



IX. ULUSLARARASI HİTİTOLOJİ KONGRESİ BİLDİRİLERİ

Çorum 08-14 Eylül 2014

*Acts of the IXth International
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THE TRIALS OF TUDHALIYA IV

Gary BECKMAN*

The resources now available to scholars through the Hethitologie Portal Mainz website, particularly the photographs accessible there, have greatly facilitated progress in the recovery of the history and culture of Hatti. I have previously made good use of these images in preparing re-editions of several compositions first studied long ago, and have most recently perused the relevant photos while working on CTH 123 (KBo 4.14), an enigmatic document whose only full treatment was published by Ruggiero Stefanini a half-century ago.¹

The unique manuscript is definitely inscribed in late script, and grammatical features indicate clearly that the text itself was composed during the final decades of the Hittite Empire. Previous writers have attributed the text to each of the final known monarchs of Hatti: Tudhaliya IV,² Arnuwanda III,³ and Suppiluliyama II,⁴ but I agree with the late Itamar Singer⁵ that the impassioned reference to the battle of Nihriya featured in CTH 123 demonstrates that Tudhaliya was its author.

The reign of Tudhaliya IV was replete with trials: Internally, this ruler was confronted by rivalry with his cousin Kurunta, representative of the

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1 Stefanini 1965; cf. the earlier remarks of Meriggi 1962: 84-90. For transliterations of quoted passages and philological commentary the reader is referred to my re-edition, which will appear elsewhere (forthcoming).

2 Klengel 1999: 276-77.

3 Stefanini 1966.

4 Stefanini 1965: 39; Laroche 1953: 76, *CTH*. Mora 1988: 565-67 proposes dating the composition to an unspecified successor of Tudhaliya IV.

5 Singer 1985: 110-18.

descendants of Muwattalli II, who stood in dynastic conflict with his own line stemming from the usurper Hattusili III, whether or not this contention resulted in an actual rebellion or *coup d'état*.⁶ He also experienced an unsuccessful plot seemingly organized by his own brother Hesni, according to the investigation recorded in a court document.⁷

Abroad, Tudhaliya engaged in military campaigns against the minor states of southwestern Anatolia and Cyprus, as recorded in the hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions of Yalburt⁸, Emirgazi,⁹ and Nişantaş.¹⁰ But the weightiest problem faced by the Great King was the challenge posed to the Hittite empire in Syria by the growing power and influence of Assyria.¹¹ In the course of the face-off between Hatti and Assur, which seems to have begun early in his reign, the Hittites suffered a decisive defeat near the town of Nihirya/Nihriya¹² in Upper Mesopotamia. It was following this calamity that the king composed the most curious administrative document here under discussion, which is directed to a subordinate who had failed him at a crucial moment.

KBo 4.14 is a four-columned tablet, of which columns ii and iii are generally well preserved, while large portions of columns i and iv have been broken away. Of an estimated 320 original lines, around 150 are more or less complete, while an additional 100 or so lines are partially present. The language of the text is Hittite, larded with thirty-three Luwian *Glossenkeilwörter*. A large erasure at the top of col. i suggests that we are dealing with a draft.

The document may have opened with a salutation and greetings, that is, as a letter, to judge from the first legible section:

May whichever deities [to whom you turn(?)] protect [you!] May [you] be [well(?)!] But on your neck [...] May those (gods) protect you! [...]

