

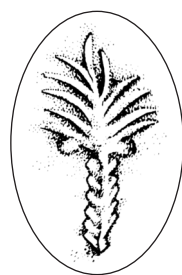
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*Direttore:* CARLO LIPPOLIS

*Comitato scientifico:* GIORGIO BUCCELLATI  
STEFANO DE MARTINO  
ANTONIO INVERNIZZI  
CHRISTINE KEPINSKI  
STEFANIA MAZZONI  
ANDREAS SCHACHNER  
ST JOHN SIMPSON  
ROBERTA VENCO RICCIARDI

*Redazione scientifica:* CARLO LIPPOLIS  
ROBERTA MENEGAZZI

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STEFANO DE MARTINO\*  
THE FALL OF THE HITTITE KINGDOM<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT

The first part of the present essays deals with the time when Ḫatti collapsed and the events related to its fall. Besides, we have tried to investigate four possible causal factors that might have determined the fall of the Hittite kingdom, namely, a situation of shortage of foods, movements of peoples, an economic crisis and, lastly, the break of the political and social network.

KEYWORDS

Hittite kingdom; Sea Peoples; Famine; Collapse.

1. *Premise*

The fall of the Hittite kingdom was a complex process that involved the abandonment of the capital Ḫattuša, the fragmentation of the Hittite kingdom into smaller polities, the breakdown of a centralized system of control over the Anatolian territory, and the disappearance of cuneiform writing as well as the Hittite language.

The events that brought about the fall of the Hittite kingdom have been the focus of several essays published in recent years.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, substantive differences remain among the proposed historical reconstructions.

Furthermore, the collapse of the Hittite kingdom happened at a moment when political and economic crises were afflicting other polities, such as the Mycenaean kingdoms, the communities of Cyprus, and the coastal polities of Syria. Hence, the situation in Anatolia must be viewed in the wider context of the Eastern Mediterranean, and some interdisciplinary conferences have indeed been held on the passage from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, several volumes on the decline, erosion, collapse, and fragmentation of ancient and modern political entities are now available, and thus the fall of the Hittite kingdom can also be studied in the context of global history.<sup>4</sup>

2. *When?*

No Hittite document indicates the exact date of the collapse of the Hittite kingdom. The inscription of Ramesses III on the front of the second pylon in the

Medinet Habu temple states that Ḫatti and its subordinated countries fell victim to the “Sea Peoples” in the eighth year of the reign of this pharaoh. Focusing exclusively on this chronological statement here, we will discuss the reliability of Ramesses III’s inscription in more detail (see § 4.1.2.).

As is well known, there is no agreement concerning the years of Ramesses III’s reign. E. H. Cline,<sup>5</sup> for example, argued that Ramesses III took power in 1184. His regnal years are listed as 1187-1157 in the *Handbook of Egyptian Chronology* edited by E. Hornung, R. Krauss, and D.A. Warburton.<sup>6</sup> Th. Schneider<sup>7</sup> preferred an earlier date and placed the beginning of Ramesses III’s reign in the year 1195. Thus, the Medinet Habu inscriptions cannot be summoned to testify to the exact time when Ḫatti disappeared.

Evidence coming from other archives offers further indications concerning the last years of the Hittite kingdom. The latest securely datable document found in Ugarit is the letter RS 88.2230, sent by the Egyptian official Beya to Ammurapi, the last king of Ugarit. The sender of the letter can be identified as an Egyptian dignitary who was active during the reign of two pharaohs, namely Sety II and Siptah, and died in the fifth year of the reign of the latter king.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the letter presumably dates from the end of the first

\* Dipartimento di Studi Storici, University of Turin.

<sup>1</sup> This research is part of the PRIN Project (2015) “L’Anatolia antica: politiche imperiali e culture locali tra XV e VII secolo a.C. Problemi di etnicità, assetti urbani e territoriali, tradizione e innovazione”.

In the present essay I call Ḫattušili II the brother of Muwatalli II; he is also known as Ḫattušili III in the secondary literature. His son and follower was Tuthaliya III, who is also called Tuthaliya IV.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, OTTEN 1983; HOFFNER 1989; GIORGIERI, MORA 1996; SINGER 2000; HAWKINS 2002; DE MARTINO 2009; FREU 2009; STROBEL 2011; CLINE 2014.

<sup>3</sup> See WARD, JOUKOWSKI 1992; GITIN, MAZAR, STERN 1998; FISCHER *et alii* 2003; BACHHUBER, ROBERTS 2009.

<sup>4</sup> See TAINTER 1988; YOFFEE, COWGILL 1988; DEVER 1989; SCHWARTZ, NICHOLS 2006; McANANY, YOFFEE 2010; DIAMOND 2011; see also the proceedings (in press) of the conference held at Hildesheim on “The End of Empires. Decline, Erosion and Implosion” (October 2018).

<sup>5</sup> CLINE 2014.

<sup>6</sup> HORNUNG, KRAUSS, WARBURTON 2006.

<sup>7</sup> SCHNEIDER 2010.

<sup>8</sup> See SINGER 1999, 713-714; FREU 2006, 228-234; 2009, 23; KLINGER 2006, 213, n. 92; CLINE 2014, 109.

decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE and indicates that Ugarit had not yet been attacked at that time.

Furthermore, the Ugaritic *omen* RS 12.061 records an eclipse of the sun that M. Dietrich and O. Loretz<sup>9</sup> date to the year 1192 and hence confirms that Ugarit was not destroyed before the beginning of the second decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

If the Hittite kingdom had collapsed before this date, we assume that such a dramatic event would have been reported in the tablets found in Ugarit, but the hypothesis that Ḫatti disappeared after 1192 BCE is only supported by evidence *ex silentio*.

The Ugaritic letter RS 4.475<sup>10</sup> alludes to a lost battle. The sender of the letter, who bears the Hurrian name of Ewri-Šarri, relates what he heard from Tarḫuntišši and Kalbaya about the negative result of a military conflict. The two aforementioned individuals may be officials of the Hittite army, but we have no other information on them, apart from the fact that Kalbaya bears a Semitic name, whereas Tarḫuntišši is a Luwian name.<sup>11</sup> This document presumably refers to the dramatic events that affected Ḫatti before its ultimate collapse, but its exact historical and chronological context is unknown.

The city of Ugarit also was in danger, as a letter found in the Urtenu archive (RS 94.2169) demonstrates; in fact, it contains an urgent request for military support in order to counter groups of enemies who are approaching Ugarit. The author of this letter was the last king of Ugarit, whereas the intended recipient presumably was the king of Karkemiš. The letter was found at Ugarit and hence was never sent, which suggests that it was written on the eve of the city's destruction.<sup>12</sup> Another letter, RS 16.402,<sup>13</sup> contains a dramatic report made by an official to the queen of Ugarit. The sender writes that enemies are approaching from Mukiš, whereas he is near Mount Amanus;<sup>14</sup> furthermore, he repeats his previously unsuccessful request for two thousand horses.

We can compare the aforementioned Ugaritic documents with an unpublished text from Tell Sabi Abyad (T 93-12), where Ilī-īpadda asks for information on Ḫatti. This passage has been interpreted as evidence that news of either the fall of Ḫatti or a grave emergency in the kingdom had reached the Assyrian court.<sup>15</sup>

The legal document Emar 26, which was part of a small archive or cache found in House 5 in area A,<sup>16</sup> mentions the second year of the reign of the Cassite king Meli-Šipak, who ascended to the throne in the year 1187<sup>17</sup> and thus demonstrates that Emar was still standing in 1185 BCE.

Y. Cohen<sup>18</sup> assumed that Emar survived, though for a short time, after the Hittite kingdom collapsed. In fact, unlike his predecessors, the last "overseer" of Emar does not bear a name of Hurro-Hittite tradition but a Semitic name, and this may mean that he was politically independent from Ḫatti.

Lastly, two Emar texts<sup>19</sup> mention the terrible year when the *tarwa* troops, or hordes, besieged the city. We are unable to specify who this enemy actually was; nevertheless, this fact may be related to the events that brought about the fall of Emar.<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion, all the aforementioned documents support the assumption that Ḫatti collapsed in the second decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and presumably before Ugarit and Emar were attacked.

### 3. What Happened?

#### 3.1. The Abandonment of Ḫattuša

J. Seeher<sup>21</sup> demonstrated that the Hittite capital was abandoned and the official buildings were meticulously cleaned out.<sup>22</sup> We can exclude that the city was looted by enemies, because there are no traces of fighting; if the capital had been attacked or plundered, either smashed pottery or pieces fallen from the hands of the looters should have been found; besides, the domestic quarters were not burnt.<sup>23</sup> The only possible explanation is that the court moved to another place to which it transported all the temple inventories and precious goods.

Concerning the tablet collection discovered at Boğazköy, the scarcity of documents datable from the time of the last king, Šuppiluliuma II, may be explained by assuming that the most significant texts were moved to another place.<sup>24</sup>

After the court left Ḫattuša, occupation was reduced to small areas in the former Hittite city.<sup>25</sup> Some of the city gates were blocked, presumably because the inhabitants felt insecure and were no longer able to control the whole extent of the city walls.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>9</sup> DIETRICH, LORETZ 2002.

<sup>10</sup> See CUNCHILLOS 1989, 275-280; SINGER 1999, 726-727.

<sup>11</sup> See CUNCHILLOS 1989, 277 nn. 7 and 8.

<sup>12</sup> See LACKENBACHER, MALBRAN-LABAT 2016, 33-35.

<sup>13</sup> See CUNCHILLOS 1989, 325-340; SINGER 1999, 724-725; 2017, 624; FINK 2010, 140; DEVECCHI in press.

<sup>14</sup> See SINGER 1999, 724 n. 411.

<sup>15</sup> See COHEN, D'ALFONSO 2008, 15 n. 54; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>16</sup> See COHEN, SINGER 2006, 134; COHEN 2009.

<sup>17</sup> See BRINKMAN 2017.

<sup>18</sup> COHEN 2012.

<sup>19</sup> See ARNAUD 1991, ns 25 and 44.

<sup>20</sup> See SINGER 2000, 25; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>21</sup> SEEHER 1988; 2001.

<sup>22</sup> See SCHACHNER 2011; 112-113; GENZ 2013.

<sup>23</sup> See GENZ 2013.

<sup>24</sup> See BEMPORAD 2006, 74; KLINGER 2015, 99; also see here § 4.5.

<sup>25</sup> See KEALHOFER *et alii* 2009; SEEHER 2018, 89-90.

<sup>26</sup> See SEEHER 1988; GENZ 2013, 471.

