be in the second person (like *teši* in l. 20), either preterite (*na-a-it-ta*) or present (*na-a-it-ti*); for these spellings see *CHD*, L-N: 349a.

(18'–19') If one does not breach the wall someplace, the besieging will not succeed. (20'–21') If my lord should say thus: “Why does it not succeed?” (22'–24') Because in the midst of the fortress the wall(s) – one is 4 *šekan* (wide) and the other is 3 *šekan* (wide) – (25' – left edge 1) from this, from the first⁵⁷ (wall), the *siege ramp* goes [down (into)] the moat. This is why we do not succeed. (l. e. 2–4) [But be]hold! Since Dudu is coming, as [he arrives(?)] he will bring the (report about) the *siege ramp*. Let m[y lord] inspect [it]! / (l. e. 5–6) [To His Majesty], my lord, say: Thus speaks Zarna-ziti, your servant./ Write back to me, my lord, how is it [with His Majesty]!

This intriguing passage, a rare written consultation between the king and a military commander how to assault a city, is not easy to grasp, and the missing parts at the end obstruct the understanding even more. Many commentators have tried their best to provide a sensible meaning, but this still eludes us.⁵⁸ Regrettably, I cannot claim a full elucidation either, but since the key phrases are either *hapax* or very rarely attested, an *ad sensum* interpretation may perhaps bring us closer to a solution.

The basic situation is of a failed siege of a city, the name of which is not indicated in the preserved parts of the letter. Another commander, Dudu (for whom see below), apparently an expert on siegecraft, was sent or is about to be sent by the king to solve the problem. In order to explain to his lord the difficulties in taking the city, Kaššu provides a detailed description of its fortifications. There seem to be three verbs describing the possible ways to break into the city:⁵⁹ (1) *pippa-* refers to the breaching of the city walls,⁶⁰ and for some reason the king seems to object to this method (l. 11' f.); perhaps he wanted to minimize the number of his casualties or to keep the city intact for a subsequent Hittite occupancy; (2) *kattan arḫa ḫatta-* (l. 16') must refer to undermining or tunnelling underneath the walls;⁶¹ (3) *epurai-*, the most

57 Collation: There is a tiny damaged space at the beginning of line 26', which *could* accomodate more than the vertical of '1'. A [*k*]u- could fit in, but *kuedaza* seems to be attested only in the lexical text KBo 1.35(+)KBo 26.25 iii 10', 42 (corresponding to Akkadian *ayyāniš*, 'where'). So the reading *1-edaza* remains the most plausible, but I wonder whether it could also be adverbially conceived as 'at once'; this would describe the abrupt descent of the terrain from the wall into the moat.

58 See refs. in Hagenbuchner, *Korespondenz*, 59, to which one should add the translated sentences quoted in the Hittite dictionaries. I have discussed the difficulties posed by this passage with Theo van den Hout and I wish to thank him for his valuable comments.

59 Beal, *Organization*, 402. For the same three methods to break into a city, see Eph'al, *Siege*, 66 ff.

60 CHD, P: 269 ff.

61 The simplex *ḫat(ta)-* means 'make a hole', 'pierce', 'penetrate' or the like (HED, H: 248

common verb in the passage, probably means ‘besieging’ the city with a siege ramp.⁶² The attackers continuously failed to take the city through the second and third methods and Kaššu argues that without actually knocking down part of the wall somewhere the siege might not succeed.

There remains a major difficulty with the exact interpretation of the abstract noun *epureššar* derived from *epurai-*. In left edge 2–4 we hear that Dudu brings or will bring (*udai*) an *epureššar*. Unfortunately, the end of the verb *para nai-* in l. 10 is broken, so that we do not know whether Dudu is about to be sent to the beleaguered city or whether he had already arrived there and took part in the siege. In the first case, he is expected to bring an *epureššar* when he comes (left edge 3), which would uneasily fit the meaning ‘siege ramp’. Some movable siege device, such as a battering-ram or a siege tower, would seem more appropriate, unless, we may interpret *udai* in a more abstract way, in the sense that Dudu will bring the necessary know-how for a successful *epureššar*, ‘siegecraft’.⁶³ On the other hand, if Dudu had already participated in the siege and is now being sent back to report about it to the king, then *epureššar udai* may mean to ‘bring (a report of) the siege’, which would actually refer to this very letter.⁶⁴ In any case, a ‘built ramp’ remains presently the most plausible rendering for *epureššar*, a military device used both by the attackers and sometimes also by the defenders of the city.⁶⁵