6 Bryce 2005: 319-21.

7 CTH 297.8 (KUB 31.68).

8 Poetto 1993.

9 Masson 1979.

10 Güterbock 1967.

11 Dietrich 2003, Cancik-Kirschbaum 2008, Yamada 2011.

12 On this place name, well known from Assyrian sources, see Miller 2012.

in regard to which matters [you(?)] are sworn, [...] let it be! ... May [those (gods) ...] you away! (i 17-24)

But just who is the addressee whose name has been lost at the head of the first column? Laroche¹³ simply labels him “un partenaire inconnu,” but others have suggested that he was the vassal king of the land of Išuwa.¹⁴ This is doubtful, however, since we now know that the ruling family of Išuwa was an appanage line of the Hittite royal house,¹⁵ and given this fact, it would not have been appropriate for Tudhaliya even to contemplate bossing about its current head in the manner in which he deals with the recipient of this missive. Even if the name written *Eh-li-LUGAL* (iv 71) is to be understood as that of Ehli-Šarruma, the final attested king of Išuwa, the context in which this man appears is third-person, not second-person as would be expected for the document’s addressee. The brusque tenor of the discourse also rules out the possibility that the document was intended for a king of Ugarit or Carchemish. No, the object of the Great King’s scorn in CTH 123 was most probably a member of the native Hittite nobility who could not claim even a semi-independent power base of his own.

In any event, this individual had well deserved the contempt of his master:

But when it became difficult for me, you were off somewhere. You were not with me. Did I not drive away from (the city of) Nihiryra alone? When it came about that the enemy once more took the Hurrian lands away from me, was I not alone back in (the city of) Alatarma? And if such a critical occasion should recur – or if the enemy should enter my land or city, as he has already done previously – or if some subject of mine should defect and turn to you out of fear of me, then die for the sake of the king! Let (this) be under oath! (ii 7-16)

Indeed, the purpose of the present administrative instrument is to assure that just such an act is not repeated. Accordingly, the subordinate is presented with various scenarios in which he might be tempted to behave in a disloyal manner

13 CTH 123: “Traité avec un partenaire inconnu.”

14 Meriggi 1962: 84-85; Singer 1985: 118 (tentatively).

15 Glocker 2011.

– through action or inaction – and then sworn not to embrace such conduct.

Many are the social and political conditions that might give rise to rebellion, as Tudhaliya explains:

The occasion of revolt is as follows: Even the wealthy become impoverished. Or the royal military forces or the provinces defect from the king. Or the enemy takes from the king by force his confidential advisors. Or they are killed. Or the noblemen defect from the king. Or the king falls ill. Or the king goes off on a distant campaign. Or it is any sort of treacherous time. You shall not seek to revolt, nor to abscond, nor to misbehave at your post. Let death be your limit! (ii 52-61)

Beyond these hypothetical occurrences, there is the very real danger posed to Hatti by Assyria:

And this Assyrian enemy who has arisen against me has held off for many years. And if he bravely challenges me with arms or enters my land or city, at such a moment you shall not seek to revolt, nor to abscond, nor to misbehave [at your post]. Die along with the king! Let (this) be under oath! (ii 66-72)

Note that the enmity with Assyria is said to be of long standing, although things seem to be quiet at the moment. This state of affairs accords well with what we otherwise know of the episodic character of the Assyro-Hittite struggle under Tudhaliya on the one side and Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I on the other.¹⁶ It is apparently the same Mesopotamian foe who is referred to throughout CTH 123 by the generic term “the enemy,” and in the following section by the phrase “the hostile king”:

And as for this hostile king who has [arisen] against me – if he should enter my land or city, let death be your [limit] (in protecting me)! Or (if) he should inflict misfortune on me by force of arms, or come into my land or city, [die] for the person of the king! (ii 22-25)

¹⁶ See references in note 11.

But in our text even greater attention is devoted to the danger of disloyalty among the Great King's own underlings:

Or (if) the lands defect, or bloodshed occurs among my domestic or foreign subjects, as it continues to be difficult for the king, on that occasion you must bite firmly the Dark Earth. Let death be your limit!

And if some man of Hatti on that [occasion] joins your party, or [some people] have been your sworn associates and [someone (among them)] says to you: "This is the time! You should revolt against the king!"—then as a loyal man you will speak as follows: "[If] I do such a thing(?), then let me die, [and] let the Sun-goddess of Arinna not give [me] a (further) life of (even) a single day!"

