

The War with Alašiya in KBo 12.38

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The Hittite text KBo 12.38 is an extremely interesting one: in addition to dating to a period generally lacking in historical news, such as that of the last reigning sovereign of Hattuša, it contains the only existing testimony of the use of naval forces by the Hittite empire¹. The cuneiform text also deals with a particular sanctuary, the “Everlasting Peak” (^{NA4}*hekur* SAG.UŠ), whose location and role have been debated at length².

On a first observation of the tablet, in the II column, between lines 21 and 22, we note a double line indicating a paragraph, which seems to divide it into two distinct texts³. Based on the content, as we shall see, these two main sections can in turn be divided into two parts, with a succession in which two different arguments are repeated and alternated: a) military expeditions against Alašiya⁴ and b) cultic attentions of Šuppiluliuma II who celebrates himself also as the ruler who built or restored the sanctuary ^{NA4}*hekur* SAG.UŠ.

From the very first studies on KBo 12.38, the composite nature of this document has been varyingly interpreted: for Steiner it dealt with the same military operation against Alašiya twice recounted by Šuppiluliuma II (Steiner

¹ Prior to the discovery of the hieroglyphic inscription of the Südburg, KBo 12.38 was also the only certain text concerning the military activity of Šuppiluliuma II (Bemporad 2006: 69-80).

² Cfr. van den Hout 2002: 73-92; Singer 2009: 169-192, and more recently Balza-Mora 2011: 213-225, with bibliography.

³ This composite aspect is rendered even more evident by the gaps in the upper and lower parts of the tablet which, rendering obscure several passages at the beginning and at the end of the various columns, make this division into four parts even more pronounced.

⁴ This realm, as we know, corresponds to the island of Cyprus or to a part of it.

1962: 130-138), while for Otten it referred to two distinct offensives, both conducted by Šuppiluliuma II, the first against the king of Alašiya and the second against an unidentified enemy⁵. Later, Güterbock, too, supported the theory of the two different expeditions, but in his opinion, the first one was led by the father of Šuppiluliuma II, Tutḫaliya IV⁶.

Following the initial gap, the narration remains in the first person for the rest of the text; for several authors, the first person singular in the I column (4-6) would therefore refer to the artificer of the previous conquest and subjugation of Alašiya⁷, while only starting from the II column, would the subject be identifiable with the document's author, Šuppiluliuma II.

In our opinion, as we shall attempt to point out, the most realistic and sustainable hypothesis, however, appears to be that the author of the text in both cases speaks of his own undertakings, in which he took active part, and that he refers to himself, naturally, in the first person.

The assumption that the sovereign had picked up the first part of KBo 12.38, and therefore the first person pronoun (*uk*), from a hieroglyphic inscription carved on a statue of Tutḫaliya IV indeed appears criticisable, as has already been noted by Bolatti Guzzo and Marazzi Bolatti (2004: 167-168) who agree with the theory proposed by Steiner, and hypothesis that the two parts of KBo 12.38 are a sort of repetition and clarification of the narration of the same events, with Šuppiluliuma II as protagonist (Steiner 1962: 133).

These authors admit, however, that part of the event narrated in the first section of the text, which has been lost, could be contemporaneous to the final phase of the reign of Tutḫaliya IV.

The first part of the tablet, after a gap of a couple of lines, speaks of the subjugation of Alašiya and its subjection to tributes⁸. After this historical

⁵ For Otten, this hostile force could be traced to the Sea Peoples (1963: 13-23).

⁶ Güterbock 1967: 73-81. Cfr. in this regard also Kümmel 1985: 492-495 and Singer 2009: 182-186.

⁷ Güterbock therefore proposes to integrate the initial gap of KBo 12.38 (I 1-2) with the name of Tutḫaliya, accompanied by the royal title; the text would thus celebrate two distinct military operations led in different historical periods: the first attributable to Tutḫaliya and immortalised on his statue erected by his son Šuppiluliuma II, the second conducted by Šuppiluliuma himself and plausibly celebrated on the rock of Nišantepe (Güterbock 1967: 73 ff. Cfr. also Lehmann 1979: 486 and Hawkins 1995: 59 ff.).

⁸ As far as the nature of the goods mentioned in KBo 12.38 (col. I 13-23) and falling within the tributes imposed on Alašiya by the Hittites, in addition to gold and *gayatum* (a much sought-after cereal product), we find copper (URUDU) that Alašiya supplied in abundance, also thanks to its favourable location on the sea which facilitated its transport and trade. Copper must have been extremely

excursus, which occupies the rest of the I column⁹ and which, we too feel, could already represent a section referred to Šuppiluliuma II, in the following column we find the latter presenting his genealogy, tracing his direct descent from his ancestor Muršili II (II 6-9), and then declaring that he has placed a cultic statue in the ^{NA4}*hekur* SAG.UŠ (II 17) (see Balza – Mora 2011: 213-225), a Mausoleum he claims to have built¹⁰.