A progressive impoverishment affected the city, as the production of ceramic artefacts clearly demonstrates. During the period immediately following the abandonment of Ḫattuša by the court, the majority of the pottery is hand-made, but pieces of wheel-made pottery can still be found. H. Genz<sup>27</sup> argued that “the short-lived continuation of Hittite pottery traditions is best explained by the assumption that parts of the Hittite population remained at the site”.<sup>28</sup> But, in the following period, presumably after one generation, the Hittite tradition completely disappeared and only hand-made pottery was produced.<sup>29</sup>

One may assume that after the abandonment of Ḫattuša and the disappearance of the Hittite system of control and administration, some of north Anatolian sites were attacked by the Kaška tribes. Several clues support the assumption that the Kaška survived the crisis of the Late Bronze Age and eventually profited from the power vacuum that the fall of Ḫatti caused.<sup>30</sup> J. Seeher<sup>31</sup> examined in depth the origin of the peoples who settled Boğazköy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and assumed that they may indeed have been Kaška tribes. Furthermore, as H. Genz<sup>32</sup> argued, the pottery groups, which were known in the Early and Middle Bronze Age, but no longer documented in the Hittite age, reappeared in the region of Ḫattuša in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and hence this phenomenon could actually be attributed to the Kaška. In fact, some Kaška tribes may have maintained their old pottery traditions and eventually diffused them when they settled at sites that were formerly part of Ḫatti. In addition, J. Seeher<sup>33</sup> supposed that the wheel-made pieces of pottery which are documented at Büyükkaya in the years immediately after the court left the city were not the work of Hittite artisans, but of new workshops. If the new potters actually were Kaška, they may initially have produced vases, exemplars of which were diffused during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE in the peripheral regions of northern Anatolia; instead, they eventually abandoned these “Hittite models”, which lost their attractiveness as soon as Ḫatti collapsed.

The abandonment of Ḫattuša is not comparable with the earlier shift of the royal residence to Tarḫuntašša at the time of Muwattalli II.<sup>34</sup> In fact, this king left the government of Ḫattuša to the high official Mitannamuwa, and the former capital remained one of the most important Hittite cities, though it suffered a decline.<sup>35</sup>

We are unable to determine the causes and expectations that led the court to abandon Ḫattuša. Despite this, we assume that the last king of Ḫatti considered the countryside around Ḫattuša to be no longer productive – a result of the overstressing of resources during the previous centuries. Besides, the strong competition between the Hittite central government and the subordinated Anatolian polities (see § 4.4.) presumably pushed the last king of Ḫatti to move the

seat of his power closer to Tarḫuntašša, Karkemiš, and Ugarit, with the aim of maintaining a stricter control over these kingdoms.

As for the location of the new residence, M. Forlanini<sup>36</sup> assumed that the court moved to central Cappadocia, where the first Hittite rulers came from. As we will see later, elements indicating cultural continuity with the tradition of Ḫatti actually seem to have survived in this region, though no documents datable from the first three centuries of the Iron Age were found there and the rulers of Tabal did not play a significant political role before the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>37</sup> Besides, H. Genz<sup>38</sup> argued that the Hittite court may have chosen a site in south or southeast Anatolia, and this region indeed preserves aspects of the Luwian and Hittite tradition.<sup>39</sup> Lastly, T. Bryce<sup>40</sup> supposed that Šuppiluliuma II moved to the region of Maraş, but we have to keep in mind that none of these conjectures are supported by convincing evidence.

### 3.2. *The Other Sites*

As far as the core of the Hittite kingdom is concerned, at Kuşaklı/Şarišša (in the province of Sivas) some of the city buildings were destroyed by fire;<sup>41</sup> the inhabitants either left the city or were killed, and very few people settled there in the period that A. Müller-Karpe<sup>42</sup> labelled “Sub-Hittite”.

The excavations conducted at Yassıhöyük/Gordion, in west-central Turkey, did not discover traces of a destruction at the end of the Late Bronze Age; despite this, significant changes in the material culture can be detected in the Early Iron Age levels.<sup>43</sup> M. Voigt<sup>44</sup> argued that the Late Bronze inhabitants of Yassıhöyük

<sup>27</sup> GENZ 2013, 474.

<sup>28</sup> See also SEEHER 2018, 104.

<sup>29</sup> See GENZ 2000; 2003; 2004; KEALHOFER *et alii* 2009.

<sup>30</sup> See SINGER 2007, 177-178.

<sup>31</sup> SEEHER 2010.

<sup>32</sup> GENZ 2003, 187; 2004, 48-49.

<sup>33</sup> SEEHER 2000.

<sup>34</sup> See FREU 2009, 256.

<sup>35</sup> For example, the temples of the Upper Cities were no longer in use and some of the architectural works remained unfinished, such as the decoration of the “Lions Gate” (SCHACHNER 2011, 92-93, 159, 181).

<sup>36</sup> FORLANINI 2013, 74.

<sup>37</sup> See HAWKINS 2000, 426-428.

<sup>38</sup> GENZ 2013, 472.

<sup>39</sup> Also SEEHER (2018, 103) argued that the court moved to a place which was located in the southern part of Anatolia.

<sup>40</sup> BRYCE 2012, 124.

<sup>41</sup> See MÜLLER-KARPE 1996; IDEM 2004.

<sup>42</sup> MÜLLER-KARPE 2017, 61.

<sup>43</sup> See HENRICKSON 1994; VOIGT, HENRICKSON 2000.

<sup>44</sup> VOIGT 2011, 1079.

left their home at the time of the collapse of the Hittite kingdom and new peoples settled there.<sup>45</sup>

The site of Kaman-Kalehöyük, which is located in Central Anatolia, does not seem to have suffered any destruction<sup>46</sup>. The surveys conducted by L. D'Alfonso<sup>47</sup> in the region of northern Tyanitis also give clear hints in support of the assumption of a continuity in settlement between the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age in this area of Anatolia.

In eastern Anatolia the sites of Norşuntepe, Tepecik, and İmikuşağı were also set on fire,<sup>48</sup> whereas Malatya presents an interrupted settlement continuity between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age.<sup>49</sup> This city was under the political control of Karkemiš during the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>50</sup> and was eventually destroyed at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE, though the site continued to be inhabited through the following centuries.

Concerning south-eastern Anatolia, several sites show clear and dramatic traces of destruction and abandonment,<sup>51</sup> such as Kilise-tepe,<sup>52</sup> Tarsus-Gözlükule,<sup>53</sup> and Kinet Höyük.<sup>54</sup>

A situation of general impoverishment is recognizable at Kinet; in fact, during the Bronze Age a consistent proportion of the food consumed there consisted of large fish, which were presumably caught in the open sea by professional fisher-men. In the period after the fall of Ḫatti, faunal remains show the transition from a maritime economy to an essentially agricultural one.<sup>55</sup> One may assume that the general feeling of insecurity along the maritime routes in the Eastern Mediterranean may have made fishing on the high seas more difficult.

The phases IIa-c at Kilise Tepe, which correspond to the life of the so called “Stele Building” and presumably date from the last years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, present significant cultural changes and a shift away from the Hittite tradition;<sup>56</sup> hence, N. Postgate<sup>57</sup> assumed that Tarḫuntašša may have severed its political ties with Ḫatti, even before the collapse of the central Hittite government. A clue to the hypothesis of the political “autonomy” of Tarḫuntašša can be found in the ceramics, which no longer show the traits of Hittite standardised production.<sup>58</sup>

The polity of Karkemiš did not suffer any destruction,<sup>59</sup> presumably because it was located far from the coast. Furthermore, the fall of Ḫatti allowed Kuzi-Teššob to inherit the prestige of the Hittite royal dynasty, and he assumed the title of Great King and expanded the territories under his control.<sup>60</sup> By contrast, the temple of the Storm God in Aleppo was presumably set on fire and destroyed at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>61</sup> Besides, the Late Bronze Age levels also end with a destruction at Tell Afis.<sup>62</sup>

Moving on to the sites on the Syrian coast, Ugarit was pillaged, abandoned, and eventually destroyed; the site was abandoned at that time and there are no

traces of reoccupation, apart from the fact that groups of squatters re-used the ruined buildings.<sup>63</sup> The city of Tell Tweini/Gibala, which was part of the kingdom of Ugarit, was presumably destroyed some time before the capital; in fact, the sporadic finds of LH IIIC sherds in the destruction levels at this site support the assumption that Tell Tweini was already abandoned in the first years of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE,<sup>64</sup> though it was eventually resettled.<sup>65</sup>

Tell Kazel, which is in the Akkar Plain and may be identified with the city of Sumur, was destroyed and abandoned; it was re-settled for a short time until it was set on fire and severely destroyed. R. Jung<sup>66</sup> examined the distribution of Late Helladic pottery in the levels, respectively, of the final phase of the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age and argued that the first destruction of Tell Kazel could correspond to the time when LH IIIC Early pottery started to appear in the Levant.

To sum up, some of the northern and central Anatolian sites that belonged to the Hittite kingdom were attacked and destroyed, and we assume that the Kaška tribes may have been responsible for some of these attacks. Elsewhere, the events related to the fall of Ḫatti affected less dramatically the centres at the west and south of Ḫattuša, such as Yassihöyük and Kaman-Kalehöyük. Lastly, quite all the sites located on the coast of Anatolia and Syria were destroyed and abandoned.

<sup>45</sup> See also SEEHER 2018, 102-103; nevertheless see GENZ 2003, 185 for a different point of view.

<sup>46</sup> See MATSAMURA 2008; MATSAMURA, WEEDEN 2017, 112-113.

<sup>47</sup> D'ALFONSO 2010.

<sup>48</sup> See KÖRÖĞLU 2003.

<sup>49</sup> See FRANGIPANE, LIVERANI 2013; FRANGIPANE *et alii* 2018.

<sup>50</sup> See WEEDEN 2013, 8; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>51</sup> See LEHMAN 2017, 237.

<sup>52</sup> See HANSEN, POSTGATE 1999; POSTGATE, THOMAS 2007, 121-163.

<sup>53</sup> See YALÇIN 2013.

<sup>54</sup> See GATES 2013.

<sup>55</sup> See IKRAM 2013.

<sup>56</sup> See POSTGATE, THOMAS 2007.

<sup>57</sup> POSTGATE 2007.

<sup>58</sup> See SUMMERS 2017; see also n. 121. Despite this, we cannot exclude the assumption that a local production, with regional features, coexisted with the large-scale centralized manufacturing of pottery (see GLATZ 2012).

<sup>59</sup> See MARCHETTI 2016.

<sup>60</sup> See HAWKINS 1988; also see here § 4.5.

<sup>61</sup> See MATTHIAE 2018, 314.

<sup>62</sup> See VENTURI 2013.

<sup>63</sup> See YON 1989; CAUBET 1989; CASANA 2017.

<sup>64</sup> See BRETSCHNEIDER *et alii* 2008.

<sup>65</sup> See BRETSCHNEIDER, VAN VYVE, JANS 2011.

<sup>66</sup> JUNG 2007.

### 3.3. *Is there any evidence for the survival of the Hittite dynasty after Šuppiluliuma II?*

Šuppiluliuma II is the last Hittite king known to us. The treaty concluded between Šuppiluliuma II and Talmi-Teššob of Karkemiš (KUB 26.25 + KBo 12.30)<sup>67</sup> contains provisions of loyalty towards the Hittite king. Paragraph 15 preserves the oath sworn by the king of Karkemiš to protect Šuppiluliuma II and his son, but aside from this we do not have further information concerning any of Šuppiluliuma II's sons. Thus, we are unable to determine whether one of them was alive at the time of the king's death and inherited the throne.