In the future you shall not seek revolt. You shall not revolt at a critical time. You [shall not think up] anything foolish against me. You shall not [stifle(?)] the manliness in your soul. You shall not think as follows: "Someone [somewhere] has let the enemy escape." And you shall not revolt at a critical [time]. The gods shall pursue (any) matter of revolt in relation to you. And if things become difficult at some point, you shall not flee, thinking: "(I am) sworn in regard to defection, but not in regard to this." And (if) you then throw in your lot with those who rebel, claiming: "They carried me off by force" – this matter shall be under oath for you. (ii 26-51)

Indeed, Tudhaliya enjoins the addressee to value the life of his master – himself – as highly as his own: "Let me be [as] important [to you] as [your own person(?)] is important [to you]!" (i 42-43). The subordinate must also be proactive as well as vigilant:

[And] let this matter [be] inscribed ... for you (pl. sic!). You shall be a bodyguard for My Majesty. You, [your wife], your child<ren>, and your subjects shall be lookouts and watchmen for the life of the king. You shall [not] overlook (any) evil.

And [if] something causes difficulty for the king, or the king falls ill, [or] provinces defect, or an enemy enters the provinces, [then] ... likewise, and likewise let it cause anxiety for you. Your wife, your children, and your subjects shall be trustworthy watchmen [for] the person of the king. They shall not be untrustworthy watchmen and scouts.

And if you (fore)see some terrible day for the king, then as it would be of concern to the personal servants of the king regarding the person of the king, let it likewise cause concern for your own person, your wife, your children, and your subjects. (iii 8-22)

Much of the language here is familiar from the stipulations and curses found in the treaties of the empire period.¹⁷ Most unusual, however, is a paragraph detailing what we might label “thought crimes”:

Concerning the fact that I had already confronted you about these words, and you yourself spoke them repeatedly: “Would that even a small matter becomes constrained for him!”—because venereal disease(?)¹⁸ afflicted me without cease, in anger it found you. And if something becomes difficult for the person of the king, or some province defects, or an enemy enters the land or city, or an incident of illness or defeat occurs, you shall not celebrate secretly, nor shall you secretly rejoice(?). As it is personally critical for (me), the king, (thinking:) “If only I could get away”—so let it be critical for you, (thinking:) “May my lord get away from here!” I experienced this matter in regard to you on the Nihirya campaign. (iii 23-35)

Clearly the relationship between Tudhaliya and this junior partner was a close one. The Great King was privy to details of the latter’s reflections and confidential conversations, while the latter in turn had knowledge of embarrassing aspects of the monarch’s health. And if the ruler had indeed been abandoned at Nihriya in the heat of battle by all of his followers, as recounted earlier, he had taken special notice of the absence of this particular courtier.

17 Compare the various stipulations and sanctions in the treaties translated in Beckman 1999.

18 iii 25-26: *ŠA MUNUS* ... GIG, literally “illness of a woman.”

Nonetheless, Tudhaliya had forgiven his faithless subject, but remained uncertain whether his magnanimity would be reciprocated with the appropriate devotion:

[And] given that I have promised as follows: “I [will] take [you] back; I will not cast you out. Things will be [good] for you once more” – would I for some reason go back on my word? Time will pass and you might think as follows: “The king has not paid any attention to me, so let me be free from these oaths.” You shall not do it. Let (this) be [under] oath for you! (iii 1-7)

I believe that I have now established that CTH 123 is verily an unusual text. Here a Hittite Great King unburdens himself to another mortal, exhibiting before a fellow human being a vulnerability otherwise displayed by kings in our Hittite records only in prayers to the gods. As has already been observed by others,¹⁹ it is also difficult to assign a generic label to this composition. It combines elements of a letter, of an *Anklageschrift* – compare the Madduwatta text, of instructions for bureaucrats – particularly of the latest of these with their emphasis on loyalty rather than upon duties,²⁰ and of an inter-state treaty. However we categorize it, KBo 4.14 conveys a vivid picture of the disorder besetting Hatti during its years of ultimate decline.

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