In line with the hypothesis upheld by Bolatti Guzzo and Marazzi, it could also be objected that there would have been no sense in Šuppiluliuma II celebrating the paternal expedition (col. I) (2004: 155-185) and then immediately afterwards priding himself as ruler or his own commitment as warrior and builder of the mountain sanctuary. All the more so because in this auto-celebration Šuppiluliuma II, in our opinion, seems to place himself in opposition to his father Tuthaliya IV. Unlike him, Tuthaliya IV would not succeed in erecting the divine statue (II 4-5) which, therefore, evidently, did not represent his deceased father:

ki-i-ma-za ALAM [A-BU-YA
^m*Tu-ud-ḫa-li-ya-aš U[L DÛ-at*¹¹

We must also bear in mind that Šuppiluliuma II was not appointed successor to the throne directly by Tuthaliya IV: this text could therefore already suggest, in a formal tone of filial respect and legitimacy (col. II, lines 11-16), also a subtle sentiment of resentment and revenge towards his father, which appears more evident, as we shall see further on, in another document that deals with Alašiya, KBo 1239, and which could therefore trace back to a later period, when the succession to the throne was by then consolidated¹².

necessary for a great military power like Ḫatti, especially in a period in which Assyrian expansionism could have posed difficulties for the importations from the eastern areas, such as the mines of Ergani Maden, in the southeast Anatolian. Cfr. Muhly 1973: 89 ff., Machinist 1982: 266 and Singer 2006: 255-258.

⁹ Carruba (1973: 42) further divides this first column into two paragraphs: the first (1-9) would belong to the “annalistic” genre, the second (10-25) to that of “treaties”.

¹⁰ Based on the narration, Šuppiluliuma II would thus have succeeded in recovering the divine favour for himself and for his people, appeasing the angry divinity perhaps following the scarce attention to the religious sphere shown during the brief and litigious reign of his predecessor Arnuwanda III. In this sense, the use of the verb *waršiya-*, “to give peace” (II 21 and IV 6) may correspond to the Hittite ruler’s desire to re-establish, with these cultural undertakings, the divine favour and protection for himself and for his people.

¹¹ The integrations of the gaps correspond to those proposed by Güterbock (1967: 76); see also Bolatti Guzzo – Marazzi 2004: 174-175.

¹² Both KBo 12.38 and KBo 12.39 come from the archive of the “House on the Hill”; see Torri 2008: 774 and 780.

The fact that he presents his own genealogy, which narrates actions of war that can probably be traced to an early subjugation of Alašiya¹³, not at the beginning of the text but only further on in the text, in connection with the second expedition, could be explained precisely with the fact that the previous operations of war, though led by Šuppiluliuma II himself in the role of field commander, had officially and formally been attributed to Tuḫaliya IV, still alive and reigning.

The second part of the tablet begins with line 22 (col. II), right after the interruption of the double line indicating a new paragraph; here Šuppiluliuma II again repeats his titles and royal ancestry:

§22 ú-uk-za ^dUTU-ŠI Ta-bar-na-aš

§23 ^mKÛ.GA.[TÚ]L-aš LUGAL.GAL LUGAL KUR ^{uru}[Ha]t-ti

§24 UR.SAG DUMU ^mTu-ud-ḫa-li-ya

§25 LUGAL.GAL LUGAL KUR ḫat-ti UR.SAG

§26 [DUMU.D]UMU-ŠÚ ŠA^mPA-ši-ILI^{LIM} LUGAL.GAL U[R.SAG]

This genealogical presentation comes only a few lines after the previous one (II 6-10)¹⁴, which would appear somewhat singular in a unitary text, and can represent a consequence of the particular characteristics of this document¹⁵. In fact, in our hypothesis, only the narration of the second expedition led by Šuppiluliuma II as ruler, unlike the first, could derive from or be

¹³ The first column of KBo 12.38 largely expounds on the tributes imposed on Alašiya as a subjugated state; these goods established in favour of the Sun Goddess of Arinna are divided into four equal parts between the same Goddess and the Gods of the Tempest of Zippalanda, ḫatti and Nerik (I 13-20). Alongside the king of Alašiya, there is also mention of an important personage called ^{lu}pidduri (I 10), who seems to be personally responsible, together with the king of Cyprus, for fulfilling these obligations imposed on the island by the victorious Hittite ruler. The tablet KBo 12.39, at line Vo 5, also mentions the ^{lu}pidduri, who could therefore be a Hittite functionary involved in controlling and supervising the dispatch of merchandise and tributes to ḫatti. In this case, too, the personage, like the ruler of Cyprus, is not referred to by name. Cfr. Holmes 1969: 343 ff.; Imparati 1974: 72 ff.; Otten 1976: 27; Hellbing 1979: 58. See also Carruba 1968: 24; Heinhold Kraemer *et al.* 1979: 19 and 32, and also the entry ^{lu}pidduri, in CHD, vol. P, fasc. 3, 368.

¹⁴ Going back to his direct predecessor, ḫattušili III, Šuppiluliuma II starts the second part of the text with the words “I (am) My Sun, the Tabarna Šuppiluliuma, the Great King, King of ḫatti, Hero”, a formula that begins with the personal pronoun “I” (*uk*) which precedes the titles. Cfr. about this Poetto 1993: 21; Hawkins 1995: 20 and 59; Giorgieri-Mora 1996: 84; Laroche 1970: 98.