C. Mora<sup>68</sup> assumed that a king by the name of Tuḫaliya might have ruled as a son and follower of Šuppiluliuma II, and attributed to this king the seal impression Bo 726/z. Instead, Z. Simon<sup>69</sup> argued that the aforementioned seal impression mentioned Šuppiluliuma II's father, King Tuḫaliya III.

Notwithstanding, the existence of a king by the name of Tuḫaliya, who may have reigned after Šuppiluliuma II, was asserted by Z. Simon<sup>70</sup> on the basis of a document that was not yet available when C. Mora wrote her essay. Simon identified this Tuḫaliya with the individual mentioned in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription (no. 1) on a silver bowl preserved in the Ankara Museum.<sup>71</sup> As matter of fact, the inscription on the Ankara bowl presents several interpretative difficulties, concerning not only the mentioned personal names and place names, but also the date when the two inscriptions were engraved. Despite this, the most convincing scenario is that the personage by the name of Tuḫaliya who is documented by the Ankara silver bowl was a king of Karkemiš who ruled after the fall of the Hittite kingdom,<sup>72</sup> and successfully campaigned in Syria.<sup>73</sup> In conclusion, the available sources do not give any information concerning any direct successor of Šuppiluliuma II.

As was already stated, the ruling family of Karkemiš, which was a branch of the Hittite royal house, maintained control of its country and Kuzi-Teššob even bore the title of "Great King", after the disappearance of Ḫatti.<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, the Karahöyük stele<sup>75</sup> preserves a Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription that may date from the late 13<sup>th</sup> or the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>76</sup> and contains a dedication made by a local official<sup>77</sup> named Armanani, on the occasion of the arrival of the Great King Ir-Teššob.<sup>78</sup>

We are unable to say who this Great King actually was. F. Giusfredi<sup>79</sup> argued that Ir-Teššob was a scribal error for the name of Ini-Teššob, and, hence, he may be identified with the sovereign who preceded Kuzi-Teššob; nonetheless, it has been argued that Ini-Teššob never bore the imperial title,<sup>80</sup> and, besides, the misspelling of a well-known personal name is unlikely.<sup>81</sup>

Instead, T. Bryce and Z. Simon<sup>82</sup> assumed that Ir-Teššob was a member of the royal house of Karkemiš and a successor of Kuzi-Teššob, who was able to expand his reign and conquer the eastern Anatolian regions previously belonging to Ḫatti. Hence, M. Weeden,<sup>83</sup> though doubtfully, inserted Ir-Teššob among the kings of Karkemiš. Furthermore, D. Hawkins and M. Weeden<sup>84</sup> argued that the style and content of the inscriptions of Karahöyük, Kızıldağ, Karadağ, Karkemiš, and Malatya point to the assumption that there was, in south-eastern Anatolia, a cultural unit, if not a political entity, which survived the fall of the Hittite kingdom. Thus, one cannot exclude the possibility that Ir-Teššob actually ruled an Anatolian polity that was a product of the fragmentation of the Hittite kingdom.

As for the royal family of Tarḫuntašša, which descended from Muwatalli II, a king by the name of Hartapu, son of Muršili, is documented in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions at the sites of Kızıldağ, Karadağ, and Burunkaya. J.D. Hawkins<sup>85</sup> argued that this Hartapu was a son of Muršili III,<sup>86</sup> who claimed the title of "Great King" as a "lineal descendant of Suppiluliuma I through Muwatalli and Urḫi-Tešub or Kurunta".<sup>87</sup>

The question whether Hartapu ruled at the end of the Hittite kingdom or after its fall has been widely discussed.<sup>88</sup> L. D'Alfonso<sup>89</sup> assumed that Harta-

<sup>67</sup> See DEVECCHI 2015, 238-241 with previous literature.

<sup>68</sup> MORA 1988.

<sup>69</sup> SIMON 2009, 259-260 n. 19.

<sup>70</sup> SIMON 2009; see also STROBEL 2010; 2011, 199.

<sup>71</sup> See HAWKINS 1997, 2004, and the literature quoted by GANDER 2015, 462 n. 79.

<sup>72</sup> See WEEDEN 2013, 7-8; GIUSFREDI 2013; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>73</sup> The site of Tarwiza, which is mentioned in the Ankara bowl inscription, may have been located in Syria, as MORA (2007) argued.

<sup>74</sup> See HAWKINS 1988.

<sup>75</sup> See HAWKINS 2000, 288-295.

<sup>76</sup> See GIUSFREDI 2010, 41-42; HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>77</sup> The name of the country is written logographically and cannot be read. See HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>78</sup> The reading of the king's name is conjectural, since it is written half-logographically; SIMON 2013, 828, assumed that it may also be read as a Luwian name (for example, Yarrī-Tarhunzas).

<sup>79</sup> GIUSFREDI 2010, 42.

<sup>80</sup> See SIMON 2013, 826.

<sup>81</sup> See HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10.

<sup>82</sup> BRYCE 2012, 85-86; SIMON 2013, 824.

<sup>83</sup> WEEDEN 2013, 9.

<sup>84</sup> HAWKINS, WEEDEN 2016, 10-11.

<sup>85</sup> HAWKINS 1992, 270.

<sup>86</sup> See also SINGER 1996; SIMON 2009, 263-264; CAMMAROSANO 2009, 197.

<sup>87</sup> HAWKINS 2002, 148; see also BRYCE 2012, 21-22.

<sup>88</sup> SIMON 2009, 263, and nn. 28-29 with previous literature; see also MORA, D'ALFONSO (2012, 387), who share the assumption that Hartapu ruled at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

<sup>89</sup> D'ALFONSO 2014.



pu inherited the throne of his uncle Kuruntiya and reigned after him, presumably as a contemporary of Šuppiluliuma II.<sup>90</sup> A lower date for the reign of Hartapu was assumed by J. Freu and K. Strobel,<sup>91</sup> who concluded that this ruler was not a son of Muršili III but a later descendant. Taking a different approach, R. Oreshko,<sup>92</sup> by re-interpreting some passages of the Kızıldağ and Karadağ inscriptions, argued that Hartapu was a ruler of the western Anatolian polity of Maša and the son of a king by the name of Myrsilos, or Myrtilos, who reigned in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE.

Another personage who may be related to the royal family of Tarḫuntašša is Šaušgaruntiya. His name occurs on two seal impressions from the Nişantepe archive (nos. 376 and 377),<sup>93</sup> where he bears the titles of Prince (REX.FILUS) of Tarḫuntašša, MAGNUS.SCRIBA, and MAGNUS.DOMUS.FILIUS. This individual also occurs in the tablet IBoT 1 31 obv. 11, 17 in passages that refer to a military expedition in the land of Azzi, presumably conducted by Tuḫaliya III.<sup>94</sup> The name of Šaušgaruntiya is also mentioned in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription found in the village of Köylütöluyayla;<sup>95</sup> Šaušgaruntiya bears here the titles of REX.FILIUS, MAGNUS.DOMINUS.FILIUS, and L.283.DOMINUS. The fact that this inscription was found in a territory on the border between Tarḫuntašša and Ḫatti, along with the titles borne by Šaušgaruntiya in the Köylütöluyayla inscription as well as in the two aforementioned seal impressions, support the assumption that all these documents refer to the same personage. M. Marizza<sup>96</sup> inferred from this evidence that Šaušgaruntiya may have been one of Kuruntiya's sons, or at least a member of his family.

#### 4. The possible causal factors of the collapse

##### 4.1. Drought and Famine?

Climate and environmental changes have often been considered as to be the primary drivers of the political and economic crisis that affected some regions in the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the Late Bronze Age, but this assumption is not universally accepted. Since A.B. Knapp and St. W. Manning<sup>97</sup> have accurately reviewed the most significant and recent publications on this topic, I will limit myself here to summarizing some key points.

Davis Kaniewski and his team investigated in depth whether climate and environmental changes actually occurred in Anatolia and Syria at the end of the Late Bronze Age; they reached the conclusion that there was a shift to a more arid climate, which indeed was the ultimate cause of economic crisis and the collapse of several Near Eastern societies.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, correlating archaeological and histori-

cal evidence with the results of scientific analyses is a difficult task. The main problem consists in the lack of “high-resolution information”, which could be connected to either political events or archaeological data, that may be correlated with the exact chronology of the detected climate changes.<sup>99</sup> We can only state that “based on a series of proxy indicators, there is clearly some sort of shift to cooler and arid instable conditions generally between the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., but not necessarily any one key «episode»”.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, Kuzucuoğlu<sup>101</sup> argued that the climate was dry during the whole second millennium BCE, but Anatolian societies were able to successfully resist such climatic conditions for centuries; in fact, the Hittite kingdom was a long-lasting political entity that flourished for more than 450 years in an environmental situation that presumably was not much different from that of the Middle Bronze Age, thus showing a high level of adaptability to unfavourable conditions.<sup>102</sup>

The limits of Hittite agricultural resources and the necessity of feeding the people living in and around Ḫattuša led the rulers of Ḫatti to invest resources in the construction of large grain-storage complexes. One of these lies in Ḫattuša, close to the “postern wall”, and dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Silo pits, datable from the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, have been found at Büyükkaya, in the north-eastern area of Ḫattuša. Granaries had also been built in other Hittite cities, such as the huge silo in Šarišša (Kuşaklı), which dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>103</sup>

The Hittite kings also sponsored the building of water reservoirs, ponds, and dams in Ḫattuša, and in other regions of Anatolia as well, in order to assure the availability of water throughout the year. Water management seems to have been one of the most significant duties of the Hittite sovereigns. The old-

<sup>90</sup> MATSAMURA 2008 argued that Hartapu should be dated at the end of the Hittite kingdom, when the red-painted pottery was widely diffused in Central Anatolia, and assumed that this pottery was a cultural marker of the polity ruled by Hartapu.

<sup>91</sup> FREU 2005; STROBEL 2011.

<sup>92</sup> ORESHKO 2017.

<sup>93</sup> See HERBERT 2005, 181-182.

<sup>94</sup> See MARIZZA 2006, 166-168; CAMMAROSANO, MARIZZA 2015.

<sup>95</sup> See EHRINGHAUS 2005, 47-48.

<sup>96</sup> MARIZZA 2006, 168.

<sup>97</sup> KNAPP, MANNING 2016.

<sup>98</sup> See KANIEWSKI *et alii* 2010; KANIEWSKI, GUIOT, VAN CAMPO 2015.

<sup>99</sup> See KNAPP, MANNING 2016, 113-118.

<sup>100</sup> KNAPP, MANNING 2016, 137.

<sup>101</sup> See KUZUCUOĞLU 2015, 32.

<sup>102</sup> See ROBERTS 2017.

<sup>103</sup> See SEEHER 2007; DÖRFLER *et alii* 2011, 108-113; SCHACHERNER 2011, 234-242.

est water facilities date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE, whereas the most recent are the work of the last Hittite kings and date from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>104</sup>

Since some Hittite water supplies precede the period immediately before the collapse of the Hittite kingdom, one cannot assume that a state of emergency, due to a period of below-average precipitation during the last decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, obliged the last kings of the Hittite dynasty<sup>105</sup> to engage in more intensive activity in this sector.