ff.). The expression *kattan arḥa ḥaddanniškiwen* has usually been rendered “to penetrate completely” (ib.: 254) or the like, but *kattan* should rather be taken as a postposition to BĀD, referring here down or under the fortification. For the conquest of a city by undermining its walls, see Eph’al, *Siege*, 72 ff.; Kern, *Ancient Siege Warfare*, 17.

62 HED, E/I: 282 f.: ‘besiege, dam up’; *HW*², E: 89: “Erdmassen bewegen, also terminus technicus für den Bau einer Rampe, das Auffüllen eines Festungsgrabens (KUB 18.54) und den Bau eines Dammes (KUB 36.89).” Unlikely is the translation “flach machen, planieren” suggested by N. Boysan-Dietrich, *Das hethitische Lehmhaus aus der Sicht der Keilschriftquellen* (Heidelberg 1987), 76. All the etymologies suggested till now are inner-Hittite or Indo-European (refs. in HED, all rejected in *HW*²). One may perhaps consider a borrowing from Akkadian *epêrum*, a recently recognized denominative of *ep(e)rum*, ‘earth, soil’, which is used in Mari exactly in the same sense as *epurai-*, i.e. ‘piling up earth for a siege-ramp’; see J.-M. Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari*, Tome II (Paris 1998), 208 f., 295. For other Akkadian expressions designating the building of a siege ramp, see Eph’al, *Siege*, 82 f.

63 As conceived by Hagenbuchner, *Korespondenz*, 59: “wird er (dass Wissen) um den Rampenbau herbringen“. Could *udai* possibly refer in this context to the advance in the building of the siege-ramp itself, until it butted on the wall? In this case Dudu must already have begun his siege when Kaššu wrote his letter.

64 This possibility was suggested to me by Theo van den Hout, who would like to associate this letter with the description in *Fragment 4* of the Deeds of Šuppiluliuma, for which see below.

65 For the Assyrian siege-ramp and the counter-ramp built by the defenders of Lachish,

Kaššu's explanation of his failure (rev. 22'–left edge 1) provides a rare description of a fortification system in a provincial town.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the passage is replete with syntactic and semantic difficulties, enhanced by the slight damage at the beginning of the last two lines. The description opens with a double fortification wall, which may either refer to an inner and an outer wall, or to a casemate wall.⁶⁷ As mentioned above, the exact length of the *šekan* is not known. If we follow the common translation as a 'span', the resulting 22 cm. or so, would give us 0.88 m. for the first wall, 0.66 m. for the second. This may seem too narrow for a city wall,⁶⁸ but may perhaps be 'sufficient' in a remote provincial stronghold, especially if the space between the walls was filled with rubble as in the typically Anatolian *Kastenmauer*. However, Theo van den Hout has rightly pointed out that both numbers (4 and 3) are followed by an erasure, which may indicate some hesitation or confusion on the part of the scribe.⁶⁹ If, for instance, he wrote *šekan* instead of *gipeššar*, the walls would be much wider, 2 m. and 1.5 m., respectively. The continuation of Kaššu's description is even more puzzling. It may refer to a rampart which slopes down abruptly from the (outer) wall into the moat, obstructing the accessibility of the attackers.⁷⁰ Alternatively, the *epureššar* could refer to a siege ramp built by the attackers which slipped down into the moat. This explanation would also apply if *epureššar* turned out to be a movable assault device, such as a siege tower or a battering-ram.

see I. Eph'al, *Tel Aviv* 11 (1984), 60–69; idem, *Siege*, 79 ff. (with refs. to the excavation reports).

66 Besides the translations of this passage referred to above, see also F. Starke, *BiOr* 49 (1992), 810, n. 21: "Weil innerhalb der Befestigung die eine Mauer 4 Spannen, die andere aber 3 Spannen (beträgt), führte nämlich aus diesem Grunde auch die Rampenanlage (nur) von der einen (Mauer) bis zum Graben hinab ([*kat-t*]a pa-it)".