¹⁵ Cfr. Giorgieri 1995: 278 ff.; Klengel 1999: 312-313. A similar introduction in fact recurs in the quite damaged inscription of Nišantepe to ḫattuša and shows the same compositional scheme (the personal pronoun preceding the titles); cfr. about this Bolatti Guzzo-Marrazzi 2004: 162 ff.

connected to a royal hieroglyphic inscription. For this reason the first genealogy appears exclusively to refer to the construction of the everlasting peak, which Šuppiluliuma II would have erected or readjusted when he was already king and compensates for its absence at the beginning of the text, where it was not possible to insert it. If such were not the case, its repetition in the same section of the tablet would have no sense.

In the second part, the ruler can begin his own genealogy and then describe the war undertakings accomplished as the legitimately reigning sovereign: in fact, in the IV column, Šuppiluliuma II celebrates himself as a builder without repeating his genealogy. Therefore the double line of separation, which was certainly not coincidental, might have been placed there precisely to separate the two genealogies, situated in the same column and only a few lines apart: it would have served to render less evident the particular repetition within the document and also to separate the two war campaigns against Alašiya, the first of which was led by Šuppiluliuma II but still, as hypothesized, under the reign of Tuḫaliya IV.

Furthermore, the reference to the sanctuary ^{NA4}*hekur* SAG.UŠ in both parts of KBo 12.38 could instead respond to a criterion of unification, bringing the two parts of the text back to a single document apparently destined to the religious institution, but in reality principally aimed at the self-glorification of Šuppiluliuma II, who celebrates himself as a warrior and devout builder¹⁶.

If we therefore suppose that the text deals with two distinct expeditions led by Šuppiluliuma II himself, it is necessary in any event to explain how Alašiya, after not many years, had again evaded Hittite control¹⁷, evidently also ceasing to dispatch the precious tributes and the established supplies to Ḫattuša¹⁸, and why the landing on the island and the naval encounters are

¹⁶ This alternation of topics, which is one of the text's most characteristic elements, leads us to suppose that this is not a question of a document concerning a single event and conceived in a single moment, but of a reformulation carried out by Šuppiluliuma II.

¹⁷ There are not many signs to date the onset of an effective Hittite control over Alašiya but it can be hypothesized that already during the middle kingdom of the Hittites they had contracted advantageous relations with this potentate, which was perhaps subjugated for good only in the late-imperial age. Cfr. about this de Martino 2008: 258.

¹⁸ As far as the real motivations of Šuppiluliuma II's undertaking at Cyprus are concerned, it appears evident that this island played a fundamental role in the political and economic system of the Hittite empire, which was unlikely to tolerate the loss or even the slackening of economic relations with this potentate. The continuation of trade exchanges and the re-establishment of these supplies from Alašiya would have induced Šuppiluliuma II to re-establish as soon as possible Hittite control over the island, which in addition to being, as we have already mentioned, one of the principal

recalled only in the second part of KBo 12.38, which describes the succession of the military operations of the second expedition.

Concerning the latter question, if this campaign were effectively organized and carried out by Šuppiluliuma II already in the capacity as legitimate ruler, we can believe that in a celebrative perspective, it required a greater echo than the first campaign, which he had led simply as a general which would have been dismissed briefly in the very first lines of KBo 12.38.

The political and economic results of this first campaign appear, moreover, to be quite limited in time inasmuch as, as we have already noted, the control over Alašiya seems not to have lasted for long and the island could have taken advantage of the Hittite army's engagement on the eastern front, towards the end of the reign of Tuḫaliya IV, to break free of the heavy impositions of Ḫatti, counting on a decisive and final victory of the Assyrian army which, however, evidently never occurred (Mora 2005: 245-256).

In writing the first part of KBo 12.38 Šuppiluliuma II could therefore have reduced the description of the military operations to a minimum to the advantage of a detailed description of the tributes imposed, which finds ample space in all the second part of the I column and which, indirectly, confirms the importance and the urgency to re-establish such an important source of goods and tributes by means of yet another expedition, the principal phases of which can now find the proper emphasis in the detailed account of the battles he won (col. III) in his capacity as ruling sovereign.

Bolatti Guzzo and Marrazzi furthermore affirm that the first two lines of KBo 12.38, irremediably illegible, in addition to the ruler's self-presentation, also contained the narration of the phases of the conflict (2004: 165). The two scholars, however, do not explain how the ruler's self-presentation, which in the titles of Šuppiluliuma II occupied lines 6-9 and 22-26 (col. II), could find sufficient space to be concentrated in only two lines at the beginning of the I column, along with the antecedents of the war and the capture of the king of Alašiya. This fact could be explained only with the hypothesis that Šuppiluliuma II, not yet king, referred to himself in a concise manner, simply in the first person, as also occurs later in lines 4-6.

suppliers of copper and wood in the near-eastern area in that period, also constituted a privileged location for trade exchanges and for the transit of goods and grain from Egypt: it was therefore necessary to protect and maintain these increasingly more essential supply routes. Cfr. Muhly 1986: 45-61; Bryce 1998: 358 ff.; Bryce 2005: 321-322 and Singer 2006: 255-258.

If this were the case, we are induced to believe the thesis that it was the same writer of the text who also led the first expedition; but unlike the claims of Bolatti Guzzo and Marrazzi, in our opinion, it remains difficult to explain the fact that in the definitive writing of KBo 12.38, the accounting of the subjugation and imposition of tributes, described in such detail (col. I 13-20), precedes the detailed description of the naval battle and the disembarkation narrated in the III column, unless we are dealing precisely with two distinct campaigns that occurred in completely different historical and political periods.