Besides their practical function, water supplies also had a political purpose, as indicated by the inscriptions and decorations that characterize some of these reservoirs, such as those of Yalbur, Eflatun, Pinar, and the Südburg;<sup>106</sup> in fact, these structures established “not only physical but also mental and ideological control over the territory”, as Schachner wrote.<sup>107</sup> Hence, such reservoirs, which date from the last phase of the Hittite kingdom, might also have been built with the aim of reinforcing the presence and authority of the king all over Anatolia.

Despite the Hittite effort to prevent the consequences of periods of drought, it is indubitable that the political, administrative, and military complexity of the Hittite kingdom called for high levels of extraction of natural resources, which presumably led to a continual and cumulative “over-stressing” of the Anatolian environment.<sup>108</sup>

The assumption that dramatic climate changes affected Anatolia during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE was often supported by quoting some Hittite and Ugaritic texts.<sup>109</sup> To my knowledge, only J. Klinger<sup>110</sup> has questioned the relevance of these documents to the discussion on environmental conditions in Anatolia at the end of the Late Bronze Age. I present here an analysis of the most significant texts on this topic, namely KUB 21.38, KUB 3.34, Bo 2810, RS 20.212, and KUB 40.91 +, which, in my opinion, do not demonstrate that Hatti suffered from a sudden and dramatic shortage of food.

KUB 21.38 is a fragmentary draft, written in Hittite, of a letter to be sent to the pharaoh; the sender can be identified with the Hittite queen Pudu-Ḫeba, whereas the intended recipient was Ramesses II.<sup>111</sup>

Since we have only a draft at our disposal, we cannot say whether the letter was ever sent. The letter deals with the inter-dynastic marriage between a daughter of the Hittite king and the Pharaoh. KUB 21.38 is a masterpiece of political ability and communication; in fact, Pudu-Ḫeba several times stresses her intention to conclude the marriage, but at the same time seeks to delay it until she is sure that her daughter will obtain a high position at the Egyptian court.

The Hittite queen, thus, expresses her concern that the Hittite princess may be relegated to a secondary role and sent into a peripheral harem. Moreover, Pudu-Ḫeba, though not explicitly, demands that

Ramesses II renounces his offer of protection to the former Hittite king, Muršili III/Urḫi-Teššob, exiled by Ḫattušili II. She pretends to be unable to give a dowry to her daughter because Urḫi-Teššob squandered all the resources of the kingdom. The Hittite queen also writes: “(obv. 17'-18') What civilian captives, cattle, and sheep should I give (as a dowry) to my daughter? In my land do I not even have barley?”<sup>112</sup> Despite this, she assures the pharaoh that she will send captives, cattle, and sheep as soon as an Egyptian messenger reaches the Hittite court. Pudu-Ḫeba complains that the pharaoh did not promptly send his messenger back to Ḫattuša, and this is the reason why the Hittite messenger was also detained and the promised captives, cattle, and sheep were not yet on the road to Egypt.

Diplomatic relations between Great Kings required the quick and reciprocal exchange of messengers, and the pharaoh's delay in sending his messenger back to Hatti displeased the Hittite court. Hence, we cannot infer from the quoted passage of this letter that there was a real state of famine in the Hittite kingdom, and the queen's statement more probably is only an excuse to explain the delay in the conclusion of the arrangements for the royal wedding.

The tablet KUB 3.34<sup>113</sup> is a letter sent by the pharaoh to a Hittite king. Though the text is fragmentary and the first lines are lacking, the sender presumably was Ramesses II and the receiver either Ḫattušili II or Tutḫaliya III.<sup>114</sup>

The preserved part of this letter starts with the quotation of a previous message written to the pharaoh by the Hittite king, who announced the departure of the royal prince Ḫešmi-Šarruma for Egypt.<sup>115</sup> The pharaoh answers that Ḫešmi-Šarruma actually arrived in Egypt in winter, and departed for Anatolia when spring came. The Hittite prince was escorted by three Egyptian officials, namely Aya, Naḫḫa, and Leya, who were charged with giving a “great present” to the Hittite king. The three Egyptian envoys

<sup>104</sup> See HÜSER 2007; SCHACHNER 2011, 227-234; SCHACHNER 2012; SCHACHNER, WITTENBERG 2012.

<sup>105</sup> As MÜLLER-KARPE 2007, 140, argued, the so-called Chamber 2 was built after the dam and the reservoir had been completed. Concerning the date of the Hieroglyphic inscription see n. 198.

<sup>106</sup> See also BACHMANN 2017.

<sup>107</sup> SCHACHNER 2017, 41.

<sup>108</sup> See ROBERTS 2017; SCHACHNER 2017.

<sup>109</sup> See KLENGEL 1974; SINGER 1999, 715-719; 2017; YAKAR 2006; DIVON; 2008; CLINE 2014, 142-147.

<sup>110</sup> KLINGER 2015, 88 n. 4.

<sup>111</sup> See HOFFNER 2009, 281-290; CORDANI 2017, 103-111.

<sup>112</sup> So MILLER 2016.

<sup>113</sup> See EDEL 1994a, 182-185; CORDANI 2017, 148-150.

<sup>114</sup> See EDEL 1994b, 274-282.

<sup>115</sup> On this personage see VAN DEN HOUT 1995, 127-132.

are dignitaries of high rank and Naḥḥa seems to have also been an expert in “hydraulic engineering”.<sup>116</sup> The last portion of KUB 3.34 deals with the shipping of barley and grain from Egypt to Ḫatti, and this might have been the “great present” donated by the pharaoh.<sup>117</sup>

The tablet Bo 2810 preserves a letter written in Hittite.<sup>118</sup> Since the tablet is fragmentary, neither the name of the sender nor that of the receiver is known; despite this, it is generally assumed that the sender may have been the Hittite king, whereas the receiver presumably was either the ruler of a Syrian polity subordinated to the Great King of Ḫatti, or, less probably, a Hittite dignitary in service in Syria. The tablet Bo 2810 was found in the Hittite capital; hence, it must be a draft of a letter to be translated into Akkadian, unless we suppose that the letter was never sent.

The sender firmly orders the receiver to maintain control of his own land. Besides, the sender complains that the addressee retained in his harbour several grain-laden ships<sup>119</sup> and asserts: “(obv. 11-12) Don’t you realize, my son, that there has been a famine in my lands?”.<sup>120</sup> Then, the sender asks that the ships immediately sail either to Ura, or to a city whose name is fragmentary (Lašti[-]).

It is undoubtable that this text refers to the necessity of acquiring cereals abroad, presumably for Southern Anatolians, but despite this, we are unable to put the document in proper perspective because we do not know which Hittite king authored the letter and to whom it was addressed, nor do we know when the letter was drafted, or indeed whether it was ever sent. In my opinion, the letter only supports the assumption that the Hittite kingdom had been importing cereals from countries such as Egypt and Syria, presumably because the regular maritime shipping had been interrupted. Thus, Singer and Forlanini<sup>121</sup> argued that the designation of Ura as the final destination of the ships, instead of the closer harbours of Kizzuwatna, supports the assumption that Ḫatti no longer maintained control over Kizzuwatna at the moment when the letter was drafted.<sup>122</sup>

A tablet found at Ugarit, RS 20.212,<sup>123</sup> preserves a letter sent by the Hittite sovereign to the king of Ugarit. The Hittite ruler scolds the Ugaritic king for not having organised the shipping of a huge amount of grain to Ḫatti, thus contravening the orders issued by the king of Karkemiš. Moreover, the Hittite sovereign asks the ruler of Ugarit to let a large boat immediately sail from Mukiš to Ura; in fact, the people of Ura need grain and, as the Hittite king states, “it is a matter of life or death”.<sup>124</sup>

The aforementioned texts demonstrate that the Hittite kingdom gathered cereals from its subordinated Syrian polities and from Egypt as well. In my opinion, this was not an occasional response to a state of famine in Anatolia, but a usual practice.<sup>125</sup> Concern-

ing the reason why the king of Ugarit disobeyed his overlord’s orders, one may assume that there was a shortage of cereals also in western Syria and, hence, it was either impossible or difficult for the Ugaritic king to execute the Great King’s command. The letter RS 94.2002+2003<sup>126</sup> may support this assumption; in fact, the king of Ugarit asks the pharaoh for cereals and states that there is a famine in his country.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, if this was the case, did the Hittite king not know that the Syrian granaries were empty and that the king of Ugarit could not fulfil his request?

Lastly, H. Klengel (1974, 166-167) and S.A. Divon (2008, 103) also mentioned a fragmentary passage of the court deposition KUB 40.91 + KUB 48.87, rev. 5’,<sup>128</sup> where the Hittite expression *k[išduwanti MU-ti* [= “in the year of famine” occurs. The whole text concerns events that presumably happened at the time of Ḫattušili II. Unfortunately, the passage that refers to the year of famine is very fragmentary and we cannot infer any other information from it.

The same expression “in a/the year of famine” occurs in the Hittite Laws; in fact, Paragraph 172 establishes the compensation to be given to someone who preserved a free man’s life during a year of famine.<sup>129</sup> This text and the aforementioned passage

<sup>116</sup> See BREYER 2010, 484, for another possible interpretation of the role played by Naḥḥa at the Egyptian court. As mentioned above, the Hittite kings sponsored the construction of water facilities all over Anatolia and, although Hittite engineers were highly competent in this field (see HÜSER 2007), Egyptian experts were surely welcome at the Hittite court.

<sup>117</sup> We may recall here that also the pharaoh Merneptah recorded the dispatch of cereals to Ḫatti during his 5<sup>th</sup> year of reign, see WAINWRIGHT 1960; KLENGEL 1974, SINGER 1999, 715.

<sup>118</sup> See KLENGEL 1974; HAGENBUCHNER 1989, 14; HOFFNER 2009, 362-364.

<sup>119</sup> See HOFFNER 2009, 364, for this passage.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*, 363.

<sup>121</sup> SINGER 2017, 623; FORLANINI 2017b, 139.

<sup>122</sup> Ura was an important harbour very well connected to Ugarit (KLENGEL 2007). In consideration of its significance for the trade routes that connected the Mediterranean coast to Ḫattuša, it presumably remained under the political control of the Hittite king, even when the region of Tarḫutašša was given to Kuruntiya. See FORLANINI 2017a, 250 n. 112 for the existence of a “corridor” between Tarḫuntašša and Kizzuwatna directly controlled by Ḫatti.

<sup>123</sup> See LACKENBACHER 2002, 103-104.

<sup>124</sup> See SINGER 1999, 716; DIVON 2008, 103; KNAPP, MANNING 2016, 121.

<sup>125</sup> See BROODBANK 2013, 460-461.

<sup>126</sup> See LACKENBACHER, MALBRAN-LABAT 2016, 81-86; DEVECCHI in press.

<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, SINGER 1999, 717, followed the assumption already advanced by NEUGAYROL (Ugaritica 5, 106 n. 3) and argued that the letter RS 20.212 might be related to the missive RS 18.038, where the king of Ugarit complains that he does not have cereals in his granaries; see FINK 2006; KNAPP, MANNING 2016, 121.