67 For casemate walls in Anatolia, see Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasien*, 309 ff. and the following note. A similar wall is perhaps described also in the instruction for the border commanders (see above).

68 These are the measurements of the front and the back hanging walls, respectively, at the following sites: Boğazköy, Poternenmauer: 3 m. and 2.70 m.; Büyükkale, Südmauer: 2.20/2 m. and 2.20/2 m.; Büyükkaya: 2,50 m. and 1.80/2 m.; Upper City: 2.10 and 1 m.; Korucutepe: 1.40/1.60 m. and 1.40/1.60 m.; Alişar 11T/10T: 1 m. and 1 m.; Karahüyük Konya: 1.50 m. and 1.50 m.; Tilmen Hüyük IIc: 1.25 m. and 1.25 m. I wish to thank Dr. Tomasso De Vincenzi for providing me these data from his forthcoming papers presented at the 4th ICAANE (Berlin 2004) and the 6th Congress of Hittitology (Roma 2005).

69 *RLA* VII (1990), 519b.

70 Quite often a flat area ('berm') was left in front of the exterior wall to provide access for its maintenance; see Oredsson, *Moats*, 20ff.. Perhaps Kaššu is referring to the difficulty in positioning a siege tower close to the wall.

More evidence is needed to fully clarify this intriguing piece of military architecture.

How did this difficult siege eventually end? This is the sort of question which normally remains shrouded in the mists of history. But due to a creative observation of Theo van den Hout, we may actually restore at least part of the not-so-happy ending of the story. The hypocoristicon Dudu or Tuttu is very common in Hittite sources (and elsewhere), but in his prosopographical studies van den Hout noticed one context which may plausibly be related to the events described in KBo 18.54.⁷¹ *Fragment 4* in the Deeds of Šuppiluliuma recounts the conquest of the city of Šallapa by the grandfather of the author, i.e. Šuppiluliuma's father Tudhaliya II.⁷² Unfortunately, the fragment is in a bad state of preservation and the story must be reconstructed from isolated phrases and vocables. Still, this much seems clear that Tuttu somehow 'neglected' or 'abandoned' (*arḥa pittaleškit*) something⁷³ and the king had to intervene in person in order to complete the city's takeover. He first set the city on fire, but then, since the city belonged to [...], he extinguished it and [set free?] some 'family/clan members' (^{LÚ.MEŠ}AMA.A.TU). Obviously, a lot remains unclear due to the poor preservation of the fragment, and the situation itself could easily apply to some other siege in some other city. Still, the coincidence of the same name, the same period and the similar situation renders the association between the two texts very attractive. The city of Šallapa lies west of the Halys,⁷⁴ quite far from Kaššu's headquarters in Tapikka. But his sphere of activities seems to have been quite extensive according to the Mašat tablets,⁷⁵ and also he may have been transferred and promoted.⁷⁶

Should the connection between Kaššu's letter and *Fragment 4* in the Deeds of Šuppiluliuma prove to be valid, the combined evidence would resemble to a large extent the recurring motif of the incompetent generals scolded by the omnipotent king who eventually has to intervene himself in order to overcome the enemy. But in this case we have the actual field report of the unsuccessful general in the first person.⁷⁷ This should come as

71 *Der Ulmitešub-Vertrag*, 170 f.

72 KUB 19.12 obv.; H.G. Güterbock, *JCS* 10 (1956), 60 f.

73 Remarkably, this phrase has been added in minuscule script between lines 4 and 5. Was it an afterthought meant to condemn the general's unworthy conduct?

74 For the various localization proposals, see G. del Monte & J. Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte* (Wiesbaden 1978), 231.

75 See the concise survey of Beal, *Organisation of the Hittite Military*, 396–407.

76 Ib. 402, n. 1513.

77 For another unvarnished field report of a failing general, see Sh. Izre'el & I. Singer, *The General's Letter from Ugarit* (Tel Aviv 1990).

a warning against the tendency to regard almost every historical narrative as a mere stereotyped topos of political propaganda, with very little, if any, historical value.

I hope that these selected examples taken from the vast corpus of Hittite texts have demonstrated the great potential for integrated philological and archaeological research, a pursuit which has relentlessly been followed by the honoree of this volume.