As far as the second part of KBo 12.38 is concerned, in comparing the reformulated text of the hieroglyphic inscription of Nišantepe (universally attributed to Šuppiluliuma II)¹⁹ with lines 22-27 of the II column, Laroche points out a close parallelism between the two texts, confirming the claims of Güterbock (Güterbock 1967: 80; Laroche 1970: 93-98), according to whom the military undertaking of Šuppiluliuma II mentioned in KBo 12.38 (III 5-14) would constitute the cuneiform representation of this hieroglyphic inscription²⁰.

If we accept this hypothesis, it is indeed only in the second part of the text of KBo 12.38, however, that we can find a coincidence with the royal hieroglyphic inscription, inasmuch as Šuppiluliuma II could have had his military campaigns inscribed in symbolic sites of Ḫattuša, exclusively once he had become the effective ruling king.

The Hittite King describes in the first person how he undertook the expedition against Alašiya and tells of how he succeeded in conquering and burning, in three successive clashes, the ships of Alašiya that confronted him (III 5-9); this naval victory would have opened the way to disembarking Hittite troops on the island, followed by a battle on land with its predictable outcome (III 10-12)²¹, which would have brought Alašiya back under Hittite influence (Carruba 1977: 151). In this second section, too, the historical events precede a part referring to the cultual activity of Šuppiluliuma II in relation to the NA4 *hekur* SAG.UŠ. (col. IV)²²

¹⁹ The rock inscription of Nišantepe can be attributed to Šuppiluliuma II based on the breadth and form of the winged sun, as well as the writing of the name, still in part distinguishable. Cfr. Neve 1993: 63.

²⁰ For Marrazzi 1990: 35, “Precisely the possibility, inherent in the hieroglyphic system, to give life to a twofold visual and linguistic code of interpretation, makes this kind of inscription particularly suited to propagandistic-celebrative purposes”.

²¹ See Steiner 1962: 131; Güterbock 1967: 80; Otten 1976: 28.

²² This second section also tells of a significant designation of seventy villages for the upkeep of this sanctuary. This designation, along with the concession of several privileges and exemptions in

As far as a possible chronological placement of the expedition to Alašiya led by Šuppiluliuma II already in the capacity of king is concerned, Hoffner maintains that this undertaking took place in an epoch later than that of the expedition against Tarḫuntašša narrated in the Südburg, in a period in which the threat of the Sea Peoples would have been more consistent. Precisely for this reason, according to Hoffner, the victory of Šuppiluliuma II at Alašiya was not immortalized in the Südburg along with the conquests in southern Anatolia²³.

Based on chronological considerations and an examination of content, this reconstruction presents several difficulties, in our opinion. In fact, if Šuppiluliuma II's victorious expedition to Alašiya had been celebrated autonomously on the rock of Nišantepe²⁴, it would be comprehensible that it found no place in the inscription of Chamber 2 in the Südburg, even supposing that it occurred prior to the expedition against Tarḫuntašša, as Hoffner sustains²⁵. This is because this inscription seems to record conquests belonging to a completely distinct political-military context that refers to a single campaign of Šuppiluliuma II which presumably took place in the span of a single year and in a precise geographic ambit²⁶.

If we instead admit that the naval conflict with Alašiya is not mentioned in the inscription of the Südburg, not because chronologically later, but because it would date back to a different period of the reign of Šuppiluliuma II and to another historical context, we could consider several aspects that seem to indicate that the campaign on Cyprus in reality took place prior to the expedition in southern Anatolia:

- 1) In KBo 12.38, though in a self-celebrative context, references indeed emerge about the figure of Tuḫaliya IV, which cannot be found in other texts of Šuppiluliuma II; this vaguely polemical comparison with

favour of the Mausoleum (IV 8-14), could also represent the official occasion for which the document under examination was written.

²³ Hoffner 1992: 49. Differently cfr. de Martino 2007: 485; 2008: 249.

²⁴ Hawkins (1995: 59), expresses certainty for this identification, proposed by Güterbock 1967: 79 ff.; Singer 2009: 183.

²⁵ Hoffner 1992: 48 ff.

²⁶ The succession of countries mentioned in this inscription appears to lead back to a geographically coherent route, which seems to lead to the objective in itself most important and representative of the expedition: the conquest of Tarḫuntašša. Cfr. about this Poetto 1993: 21ff.; Giorgieri – Mora 1996: 94 and Melchert 2002: 137-143.

his father seems to fit in better with the early period of his reign²⁷, when Šuppiluliuma II could have been in search of a form of religious legitimation, after a military legitimation²⁸.

- 2) The signs of the inscription of Nišantepe²⁹, for what remains of them, as in the inscriptions of Tutḫaliya IV of Yalburt and Emirgazi, have a considerably more elegant rendering than the hieroglyphic signs of Chamber 2 whose text, from the linguistic and syntactical viewpoint, is quite unique³⁰. Moreover, Chamber 1, the same reliefs of Chamber 2, as well as several parts of the entire complex of the Südburg, show an evident state of incompleteness³¹. Given that this structure probably housed the records of events occurring at times near its preparation, if we interpret this state of incompleteness of Chamber 2 as an indication for its late dating, the same campaign in southern Anatolia narrated in this singular inscription could be dated to quite an advanced phase of the Hittite empire and, consequently, of the reign of Šuppiluliuma II³².