<sup>128</sup> See WERNER 1967, 30-31; TANI 2002.

<sup>129</sup> See HOFFNER 1997, 138; HAASE 2006.

of KUB 40.91 demonstrate that variability in rainfall could actually have caused a shortage of cereals in the Hittite kingdom.<sup>130</sup>

In conclusion, the shortage of food may have been one of the stressors of the Hittite administrative system, though presumably not the main cause of the fall of Ḫatti. In my opinion, the aforementioned Hittite texts refer only to temporary shortages of food, and not to an emergency that had already affected Anatolia at the time of Ḫattušili II. The scarcity of cereals may be due either to a period of drought, or to the difficulty in obtaining cereals from abroad, since the water routes in the Eastern Mediterranean were no longer safe and the shipping of valuable goods from Egypt to Syria had become a risk (see § 4.2.).

#### 4.2. *Movements of Peoples*

Hittite and Ugaritic tablets document the presence of sea raiders, who caused considerable unrest among the population of Ugarit and attacked the coastal cities. These texts have already been examined in depth by several researchers,<sup>131</sup> hence a further presentation is not necessary here, and I will only mention the most significant of them.

The tablet RS 20.238 preserves a letter written by Ammurapi, who was the last king of Ugarit. It may have been sent to the ruler of Alašiya.<sup>132</sup> Ammurapi complains about the fact that although enemy ships are raiding his cities, he cannot oppose them because his fleet is located off the coast of Lukka. The king of Ugarit also adds that seven ships are threatening him and his country. We are unable to say whether the number seven is a realistic detail or a literary *topos*.<sup>133</sup>

The letter RS 34.129 was sent by a Hittite king, who may be identified with Šuppiluliuma II, to the governor of Ugarit.<sup>134</sup> The Hittite king heard that a group of Šikila people, who live on ships, had captured a person by the name of ‘Ibnadašu; since he had been released, the Hittite king asked the governor of Ugarit to send the man to Ḫatti for interrogation. This letter demonstrates that the Hittite *intelligence* system did not have any idea about the identity and condition of the Šikila people, and wanted to learn more about these newcomers.

After 3.200 years we have not yet solved the puzzle of the identity of the Šikila; in fact, they are considered to belong to the group of the so-called “Sea Peoples”, who are still at the centre of an intense scientific debate. As is well known, the main evidence on the “Sea Peoples” comes from Egyptian sources and dates from the reigns of the pharaohs Merenptah and Ramesses III.

The inscription of Merenptah in the Amun Temple in Karnak narrates how this pharaoh fought off a group of enemies in the fifth year of his reign.<sup>135</sup> Some of them are labelled as northern peoples, name-

ly the Equest, Teresh, Lukka, Sherden, and Shekelesh peoples.

Furthermore, the Shekelesh are among the enemies whom Ramesses III smashed in two battles in the fifth year and in the eighth year of his reign. These events are at the centre of the reliefs and narratives that decorate the walls in Ramesses III’s mortuary temple at Medinet Habu.<sup>136</sup> The enemies who attacked Egypt were the Libyans and five other tribal groups, namely the Peleset, Tjekker, Shekelesh, Denyen, and Weshesh peoples.

The text inscribed on the walls of the aforementioned temple provides only very imprecise information about the countries from which these tribes came. The Egyptian sources, despite the fact that their authors seem not to have a clear idea of the origin of their enemies, always stress the strict alliance that these tribes had concluded among themselves by forming a threatening coalition. Their impact on the Near Eastern countries is presented as a disastrous event, to the point where “no land could stand before their arms” and Hatti, Qadeš, Karkemiš, Arzawa, and Alašiya were annihilated.

Due to reasons of space, we cannot address here the expanded and exponentially expanding literature on the Medinet Habu evidence and the “Sea Peoples”. Nevertheless, two points deserve some attention, specifically, the reliability of the Medinet Habu inscriptions, and the possible identity of the peoples who are mentioned in both the Egyptian sources and the Hittite documents.

As far as the first point is concerned,<sup>137</sup> some Egyptologists, such as L.H. Lesko,<sup>138</sup> manifested a sceptical approach to the content of the Medinet Habu inscriptions and argued that Ramesses III’s narrative was copied from the Merneptah reports. Among the historians who analysed these documents, B. Cifola<sup>139</sup> studied in depth the communicative patterns in Ramesses III’s inscriptions and stressed the lack of historical accuracy in the narrative of the struggles with the “Sea Peoples”. Thus, the Egyptian record seems to be an artificial account that refers to two

<sup>130</sup> See HÜTTERROTH 1982, 119-133; CAMMAROSANO 2018, 106.

<sup>131</sup> See YON 1989; SINGER 1999, 719-722; 2000; GILAN 2013; KNAPP, MANNING 2016.

<sup>132</sup> See LACKENBACHER 2002, 193-194.

<sup>133</sup> See SINGER 1999, 720.

<sup>134</sup> See the literature quoted by KLENGEL 1999, 393; SINGER 1999, 722; CLINE, O’CONNOR 2003, 113-114.

<sup>135</sup> See MANASSA 2003.

<sup>136</sup> See now REDFORD 2018.

<sup>137</sup> JAMES 2017 offers a very recent and up-to-date synthesis on this topic.

<sup>138</sup> LESKO 1980.

<sup>139</sup> CIFOLA 1988; IDEM 1991; IDEM 1994.

terrible battles fought against a confederation of enemies, whereas we may assume that the Egyptian army made several raids against different groups of enemies on distinct occasions.<sup>140</sup> K. Strobel's point of view is even more extreme;<sup>141</sup> in fact, he judged Ramesses III's account to be completely fictitious. Other Egyptologists, however, such as D. O'Connor, D.B. Redford, R.G. Roberts, and P. James,<sup>142</sup> considered the Medinet Habu inscriptions worthy of consideration.

Furthermore, the question concerning the identity and the provenance of the "Sea Peoples" is intriguing, but unsolvable. Archaeological and textual documents concerning these problems have often been analysed by researchers in various fields, but divergent methodological approaches and different historical perceptions of the events inevitably failed to reach a consensus, as is evident when reading the essays published in the proceedings of the three most recent conferences on this topic.<sup>143</sup>

The "Sea Peoples" were often considered responsible for the destruction of the Cilician and Syrian coastal centres,<sup>144</sup> and it is indeed possible that some sites may have been attacked by groups of raiders, whom we conventionally call the "Sea Peoples". Nevertheless, the political and cultural scenario of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in these regions is more complex and cannot be reduced to the picture of a horde of enemies who destroyed every Anatolian and Syrian city.

The crisis that affected many of the Mycenaean polities at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>145</sup> created a situation of profound social and economic instability; hence, it is understandable that several push and pull factors led groups of different social conditions to leave their homeland and look for better conditions of life.<sup>146</sup> The routes that these groups may have taken to the Eastern Mediterranean region are not linear, and the newcomers may have arrived not only from Greece, but also from the Aegean islands and Western Anatolia, by following both sea and land routes.<sup>147</sup>

Moving on to the Hittite and Ugaritic sources, only four "Sea Peoples" are documented in these texts, namely the Lukka, Šikila, Equest/Aḫḫiyawa, and Peleset peoples.<sup>148</sup> The country of Lukka was in south-western Anatolia<sup>149</sup> and, according to the Hittite sources, this region was neither ruled by a central government, nor fully integrated into the Hittite kingdom.<sup>150</sup> The Lukka-peoples are described as raiders in the el-Amarna letter EA 32, which was addressed by the ruler of Alašiya to the pharaoh.<sup>151</sup> In addition, the instructions of the loyalty oath imposed on lords, princes, and courtiers by Tuthaliya III mention Lukka among the three most dangerous enemy regions (§ 10").<sup>152</sup> In fact, the Hittite king here orders the lords in command at the frontier posts to protect the territories opposite the lands of, respectively, Azzi, Kaška, and Lukka. The necessity for the Hittites to control the aforementioned lands, which were hostile to Ḫatti, is

demonstrated by the fact that Tuthaliya III actually conducted a campaign against the Lukka sites (see the Yalburt inscription, see also § 4.3), as well as a military expedition in the region of Azzi.<sup>153</sup>

The cuneiform writing of the term Šikila is phonetically ambiguous and may indicate either the Tjekker-people<sup>154</sup> or the Shekelesh,<sup>155</sup> who are mentioned in the Medinet Habu inscription and in other Egyptian texts.<sup>156</sup>

Hittite evidence concerning the Šikila gives the impression that they were not migrants, but raiders, as the limited number of ships and, consequently, travelling individuals leads us to assume (see the aforementioned tablet RS 20.238). Furthermore, the presence of raiders, pirates, mercenaries, and fortune-hunters is well documented in the Mediterranean regions of the Late Bronze Age,<sup>157</sup> and the activities of people of this kind surely increased as a consequence of the changes in international trade, which – as S. Sherratt<sup>158</sup> argued – characterized the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

The Equest are generally equated with the Aḫḫiyawa people,<sup>159</sup> i.e. the Mycenaeans, who are documented in the Hittite texts;<sup>160</sup> Ḫiyawa is the Luwian form (with aphaeresis) of the aforementioned expression Aḫḫiyawa.<sup>161</sup> The Equest tribes occur in

<sup>140</sup> See CIFOLA 1988.

<sup>141</sup> STROBEL 2011.

<sup>142</sup> O'CONNOR 2000; REDFORD 2000; 2008; ROBERTS 2009; JAMES 2017.

<sup>143</sup> See OREN 2000; KILLEBREW, LEHMANN 2013; FISCHER, BÜRGE 2017.

<sup>144</sup> See, for example, YON 1989; SINGER 2000; JUNG 2007; WIENER 2014; WHITTAKER 2017.

<sup>145</sup> See FRENCH 2009; MARAN 2009; MIDDELTON 2010; WHITTAKER 2017; WIENER 2017.

<sup>146</sup> See BETANCOURT 2000.

<sup>147</sup> See MOUNTJOY 2015.

<sup>148</sup> See ADAMS, COHEN 2013; REDFORD 2018, 113-114.

<sup>149</sup> For the extent of the country of Lukka, see M. GANDER 2017, 268; differently, REDFORD 2018, 114.

<sup>150</sup> See BRYCE 2003, 41.

<sup>151</sup> See YAKUBOVICH 2010, 131.

<sup>152</sup> See MILLER 2013, 286-287.

<sup>153</sup> See text IBoT I 32 and CAMMAROSANO, MARIZZA 2015.

<sup>154</sup> See EDEL 1984; SINGER 1999, 722; GILBOA 2005.

<sup>155</sup> See REDFORD 2018, 120-121; see also ADAMS, COHEN 2013, 660 n. 15 for the possibility that the Šikila-tribes may, instead, correspond to Shekelesh.

<sup>156</sup> See ADAMS, COHEN 2013, 660-662.

<sup>157</sup> GILAN 2013 offered an exhaustive survey on this topic.

<sup>158</sup> SHERRATT 1998.

<sup>159</sup> See STADELMANN 1984; SINGER 2006, 252; BRYCE 2008, 86 and 91 n. 8; ADAMS, COHEN 2013, 652-654.