In short, after the early phase of his reign, probably characterized by a serious institutional crisis³³, Šuppiluliuma could have succeeded in consolidating his own position and in undertaking, with a relatively calm internal front, the expedition to Cyprus spoken of in KBo 12.38. The military activity in southern Anatolia reported in the inscription of the Südburg seems instead to date to a later period of the reign of Šuppiluliuma II.

These two war campaigns, very significant from both the military and political perspectives, therefore, in addition to belonging to the clearly distinct

²⁷ Perhaps precisely during the very first years of his reign.

²⁸ Only on his return from Alašiya could he probably fulfil the cultural commitments towards Tutḫaliya IV. Otherwise Singer 1985: 121.

²⁹ Whence, as already mentioned, Suppiluliuma II's expedition at Alašiya would have been resumed.

³⁰ The latter inscription is also characterised by the few words rendered phonetically and, in particular, by the lack of conjunctions between the phrases. In addition, the type of relief of Chamber 2, which is particularly flat, seems to reference the reliefs of Alaca Höyük, while several expressions of the same inscription seem to draw it closer to the post-Hittite inscriptions of Kizildağ-Karadağ. Cfr. Hawkins 1990: 306-311; Hawkins 1992: 269; Hawkins 1995: 22; see also Hawkins 1996: 358 and the review by Poetto 1998: 110.

³¹ This condition can also be found in other buildings of the capital and at Alaca Höyük. Cfr. Kohlmeyer 1983: 34-43; Neve 1993: 74 and Neve 1994: 213-226.

³² Cfr. in this regard Singer 1997: 67 and Giorgieri – Mora 1996: 94.

³³ This period could be that of several texts of oaths, including KBo 4.14, which probably served to strengthen an internal political front that had been evidently put to the test and weakened by the brief reign of Arnuwanda III. See also Klengel 1999: 297 ff., with related bibliography.

historical phases could also chronologically be placed many years apart from one another. In this case, the possibility could not be excluded that in this interval of time Šuppiluliuma II could have accomplished other military campaigns of which, unfortunately, we have no news³⁴.

The campaign of Šuppiluliuma II at Alašiya has at times been placed in relation to the Hittite attempt to protect the island from the Sea Peoples or, in any event, it has been connected to the disorder created by these populations³⁵. In this perspective, it has also been proposed to identify $LÚKUR^{HIA} ŠA$ KUR *A-la-ši-ya*, that is “the enemies of the country of Alašiya” mentioned in KBo 12.38 (III 12), with these populations and to interpret the victorious expedition of Šuppiluliuma II as a desperate, as well as episodic, and vain reaction of the Hittite ruler to the attempted invasion of the Sea Peoples against the Syrian-Anatolian coasts³⁶.

At the current state of studies, this historical reconstruction presents various chronological and interpretative difficulties, especially after the discovery of the hieroglyphic inscription at the Südburg³⁷ and after the general downscaling of the role of the Sea Peoples in the collapse of the Hittite political and military system³⁸.

³⁴ Furthermore, a possible offensive with a negative outcome would be unlikely to find a place among the royal records.

³⁵ In fact, the possibility cannot be excluded that the sea peoples, though not having a primary role in the conflict with Alašiya, might have indirectly influenced the political balance of the island, creating destabilising effects and giving rise to a series of even far-reaching rebellions and regional political demands, cfr. in this regard Otten 1963: 22; Otten 1976: 27; Singer 1985: 122; Liverani 1988: 634; Hoffner 1992: 48-49; Yakar 1993: 14-15; Neve 1993: 10; Neu 1995: 122-123.

³⁶ According to Lehmann (1970: 66) this undertaking was plausibly made possible precisely by the prior political annihilation of Alašiya by these invading peoples who would have used the island as a base for their later offensives. For other hypotheses see also Muhly 1984: 40 ff., Drew 1993: 21-29, Liverani 1995: 113-117; Bryce 2003: 83 ff.

³⁷ This inscription, which could belong to a very late period of the reign of Šuppiluliuma II, contains no direct reference to new groups of invaders and, significantly, tells of the construction or reconstruction of various cities. Cfr. however Singer (1997: 67) where it is affirmed: “In short, a sequence of campaigns to Alašia first, to Lukka and Tarhunšašša after, would make good historical sense in the context of the last-ditch Hittite defence against the sea-borne enemy who invaded Cyprus first, the Anatolian and Syrian coast thereafter”. Cfr. moreover Bittel 1983: 49 ff.; Yakar 1993: 21-23; Liverani 1988: 629; Liverani 1995: 115.

³⁸ It is not to be excluded that these populations, contrary to assertions by Lehmann, (1979: 481 ff.), could have settled in the regions of western Anatolia in a much later period, as a consequence to the power vacuum resulting from the Hittite decline, without having been either a direct cause or a decisive element. Even though it is undeniable that in several texts of Šuppiluliuma II reference is made to difficult moments of the Hittite dynasty, the hypothesis that the scarcity of texts dating to Šuppiluliuma II was simply attributable to a weak and brief reign appears less sustainable,

Skimming the text of KBo 12.38, as we said, we note that while in the narration of the first expedition the enemy is expressly presented as the king of Alašiya, in the account of the second campaign, Šuppiluliuma II generically refers to the enemies that come from Alašiya (III, 12-13), without making any reference to the ruler of Alašiya and to the *pidduri*³⁹.