<sup>160</sup> See BECKMAN, BRYCE, CLINE 2011, with previous literature.

<sup>161</sup> See SINGER 2006, 251; see lastly ORESHKO 2013, 20. Differently see GANDER 2010, 48-56, who assumed that Ḫiyawa refers to a Cilician site. REDFORD 2018, 120, assumed that the expression Equest refers to people coming from the island of Kos.

the Merenptah inscription at Karnak and in the Athribis Stele.<sup>162</sup>

Two tablets (RS 94.2530 and RS 94.2523) that were found at Ugarit and recently published offer further interesting information concerning the role played by the Ahḫiyawa/Ḫiyawa people during the last phase of the Hittite kingdom. Tablet RS 94.2530 is a letter sent to the ruler of Ugarit, Ammurapi, by a Hittite king, who can be identified as Šuppiluliuma II; RS 94.2523 is a companion letter written by the Hittite official Pendi-Šarruma.<sup>163</sup> Together, the two letters deal with several topics, and in the passage preserved in the last paragraph in both tablets, the Ugaritic king is scolded for failing to send some metal ingots<sup>164</sup> to the Ḫiyawa, who are in the region of Lukka. G. Beckman, Tr. Bryce, and E.H. Cline<sup>165</sup> argued that these individuals labelled by the Hittites as “Mycenaeans” may have been mercenaries hired by the king of Ḫatti. The metal ingots could have served as payment for their services, or could have been used to manufacture weapons. If this interpretation of the aforementioned letters is correct, the region of Lukka was actually considered to be in serious danger, as is demonstrated by the fact that the Hittite king had hired a group of mercenaries and urged the Ugaritic ruler to quickly ship the metal ingots. Besides, the aforementioned letter RS 20.238 documents that the Hittite fleet was deployed in this region, presumably in a bid to halt the enemy attacks before they could reach the Cilician coast.

Lastly, the Peleset are mentioned in the Medinet Habu inscription, in the Harris Papyrus, and in other Egyptian documents;<sup>166</sup> they are the most studied among the “Sea Peoples”, yet their origin, settlement, and cultural material remain controversial questions that have not yet found a consensus among archaeologists and historians.<sup>167</sup> Although the Peleset are never mentioned in the Hittite documents, we owe to J.D. Hawkins<sup>168</sup> the possibility of establishing a link between the Peleset of the Egyptian documents and the newly discovered dynasty of Palasatina. Hawkins not only recognised the place name Palasatina in some Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, but could also identify a series of rulers of this country, such as Taita and Suppiluliuma, who are mentioned in various inscriptions found in northern Syria and datable from the 11<sup>th</sup> until the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Aleppo 6 and 7; Meharde and Sheizar, Arsuz 1 and 2, Tell Taynat 1 and the Tell Taynat inscription that mentions Sapalalme).<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, as Hawkins<sup>170</sup> argued: “given the probable date (eleventh to tenth centuries BCE) and distribution (Hama and Aleppo) of Taita’s monuments, we cannot but consider what connection, if any, our term Palistin-/Walastin- may have with the Philistines and the other ‘Sea Peoples’, who appear at the end of the Bronze Age as sea-borne raiders”.<sup>171</sup>

Accepting the historical reconstruction proposed by Hawkins, we assume that a group of Peleset, who

were either mercenaries or raiders, reached the Amuq region, settled there, and gave birth to a polity that survived for about four centuries, even though it reached the zenith of its power only during the 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>172</sup>

To sum up, the Hittite sources do not give exhaustive information on the “Sea Peoples”; we can only infer that a situation of general instability allowed raiders, mercenaries, and fortune-hunters to reach the coastal regions of southern Anatolia and Syria, and, eventually, to settle there. Furthermore, the Hittite evidence rules out the possibility that Anatolia was at the centre of a mass migration of peoples. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that even small groups of newcomers may have caused damage and distress among the local communities. We are unable to say whether these peoples were responsible for the destruction of all the coastal sites, and thus contributed to the fall of Ḫatti, or, instead, profited from the power vacuum left by the collapse of the Hittite kingdom.<sup>173</sup> Ugarit, for sure, was attacked by enemies and they may indeed have been groups of raiders, such as the “Sea Peoples”. Furthermore, R. Jung<sup>174</sup> attributed to the “Sea Peoples” the destruction of Tell Kazel, though his assumption was contested by Knapp and Manning.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>162</sup> See ADAMS, COHEN 2013, 652.

<sup>163</sup> This text was published by BECKMAN, BRYCE, CLINE 2011, 253-262, as well as by LACKENBACHER, MALBRAN LABAT 2016, 24-31.

<sup>164</sup> See SINGER 2006 for this interpretation of the logogram PAD; differently, LACKENBACHER, MALBRAN-LABAT 2016, 28: “rations alimentaires”.

<sup>165</sup> BECKMAN, BRYCE, CLINE 2011, 262.

<sup>166</sup> See ADAMS, COHEN 2013, 662-664; REDFORD 2018, 117-120.

<sup>167</sup> See the conferences held on this topic and the proceedings edited by, respectively, OREN 2000, KILLEBREW, LEHMANN 2013 and FISHER, BÜRGE 2017. See also KILLEBREW 2005. YASURLANDAU 2010, who is the author of a volume on the Philistines and their culture, indicates that the assumption of an Aegean origin of the Peleset and their initial settlement in Cyprus is also supported by the analysis of their cooking traditions and preparation of food.

<sup>168</sup> HAWKINS 2005, 289-90.

<sup>169</sup> See HAWKINS 2009; IDEM 2011; IDEM 2017; DIŇÇOL *et alii* 2016; see also BRYCE 2012, 128-129; WEEDEN 2013.

<sup>170</sup> HAWKINS 2009, 171-172.

<sup>171</sup> See also SINGER 2017, 625-627; JANEWAY 2017, 121-123. A critical response to the hypothesis proposed by Hawkins was expressed by ADAMS, COHEN 2013, 662-663 n. 19, and MEJER 2017.

<sup>172</sup> WEEDEN 2013.

<sup>173</sup> As noted above, SINGER 2017, 623, and FORLANINI 2017b, 139, argued that Kizzuwatna was no longer controlled by the Hittites when the aforementioned letter Bo 2810 (see § 4.1.1.) was written and before Ḫatti collapsed.

<sup>174</sup> JUNG 2007, 566.

<sup>175</sup> KNAPP, MANNING 2016, 129.

### 4.3. *The Manpower Crisis*

Hittite kings, since the time of Ḫattušili I and Muṣšili I, regularly led their army in war. The first rulers of Ḫatti needed to ensure control of the routes that connected Anatolia to Syria as well as to put an end to the raids that the western Anatolian polities conducted on Hittite soil. Two centuries later, Tuḫaliya I tried to expand the borders of Ḫatti to the east and west, but only Šuppiluliuma I eventually succeeded in conquering and establishing a firm dominion over a large part of Syria. Lastly, his son Muṣšili II also subjugated the western Anatolian kingdom of Arzawa.

These conquests not only allowed the Hittites to dominate rich and productive agricultural regions; Ḫatti also gained control of the harbours of Ugarit and Amurru, on the Syrian coast, and of Wilušiya and Milawanda, on the Aegean coast. Besides, the subordinated countries paid tribute to the Hittite kings and delivered precious gifts,<sup>176</sup> and they also put their army at the disposal of their overlord.<sup>177</sup>

Warfare was also a very profitable business; in fact, the conquered countries and cities were systematically plundered,<sup>178</sup> as all the Hittite historiographical narratives document by mentioning the looted precious goods, and the huge numbers of deportees, cattle, and sheep that were seized and transferred to Ḫatti.<sup>179</sup>

This “living and movable wealth” played a significant role in the Hittite economy, and the deportation of civil prisoners was the main source of manpower. Since the lack of labour forces was a persistent problem for the Hittite kings, mostly after the terrible epidemic that killed many people<sup>180</sup> during the reign of Šuppiluliuma I, the deportees were a precious resource and could be settled in different regions of Anatolia, largely in sparsely inhabited territories where they worked on farms as peasants and shepherds.<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, deportees were presumably employed on the large estates owed by institutions and wealthy families.<sup>182</sup> Though we do not have at our disposal an in depth analysis on the extent of the royal and private estates in relation to the small farms, the existence of enormous properties is certainly documented, as in the case of the estate that Prince Šaḫurunuwa left to his heir, as is witnessed in the decree issued by Tuḫaliya III.<sup>183</sup> One may also cite the huge donations given to institutions by Muṣšili III and Ḫattušili II.<sup>184</sup>

Šuppiluliuma I related that he deported 3.300 prisoners from Karkemiš and transferred them to his personal estate; even more people were taken by his generals.<sup>185</sup> In addition, his successor Muṣšili II boasted to have transferred 66.000 deportees from western Anatolia.<sup>186</sup> Even if we make allowance for exaggerations in the accounts of these two kings, it is indeed possible that many deportees were actually captured by the Hittites.

Hence, one may argue that the definitive conquest of Syria and Western Anatolia as well as the relative political stability in these regions deprived the Hittite kings of one of their main economic resources.

The tributes given by the subordinated rulers were indeed significant sources of precious metals and goods, but the deportees and the livestock looted by Šuppiluliuma I and Muṣšili II better assured the food-production necessary for the life of the country.

Besides, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE the Hittite army was no longer engaged in expeditions of conquest but instead had to wage two defensive battles, with Egypt at Qadeš, and with Assyria at Niḫriya. The Hittites suffered significant losses in both struggles and, though the result of the Qadeš battle was favourable to the Hittites, they did not carry away any loot, since they only protected their subordinated polities in Syria.

In addition, the internal conflict between Muṣšili III / Urḫi-Teššob and his uncle Ḫattušili also exacted a high cost in human lives when the army of Ḫattušili fought against that of his nephew, the legitimate king.<sup>187</sup> Muṣšili III seems to have also dissipated a huge amount of wealth in the form of generous donations to cult institutions and members of the aristocracy, with the aim of acquiring the protection of the gods and the support of the nobles against his uncle, who was trying to remove him from the throne.<sup>188</sup>

The last kings of the Hittite dynasty were aware of the difficult economic situation of their time; the hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Yalburt relates a military expedition led by Tuḫaliya III in the region of Lukka,<sup>189</sup> and the Hittite king boasted about the huge booty that he carried off from the raided countries. As noted earlier, Lukka is mentioned among the enemy countries in Tuḫaliya III’s instructions in the loyalty oath imposed on lords, princes, and courtiers (§ 10’).<sup>190</sup> Hence, one may assume that this Hittite

<sup>176</sup> See LIVERANI 1990, 269-272; GIORGIERI, MORA 2012.

<sup>177</sup> See BEAL 1992, 117-129.

<sup>178</sup> As KORN, LORENZ 2014 argued, the most profitable business surely was attacking either small polities or Anatolian peripheral regions, which were not able to offer any real resistance to the Hittite raids.

<sup>179</sup> See KLINGER 2018.

<sup>180</sup> See the plague prayers of Muṣšili II (SINGER 2002).

<sup>181</sup> See IMPARATI 1987; BRYCE 2002, 100, 104-107; CAMMAROSANO 2018, 271-275.