However, the offensive against Alašiya led by Šuppiluliuma II in the capacity of ruler does not at all appear to be a chance naval battle but an operation divided into several strategic phases, in which Alašiya would have attempted three times to prevent the landing on the island and its inevitable new subjugation (also Hellbing 1979: 54). In fact, in our opinion, the triple naval victory narrated by Šuppiluliuma II (KBo 12.38, III 6-9), though in the celebrative emphasis of the account, appears to truly represent a succession of battles between the imperial fleet making way towards the island and the fleet of Alašiya, which attempted to block Šuppiluliuma II far from the Cypriot coasts⁴⁰.

The fact that reference to the ruler of Alašiya is not repeated, in our opinion is not significant, if we consider that the latter had already been named in relation to the first campaign and that this first expedition seems not to have been very decisive. Moreover, if this expedition had been led by Tuḫaliya IV instead of by Šuppiluliuma II, the latter would not have missed the opportunity to highlight the fact that in the end the king of Alašiya had been definitively defeated by himself and not by his father.

Based on the above indications we can gather that KBo 12.38, though divided and organised in several arguments, overall provides a coherent historical picture, which induces us to identify the ^{LÚ}KÚR^{HI.A} ŠA KUR A-la-ši-ya (III 12) and the ^{GIŠ}MÁ^{HI.A} ŠA KUR A-la-ši-ya (III 5) not with new groups of invaders moving towards Anatolia, but with regular forces of Alašiya

inasmuch that it is reasonable to think that the more recent and important texts followed the Hittite court at the moment the capital ḫattuša was abandoned. See Mora 1988: 568-569; de Martino 1993: 237 ff.; Bemporad 2006: 69-80.

³⁹ See de Martino 2008: 247-263, with bibliography.

⁴⁰ Alašiya would have attempted to ward off a Hittite landing on its soil, as the imperial forces would have easily got the upper hand over the defensive troops stationed on the island, as KBo 12.38 (10-16) effectively seems to narrate. This victory was also made possible by the involvement of Ugarit and other potentates, such as Amurri, in fitting out a war fleet without ḫatti thereby producing a war effort comparable to what would be necessary to confront the Assyrian army on the eastern front; this would demonstrate that Hittite imperial power was still quite sound. Cfr. Lebrun 1995: 84-88; Singer 1997: 66 ff.; Hawkins 1995: 54 ff. Furthermore, see Beal 1992: 207; Bryce 2005: 332 ff.; Singer 2006: 250.

deployed in defense of the island. In support of this hypothesis, other elements can also be pointed out:

- a) The two parts KBo 12.38 can be divided into, as we have seen, are closely related to one another; the common motive seems to be the direct participation of Šuppiluliuma II in the two victorious expeditions against Alašiya.
- b) The fact that in KBo 12.38 (III 5-13) the author never mentions the rival ruler, a fact used by several scholars to support the hypothesis that identifies Šuppiluliuma II's enemies as the Sea Peoples, in reality does not represent a probative element, inasmuch as in the hieroglyphic inscription of the Südburg, too, only the various countries defeated and subjected by Šuppiluliuma II are spoken of, without their respective rulers ever being cited⁴¹. Moreover, the ruler of Cyprus, already defeated and humiliated at Ḫattuša before the royal court, was perhaps no longer considered a king to all effects at the moment of the second expedition.
- c) Furthermore, in the event the second expedition to Alašiya had effectively preceded the construction of the ^{NA4}*hekur* SAG.UŠ, these cultual attentions by Šuppiluliuma II do not seem to be compatible with the hypothesis that identifies the previous naval campaign as an extreme and ephemeral attempt by the last Hittite ruler to contain the relentless diffusion of the Sea Peoples⁴².
- d) Finally, in our opinion, it is unlikely that Šuppiluliuma II, celebrating his naval campaign, could have generically grouped the various populations that made up the Sea Peoples under the common denomination of ^{LÚ}KÚR^{HI.A} ŠA KUR *A-la-ši-ya*, defining the enemy fleet simply as ^{GIŠ}MÁ^{HI.A} ŠA KUR *A-la-ši-ya* (III 5), inasmuch as this would not have been in line with the Hittite ruler's tone of self-glorification⁴³.

Another late-imperial document that seems to be connected to the events narrated in KBo 12.38 and which can help us to understand the political relations between Ḫatti and Alašiya in the epoch of Šuppiluliuma II is KBo 12.39⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Cfr. the translation by Hawkins 1995: 23.

⁴² See Lehmann 1970: 66 and Singer 1985: 100-123.

⁴³ The Egyptian rulers, for example, did not miss an opportunity to celebrate, with a wealth of details, with inscriptions and also depictions, their victory over the various ethnic groups that belonged to the Sea Peoples: Merneptah on the so-called "Stele of Israel" and Ramesses III in his funerary temple of Medinet Habu, where he listed by name the various Sea Peoples he succeeded in defeating in the eighth year of his reign (Helck 1976: 7-21 and Hölbl 1983: 128-130).

⁴⁴ For an attribution of the text to Šuppiluliuma II, see in particular de Martino 2007: 483-492.