<sup>182</sup> See KLENGEL 2006, 6.

<sup>183</sup> See IMPARATI 1974.

<sup>184</sup> See DE MARTINO 2017.

<sup>185</sup> See DEL MONTE 2008, 116-117.

<sup>186</sup> See DEL MONTE 1993, 66-67; KLINGER 2018.

<sup>187</sup> See YOFFEE 2010, 192, concerning the costs of the civil war between Assyria and Babylonia at the end of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

<sup>188</sup> See DE MARTINO 2017.

<sup>189</sup> See POETTO 1993; HAWKINS 1995, 66-85.

<sup>190</sup> See MILLER 2013, 286-287.

king was obliged to lead his army into this hostile territory in order to establish Hittite political control over it,<sup>191</sup> but, in my opinion, this expedition also had the purpose of seizing deportees and livestock.

The two Hittite military expeditions led by Šuppiluliuma II<sup>192</sup> against Alašiya presumably had the same purpose; they are documented in the cuneiform tablet KBo 12.30 as well as in the hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Nišantepe.<sup>193</sup> Though the tablet KUB 14.1 + KBo 19.38, which is known as the “Indictment of Madduwatta”, seems to support the assumption that the Hittites had established some sort of either political or economic control of Alašiya at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE,<sup>194</sup> the El Amarna letters clearly show that this country was not subordinated to Ḫatti at a later time.

I. Singer<sup>195</sup> argued that the “enemies of Alašiya” encountered by the Hittites – as the tablet KBo 12.38 reports – were actually the “Sea Peoples”. Singer also stressed the resemblance between the sea and the land battle fought by the Hittites, on the one hand, with Ramesses III’s wars against the “Sea Peoples” on the other hand, and, hence, he assumed that Šuppiluliuma II actually tried to stop the arrival of groups of newcomers.

Instead, I argue that the Hittite expedition against Alašiya aimed to gain booty, and KBo 12.38 indeed mentions the rich tribute that the ruler of Alašiya had to give to Ḫatti; it consisted of gold, copper, and other goods.<sup>196</sup> I also assume that the Hittite conquest of Alašiya became necessary because the crisis of the Mycenaean polities and the presence of the “Sea Peoples” in the Mediterranean regions had drastically changed the rules of business, and palaces no longer controlled the trade in copper and other precious goods.<sup>197</sup>

Hence, Šuppiluliuma II may have profited from the general political instability in the Eastern Mediterranean and, at the same time, reacted to the danger of being excluded from the trade in copper. On this assumption, Šuppiluliuma II’s expedition against Alašiya supplies evidence of his foresight in reinforcing the weak economic situation of Ḫatti.<sup>198</sup>

#### 4.4. *The Broken Political and Social Network*

The stability of Ḫatti depended on the Hittite king’s ability to impose his will and power over all the countries he dominated and, at the same time, to restrict to a manageable level the resistance that the subordinated polities posed to the central authority.<sup>199</sup>

The overwhelming military superiority of the Hittite army in comparison to the militia of each subordinated country was a “convincing” argument in favour of loyalty to the sovereigns of Ḫatti. In addition, the protection that the Hittite overlord extended to all the polities and members of the kingdom was sometimes necessary, mainly when one of the other Great Kings

became a menace; hence, loyalty to the king of Ḫatti was the only possible choice for a small polity.

The Hittites used violence and intimidation, as well as mercy and indulgence, in order to maintain control over the subordinated polities,<sup>200</sup> but on some occasions the overlords were inflexible, as in the case of the deposition of Bentešina, king of Amurru, after the battle of Qadeš.<sup>201</sup>

Furthermore, Hittite kings tried to ensure the loyalty of several of the subordinated rulers by means of family ties; thus, the sovereigns of three kingdoms, Karkemiš, Aleppo, and Tarḫuntašša, descended from the royal house of Ḫatti. Furthermore, the subordinated rulers often married Hittite royal princesses and, hence, the rulers of several countries, such as Mittani, Ugarit, Amurru, Mira, the Šeḫa River Land, Ḫayaša, and Išuwa, became relatives of the Hittite Great Kings.

Notwithstanding, the prestige and credibility of the Hittite royal house were severely affected by a series of events that happened in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The inability to defend Mittani and the final Assyrian conquest demonstrated that Ḫatti was no longer capable of protecting all its subordinated polities. The disastrous result of the battle of Niḫriya<sup>202</sup> also undermined the prestige of the Hittite royal house. The Assyrian king tried to profit from his success by bringing further discredit upon the king of Ḫatti. Hence, the Assyrian court sent a long and detailed letter (RS 34.165)<sup>203</sup> that related the events at Niḫriya and demonstrated how weak the Great King of Ḫatti had become on the international scene. The aforementioned letter is fragmentary and the name of the receiver is not fully preserved, but it is usually assumed that he was the king of Ugarit.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>191</sup> See SINGER 2000.

<sup>192</sup> The first of these two expeditions was presumably conducted by Šuppiluliuma, during the reign of his father, King Tuḫaliya III (see BEMPORAD 2014).

<sup>193</sup> See GÜTERBOCK 1967; BEMPORAD 2014.

<sup>194</sup> See DE MARTINO 2008.

<sup>195</sup> SINGER 2000.

<sup>196</sup> See SINGER, GESTOSO, SINGER 2014.

<sup>197</sup> See SHERRATT 1998.

<sup>198</sup> I do not consider here the mention of Tarḫuntašša in the Luwian Hieroglyphic inscription on the stone blocks inside “Chamber 2” at Ḫattuša (see HAWKINS 1995), because the exact date of this text, either at the time of Šuppiluliuma I or Šuppiluliuma II, remains an unsolved problem at present (see MATESSI 2016, 35 n. 60, with previous literature).

<sup>199</sup> See GLATZ 2013.

<sup>200</sup> See BECKMAN 2014; BEAL, 2014.

<sup>201</sup> See SINGER 1991, 165-168.

<sup>202</sup> See SINGER 1985; BÁNYAI 2011; YAMADA 2011, and BEMPORAD 2002, who argued that the Hittite army was led by Prince Šuppiluliuma.

<sup>203</sup> See DIETRICH 2003; DEVECCHI in press.

<sup>204</sup> Instead, D’ALFONSO 2006, 304, n. 3, assumed that the receiver of this letter was the pharaoh.



Tuthaliya III's reaction was ambiguous, and he offered an iron fist to Assyria, as well as a velvet glove; in fact he imposed on Šaušgamuwa a ban on trade with Amurru and Assyria,<sup>205</sup> but at the same time several Assyrian documents show that Ḫatti and Assyria also had good economic and political relations in the last decades of the Hittite kingdom.<sup>206</sup>

Besides, the internal conflict between Muršili III and his uncle Ḫattušili shattered the stability of the institutional and personal relations that the former kings of Ḫatti had established with their subordinated rulers; in fact, the latter personages were obliged to take sides with either the legitimate sovereign or his opponent, who was the powerful brother of Muwatalli II. We may recall here that although Tuthaliya III ascended to the throne as the heir of the usurper Ḫattušili II, he warned Šaušgamuwa, king of Amurru, against behaving as Mašduri, the ruler of the Šeḫa River Land, did; in fact, Mašduri took sides with Ḫattušili,<sup>207</sup> breaking the oath of loyalty that he had sworn to his overlord Muršili III.

Lastly, the failed conspiracy planned by Prince Ḫešni against his brother Tuthaliya III involved several members of the "aristocracy" and inflicted another severe wound on the image and authority of the Hittite royal house.<sup>208</sup>

Since the Hittite kingdom, which controlled polities and peoples of different cultures, languages, and traditions, had a strong need for charismatic leaders, the aforementioned events encouraged several local kings to claim greater independence and even a higher status than they had previously enjoyed.

The ruler of the small but wealthy kingdom of Ugarit seems to have become more and more reluctant to fulfil his vassal duties; since this topic has already been studied in depth by C. Glatz and E. Devecchi,<sup>209</sup> I will limit myself to just a few words. For example, as mentioned above (see § 4.1.1.), the Ugaritic king did not honour the Hittite king's request to ship cereals.

Furthermore, the decree issued by Tuthaliya III (RS 17.59) established that the king of Ugarit had to deliver a huge amount of gold, instead of soldiers, to his Hittite overlord on the occasion of a military confrontation that presumably involved Assyria. Thus, Tuthaliya III probably did not rely on the military cooperation of his subordinated ruler.<sup>210</sup>

The events related to Kuruntiya, king of Tarḫuntašša, a son of Muwatalli II and, hence, a cousin of Tuthaliya III, have already been the subject of many studies; as is well known, Kuruntiya claimed to be a "Great King" in the Hatip rock relief.<sup>211</sup> This same title occurs in some seal impressions found at Ḫattuša. The aforementioned documents might support the assumption that Kuruntiya seized the throne of Ḫatti and acted as a Great King, until he was eventually removed by Tuthaliya III.<sup>212</sup> But I. Singer<sup>213</sup> proposed a more plausible historical scenario and argued that

in a period when the Hittite central power was weak, Tuthaliya III, though formally refusing to recognize the supremacy claimed by Kuruntiya, maintained with him "a cautious *modus vivendi*". As Singer<sup>214</sup> wrote, in other periods of world history as well, two claimants for the imperial title were obliged to tolerate each other. Notwithstanding, the patience of the Hittite king was not endless, and the hieroglyphic sign MAGNUS, occurring in the title MAGNUS.REX "Great King" and referring to Kuruntiya, was erased from the Hatip inscription.

The treaty concluded by Tuthaliya III with Kuruntiya, the so-called Bronze Tablet,<sup>215</sup> established that the latter king would receive a wider territory than the one previously assigned him by Ḫattušili II and granted him access to the mausoleum of his father, Muwatalli II, among several other privileges. Moreover, Kuruntiya was exempted from supplying soldiers to the Hittite army (iii 35-36). I share Matessi's assumption that this passage in the Bronze Tablet was not a favourable concession to Kuruntiya, but an attempt to ensure that the king of Tarḫuntašša would not train and maintain his own standing army and would thus pose no threat to Tuthaliya III.<sup>216</sup>

The decision to minimize or eliminate the military forces of those subordinated rulers whose loyalty to the Hittite crown was suspect, such as the kings of Ugarit and Tarḫuntašša, had disastrous consequences; in fact, when the Hittite central power collapsed, the local rulers of the coastal regions of Anatolia and Syria could not defend themselves against the attacks of the "Sea Peoples" or other enemies, and many of their cities suffered destruction.

Tuthaliya III was concerned about the claims of autonomy professed by Kuruntiya and tried to reaffirm the authority of the central power by building monuments, dams, and water supplies, which had not only a practical function but also a ideological intent.<sup>217</sup> It is not by chance that the dam of Köylütölu, the altars of Emirgazi, and the Yalburt basin, which

<sup>205</sup> See BECKMAN, BRYCE, CLINE 2011, 68.

<sup>206</sup> See MORA, GIORGIERI 2004; CANCIK-KIRSCHBAUM 2008; SINGER 2008; GIORGIERI 2011.

<sup>207</sup> See the treaty concluded between Tuthaliya III and Šaušgamuwa; see also KITCHEN, LAWRENCE 2012, 595-608; DEVECCHI 2015, 225-232.

<sup>208</sup> See VAN DEN HOUT 1995, 206-211; TANI 2002.

<sup>209</sup> GLATZ 2013; DEVECCHI in press.

<sup>210</sup> See KLENGEL 1992, 140; GLATZ 2013, 33.

<sup>211</sup> See EHRLINGHAUS 2005, 101-107.

<sup>212</sup> See GOEDEGEBUURE 2012, with previous literature.

<sup>213</sup> SINGER 1996.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibidem*, 648.

<sup>215</sup> See OTTEN 1988.

<sup>216</sup> See MATESSI 2016, 648.

<sup>217</sup> See BACHMANN 2017 concerning the Eflatun Pınar basin.

Tuḫaliya III sponsored, were all close to the borders of Tarḫuntašša.<sup>218</sup>

Another contested periphery was Western Anatolia, as is demonstrated by the fact that the rulers of Mira, the Šeḫa River Land, and Wiluša become more and more reluctant to accept Hittite overlordship.

The rock relief located at Karabel depicts the ruler of Mira Targašnawa with attributes that were otherwise exclusive to Hittite royal iconography.<sup>219</sup> Furthermore, the tablet KBo 18.18 preserves a letter sent by a Hittite king, who may have been Šuppiluliuma II, to the Great King Mašḫuitta. The latter personage may have been the last ruler of Mira<sup>220</sup> and, hence, if one shares this assumption, the last Hittite sovereigns would have accepted the “self-promotion” not only of the king of Tarḫuntašša, but also of the ruler of Mira.

The Tablet KUB 23.13 +<sup>221</sup> documents a rebellion against the Hittites planned by Tarḫunaradu, who ruled the Šeḫa River Land. This event presumably happened during the reign of the Hittite king Tuḫaliya III, who eventually succeeded in capturing Tarḫunaradu.

The rebellion of Tarḫunaradu could be connected to what the letter KUB 19.55 + KUB 48.90 documents concerning the subordinated polity of Wilušiya;<sup>222</sup> in fact, this letter relates that the legitimate ruler of Wilušiya was removed from the throne by a group of rebels.

All the aforementioned texts record a situation of dramatic instability in western Anatolia at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The Hittite kings restored the legitimate rulers in the polities of Seḫa and Wilušiya, but could not resolve the competition between the central power and the peripheral polities, which either openly rebelled against Ḫatti or demanded more autonomous forms of government.

Moving towards the eastern border of Ḫatti, the tablet KBo 4.14<sup>223</sup> indicates that the subordinated ruler who was the addressee of this document did not support the Hittite king during the battle of Niḫriya. The deserter may be identified with a king of Išuwa,<sup>224</sup> who did not take the side of his Great King.<sup>225</sup>

Furthermore, the tribes of the Kaška, who inhabited northern Anatolia, never fully integrated into the kingdom of Ḫatti.<sup>226</sup> The last kings of the Hittite dynasty were aware of their inability to control these extreme regions; hence, they created the subordinate buffer kingdom of Tummana, whose ruler had the honour of governing it, but also the difficult task of protecting the Hittite borders and assuring the maintenance of the cults and religious centres of northern Anatolia.<sup>227</sup>

Lastly, the landscape monuments, such as those located at İmamkulu and Hayneri that were sponsored by the high official Kuwalanamuwa,<sup>228</sup> are a clear sign of political competition between the central power and the local authorities.<sup>229</sup> As a matter of fact, Prince Kuwalanamuwa is depicted as a warrior

standing before the gods on these two reliefs, and it is worth mentioning that this composition and iconography were usually reserved for royal representations of the Hittite kings.

C. Glatz and A. M. Plourde<sup>230</sup> argued that Kuwalanamuwa was a contemporary of Muršili II; instead, I assume that the Hittite officials were depicted on monuments and rock reliefs only from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when, as was already said, the centrifugal impulses of subordinated rulers and high dignitaries started to be tolerated by the kings of Ḫatti.<sup>231</sup>

One may also assume that these officials, who were local administrators on behalf of the Hittite king, could maintain the previous Hittite administrative structure in the Anatolian peripheral regions even after the collapse of Ḫatti, and started acting as “local chiefs”.<sup>232</sup>

In conclusion, many of the subordinated rulers were no longer regularly fulfilling their duties; furthermore, they tried to inflate their status, at least inside the borders of their countries, and the Hittite kings apparently tolerated their claims. Some high officials also acquired significant power and acted as local chiefs. The Hittite kingdom was losing its unity and cohesion and, hence, was no longer able to react to any sudden event that required a strong and quick reaction.

#### 4.5. The “Butterfly Effect”

The “butterfly effect” is a metaphor for the unpredictable consequences of seemingly minor or insignificant events, and refers to the fact that “the initial flapping of a butterfly’s wings may eventually result in a tornado or hurricane some weeks later on the other side of the world”.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>218</sup> As MATESSI 2016, 13-14, argued.

<sup>219</sup> See DE MARTINO 2010.

<sup>220</sup> See HAWKINS 1998, 21-22.

<sup>221</sup> See DE MARTINO in press.

<sup>222</sup> See BECKMAN, BRYCE, CLINE 2011, 123-133.

<sup>223</sup> See STEFANINI 1965.

<sup>224</sup> See SINGER 1985.

<sup>225</sup> See BEMPORAD 2002 on the question whether this document and also the battle of Niḫriya date to the reign of either Tuḫaliya III or Šuppiluliuma II.

<sup>226</sup> See GLATZ 2013.

<sup>227</sup> On the polity of Tummana see CAMMAROSANO, MARIZZA 2015.

<sup>228</sup> See EHRLINGHAUS 2005, 70-80.

<sup>229</sup> See GLATZ, PLOURDEE 2011.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibidem*, 2011, 50.

<sup>231</sup> See DE MARTINO 2010.

<sup>232</sup> See MORA, D’ALFONSO 2012, 395; MATESSI 2016.

<sup>233</sup> See CLINE 2014, 161.

We do not have any Hittite evidence concerning the events that transpired in the last years and days of the kingdom of Ḫatti. One may assume that either Šuppiluliuma II or his son died without leaving an heir who could ascend the throne (see § 3.3.). The most recent edition of the Allaiturahḫi purification ritual<sup>234</sup> may actually have been performed with the aim of treating a disease that affected the king.<sup>235</sup> The death of the last Hittite king presumably initiated the domino effect that brought about the disintegration of Ḫatti.

If the Hittite royal family indeed went extinct, the king of Karkemiš could legitimately claim the title of Great King, since he was the descendant of Šuppiluliuma I. This same title could also be claimed by Ḫartapu and other personages who were related in some way to the royal house of Ḫatti (see § 3.3.).

We assume two different, but likely scenarios; it is possible that either Šuppiluliuma II or his heir abandoned Ḫattuša and established a new capital, though we do not know where the new residence was located, nor the reason for choosing a new royal residence (see § 3.1.). If this was the case, the collection of cuneiform tablets and all the precious goods were transferred to this new place.

If not, when the last king of Ḫatti died, the king of Karkemiš, who took the imperial crown, may have been responsible for the transfer of the aforementioned tablets and goods. Hence, the tablets, which were considered to be of some interest to the new regime, could have been moved to Karkemiš and kept there.

### 5. *Summing up*

The Hittite kingdom was a wounded body in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The annual wars conducted since the days of Tuḫaliya I and the epidemic that spread during the latter years of Šuppiluliuma I had caused a decline in the population of Anatolia. Hence, Muṣili II deported many civil prisoners when conquering Arzawa and transferred them to several regions in the kingdom. In the following decades the availability of labour forces was drastically reduced, and it is possible that the Hittite kingdom suffered from a lack of manpower.

Furthermore, the progressive intensive exploitation of a fragile ecosystem, overstressed throughout the entire Late Bronze Age by the necessity of feeding large cities, surely contributed to weaken the Hittite economic situation. Climate change may also have affected Hittite agricultural production. Besides, cereals that had been supplied by Egypt and Syria and were necessary to feed the people of Southern Anatolia were no longer regularly shipped, due to the insecurity of sea routes and the lack of cooperation from the subordinated rulers, such as the king of Ugarit.

Lastly, the raids of the “Sea Peoples” further impoverished the communities that inhabited the coastal cities and villages and, at the same time, increased the political and social instability. Despite this, I do not believe that the movement of peoples was the main factor in the collapse of the Hittite kingdom, and I assume that groups of newcomers settled in regions such as Kizzuwatna and the Amuq plain only after Ḫatti had already disappeared and no army could oppose their advance.

The rivalries within the royal family, which culminated in Ḫattušili’s *coup d’état* and the conspiracy of Ḫešni, had a dramatic effect on the prestige of the last Hittite kings. The Assyrian victory at Niḫriya also led some of the subordinated rulers to doubt the advantages that loyalty to the Hittite king could actually offer.

Although the competition between the king of Tarḫuntašša and his cousin Tuḫaliya III never resulted in open hostility, it prompted the Hittite king to make decisions that ran counter to the interests of his own kingdom; in fact, the ruler of Tarḫuntašša was elevated to the rank of the more loyal king of Karkemiš and was exempted from any obligations to support the temples of Ḫatti, as well as from any military duties.

The rulers of the western Anatolian polities either rebelled against the Hittite authority or claimed a condition of semi-independence, which the Hittite sovereign who sent the letter KBo 18.18 eventually recognized by attributing to Mašḫuitta the title of Great King. A great political and military instability was also perceived on the eastern borders of Ḫatti.

The political and administrative system on which Šuppiluliuma I and Muṣili II had founded the imperial power of Ḫatti was undermined by repetitive centrifugal impulses. The subordinated rulers no longer relied on the protection of the Hittite Great King; furthermore, they were not afraid to break their loyalty oaths, nor did they fear Hittite military repression. The inter-social network that assured cooperation among the different components of the Hittite kingdoms was no longer maintainable.

Should we accuse the last Hittite kings of limited foresight? We may answer that Tuḫaliya III as well as Šuppiluliuma II actually tried to find solutions to the political and economic difficulties that affected the stability of their kingdom. They led military expeditions in order to acquire deportees and precious goods and protested the repeated gestures of disobedience on the part of the Ugaritic king, though they never took military action against him. Instead, the Hittite army intervened in western Anatolia when the

<sup>234</sup> See HAAS, WEGNER 1988, 160-170.

<sup>235</sup> See FERRANDI 2017.

rebellions of the local rulers actually represented a danger. Lastly, Tuthaliya III reaffirmed the presence of the Hittite central power in the contested territories along the border with Kizzuwatna, and he responded to the agricultural crisis by constructing new water supplies and dams.

I argue that with the death of the last Hittite king

and the abandonment of the capital, the last two pillars of the kingdom fell and Hatti collapsed, and the use of cuneiform writing and the Hittite language also disappeared. Instead, as is well known, a Luwian cultural space survived in south-eastern Anatolia and western Syria for centuries, at Karkemiš as well as in other Neo-Hittite centres.

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