The central argument of KBo 12.39 appears to be represented by the problems pertaining to the custody and surveillance of the Hittite prisoners sent to Alašiya, in that it occupies almost the entire part preserved of the tablet's verso. This text instead does not appear to mention the normal extradition procedures between allied countries, as generally occurs in international treaties⁴⁵, and could therefore consist not so much in a veritable treaty but in a development or a renewal of earlier Hittite dispositions towards the island potentate that had again been subjugated⁴⁶.

Again in KBo 12.39, lines Ro 17-18, in an extremely fragmentary context, we find several interesting references:

Vo-17) Š]A ^{DU}ku-iš ú-e-da-aš LUGAL KUR ^{URU}Aš-šur-z[a
[The temple of] the god of the Tempest who built (it)? The king of
Assyria [⁴⁷

Vo-18) a-ru-]na-an ku-iš za-a-iš ^{GIŠ}KÀ.GAL-x[
the sea] who crossed (it)? The great gate [

In these lines Šuppiluliuma II seems to be referring to himself, indirectly glorifying himself with rhetorical questions as a builder and perhaps, as we shall see, with a veiled antagonism towards his father. We could therefore also integrate the illegible part, translating:

“the king of Assyria [who confronted (fought) him)?]⁴⁸”

It could therefore be Šuppiluliuma II himself who alludes to military confrontations with the Assyrians and boasts of having, in any event, confronted the enemies in spite of the inauspicious outcome of the battles. Later, the sovereign would have “crossed (*zaiš*) the sea”⁴⁹, and then landed on the island,

⁴⁵ It appears significant that in the epoch of KBo 12.39 recourse, as previously, was made to Alašiya for the custody of political prisoners. Cfr. del Monte 1981: 212 ff.; Liverani 1964: 111-115; 1965: 328 ff.

⁴⁶ Another late-imperial text in which Alašiya undoubtedly appears under Hittite control is a very fragmentary letter in Akkadian (KBo 1.26), which for large passages proves incomprehensible. This missive appears to consist of a pressing request for goods by Ḫatti. This supply consisted, in particular, of a certain quantity of gold (GUŠKIN^{MES}), utensils and vases also in gold of good quality (UNUTE^{MES} SIG₅ GUŠKIN), rhyta (BIBRI) and, for what we can still understand, accessories and saddlery for horses. Cfr. Knapp 1980: 43-47; Heinhold Kraemer-Hoffmann-Kammenhuber-Mauer 1979: 316; Klinger-Neu 1990: 141 and 156; Klengel 1999: 285 and 302; de Martino 2008: 250; Goren *et al.* 2011: 686.

⁴⁷ See de Martino 2007: 488. Cfr. also Vigo 2008: 197 ff. and 225.

⁴⁸ Cfr. Singer 1985: 122-123, and lastly Bányai 2011: 233.

⁴⁹ See de Martino 2007: 489-490 and in this regard; cfr. also the translation provided by Otten 1963: 12.

as narrated in KBo 12.38, thus passing through the great gate of Alašiya to complete his victory on the field.

What personage, unlike Šuppiluliuma II, did not succeed in crossing the sea? In light of what has been said, this could be Tutḫaliya IV, or it could refer, as Meriggi suggested, to the Assyrian ruler⁵⁰. Šuppiluliuma II could have grasped the opportunity to reaffirm his hegemony in this area of the eastern Mediterranean as opposed to his rival Aššur, recalling in KBo 12.39 having confronted the Assyrian army and crossing the sea, in a tone of antagonism with the Assyrian power⁵¹.

It therefore seems presumable that KBo 12.39 falls in a period in which the expansionism of Aššur was still active, at least as a threat, in a climate of political rivalry with Ḫatti⁵². This element provides no certain chronological indication, and yet it appears consistent with an attribution of the text to a phase successive to the first and second expeditions to Cyprus of Šuppiluliuma II, but in any event belonging to the first phase of his reign.

The Assyrian kingdom was undoubtedly attracted by the economic dynamism of the Cypriot-Anatolian areas and, as we have seen, following several unfortunate military campaigns by the Hittites on the eastern front, could have been tempted to expand its own political influence over geographical areas from which until that moment it had been almost completely barred. The writer of KBo 12.39 could have inserted the reference to the friction with the Assyrians also as a warning inasmuch as, though certainly not dealing with a victorious episode, it demonstrated in any event the Hittite capability to react also in the easternmost areas of the empire in the face of a powerful enemy⁵³.

⁵⁰ Saporetti (1977: 325) cites the presentation of P. Meriggi at the first Italian Conference on the Ancient Near East (1976); in addition to integrating the word [*aru*]nan in line Ro 18, and interpreting the “king of Assyria” as the name proposes the translation: “the king of Assyria who never crossed the sea, the gate [of Alašia he never passed through]”.

⁵¹ After re-establishing his control over the island, Šuppiluliuma II therefore dedicated himself to reconquering, also on the religious level, the divine protection of his ancestors, which due to previous disorders appeared, as we have seen, seriously compromised.

⁵² Carruba (1968: 23) asserts the recency of KBo 12.38 with respect to KBo 12.39, in that the latter text would differ in the use of several graphic signs and of certain lexical and syntactical forms from all the other documents attributable to Šuppiluliuma II, including also KBo 12.38. Differently, cfr. Heinhold Kraemer *et al.* 1979: 19, 32. See in this regard also Singer 1985: 121; Klinger – Neu 1990: 141 and 156, n. 43; Neve 1994: 213-226; Seeher 1997: 336 ff.

⁵³ Cfr. in this regard also Freu 2007: 285-286 and Singer 2008: 223-246, with bibliography.

This passage could thus also be tied to the following line, (“the sea] who crossed it?”)⁵⁴, in which the Hittite ruler dares to celebrate himself even in comparison to the Assyrian ruler (perhaps still Tukultī-Ninurta I) who, though endowed with military glory, had never been able to organise a naval expedition up to the gates of Cyprus⁵⁵.

Or, as we have said, we can also conjecture that in the aforementioned lines Šuppiluliuma II grasped the opportunity to boast of having directly engaged the Assyrian army on the field, unlike Tutḫaliya IV and on his order, as well as having crossed the sea to attack Alašiya, which he himself - and not his father - had succeeded in defeating in battles at sea and on land⁵⁶.

This could also indirectly confirm the assertions of a previous paper in which it is hypothesised that Šuppiluliuma II himself, again in the capacity of a simple field commander, participated in the battles with the Assyrian army at Niḫirya (Bemporad 2002: 71-86) and that he again (evidently after having become king and with a more peaceful eastern front) crossed the sea and landed at Alašiya.

KBo 12.39 should therefore be successive to KBo 12.38 and to the re-establishment of friendly relations and tributes achieved with the second military operation at Alašiya.

Recapitulating, we could hypothesise this sequence of events:

- 1) first expedition against Alašiya, led by Šuppiluliuma II exclusively in the capacity of field commander, while Tutḫaliya IV still ruled at ḫattuša;
- 2) battles on the opposite front against the Assyrians, with Šuppiluliuma II again in the capacity as general, at the end of the reign of his father⁵⁷;
- 3) Later, with the pacification of the eastern sector⁵⁸, began an operation on a vast scale with the landing on the island and Šuppiluliuma II by now in the capacity of ruling king.

⁵⁴ Cfr. Singer 1985: 122. See also, in particular, de Martino 2007: 489-490, with n. 58, and Vigo 2008: 227.

⁵⁵ See Meriggi *apud* Saporetti (1977: 325).

⁵⁶ This hypothesis could be strengthened precisely by previous statements in relation to KBo 12.38, where Šuppiluliuma II appears to boast precisely against his father who had not succeeded in erecting the cultual statue spoken of in the first lines of the II col.

⁵⁷ Cfr. Bemporad 2002: 84-85 and Bányai 2011: 209. Differently Singer 1985: 122 and Freu 2007: 280.

⁵⁸ In reality, there was not a great change in political balance: even with the eastern front pacified, ḫatti still probably had a great need for copper from Cyprus. Cfr. also Mora – Giorgieri 2004: 17 and 22; Mora 2005: 248-249; see also de Martino 2007: 489-490.

This succession of events also seems to be reflected by lines Vo 17-18 of KBo 12.39, in which the ruler who confronted the Assyrians and then crossed the sea with a fleet to newly subject the island of Alašiya glorified himself. We could therefore hypothesise that in this treaty or series of dispositions for Alašiya, the Hittite ruler also wanted to recall the battles with the Assyrians that took place during the reign of Tuḫliya IV⁵⁹ and saw him courageously and directly confront the enemy army in the capacity of general of the unfortunate campaign of Niḫirya⁶⁰, thus further exalting his figure as leader compared with that of his father who at the time of the military expedition had remained on the throne of Ḫattuša⁶¹.

This interpretation could therefore confirm the attribution of KBo 4.14 to Šuppiliuma II⁶²; text KBo 12.38 would in fact present a picture of the events prior to and following the events of Niḫirya: with the pacification of the eastern sector, at the end of the battles which seem to have taken place towards the end of the reign of Tuḫliya IV, and with the re-establishment of a political entente and a *status quo* on the Assyrian border (Freu 2003: 111), Šuppiliuma II was able to launch an expedition in the western part of the empire in order to recover Alašiya⁶³. Only many years later, in our opinion, was he able to carry out the campaign in Anatolia that we are familiar with thanks to the inscription of the Südburg⁶⁴.

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⁵⁹ Cfr. de Martino 2007: 490 and Mora – Giorgieri 2004: 13 n. 44.

⁶⁰ During a late period of his reign, Tuḫliya IV indeed sent his son Šuppiliuma II to confront the Assyrian army. This conflict, which should be downscaled in affects and duration, in the short run probably also produced internal political unrest, which may have also taken on the form of compromising Šuppiliuma's succession to his deceased father's throne in favour of his brother Arnuwanda III. See in this regard Bemporad 2002: 76-77. Differently Freu 2007: 291-292. Cfr. also Giorgieri – Mora 2010: 104-141.

⁶¹ Also de Martino 2007: 489, agrees with Otten (1963: 13-23) in sustaining that in KBo 12.39 Šuppiliuma II does not celebrate his father, but himself and his deeds.

⁶² See Bemporad 2002: 71-86 with bibliography and Bányai 2011: 207-237.

⁶³ Narrated, as hypothesised, in the second part of KBo 12.38.

⁶⁴ In a period in which the Hittite diplomacy was perhaps already at work in view of moving the Hittite capital to the east. Cfr. in this regard Bemporad 2006: 69-80.

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