In the year 1325 B.C., the widow of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun wrote the following lines in a letter to the Hittite Great King Suppiluliuma:

My husband has died and I don’t have a son. But they say that you have many sons. If you could give me one son of yours, he could become my husband. … Send me a son of yours and our two great countries will become one!

Who were these Hittites and their king Suppiluliuma, whom the queen of Egypt courted? Where did they come from and where did they go? What was their legacy and what is their importance to us now?

**SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Sometime during the third millennium B.C., a group of Indo-Europeans entered Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) from their homeland in the steppes of southern Russia, north of the Black Sea, and spread all over Anatolia, mixing with the local populations. By 2000 B.C., the ancient Anatolians were speaking several languages, leaving written records that today are being actively studied at the Oriental Institute. The people who settled the central plateau, the Hittites, came to dominate Anatolia for most of the following millennium.

During the period of the Hittite Empire (ca. 1650–1180 B.C.), the Hittites were one of the great powers of the ancient Near East alongside Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia as well as the Mycenaean kings of Greece. In the heyday of Hittite power, the empire stretched from the west coast of Anatolia to the upper Euphrates region in the east and covered much of modern-day Syria in the south. The island of Cyprus likewise fell in their sphere of influence. A remarkably continuous line of kings ruled this vast domain in an efficient system of provinces and provincial capitals from the central seat of administration, Hattusa, some 100 miles east of Ankara. Shortly after 1200 B.C., threatened by incoming hordes from the west, the Hittites decided to abandon their capital and moved toward the southeast, suddenly disappearing from history and taking with them the Hittite language.
THE HITTITE LEGACY

After having been forgotten for almost three thousand years, the impressive legacy of Hittite civilization is being unearthed through excavations begun in the early twentieth century. Remains of Hittite culture have been found all over Anatolia, but the capital of Hattusa, with its gates, sanctuaries, and palaces, is one of the largest and most impressive places of the ancient Near East. The excavations have also brought to light an enormous body of written documents: some 30,000 tablets and fragments of tablets are now known, and each year archaeological excavations add new texts to this corpus:

- letters
- historical texts
- laws and other legal and administrative documents
- treaties and instructions
- myths, prayers, and hymns
- translations and adaptations of foreign literature (among them the Gilgamesh epic)
- oracles and omens
- and a host of magic rituals and scenarios for religious festivals

All these texts allow us insight into a vibrant society matching a deeply felt religiosity to a great sense of realism and political astuteness. This varied corpus of texts often gives us a surprisingly direct and intimate picture of the Hittite ruling class with their all-too-human personal fears and anxieties.

WHY WE STUDY THE HITTITES

Studying Hittite language and culture brings to light some of the foundations of our modern Western civilization. Hittite is the oldest Indo-European language known — older than Greek, Latin, or Sanskrit. As an Indo-European language, Hittite is related to modern-day languages like English: the Hittite word for “water” is watar! But it is not always that transparent. English “who” is also the same word as Hittite kwis!

Despite what is often thought, modern Western civilization did not start with the Greeks. The real cradle of our civilization stood in what is now the Middle East. Many literary and artistic themes and motifs can be traced back directly to that world. The Bible was embedded in ancient Near Eastern society, and the earliest forms of what we call modern science are found in Babylon. Anatolia is the natural bridge between those Western and Eastern worlds and the Hittites and their later descendants in the same area served as intermediaries, handing down ancient Near Eastern culture to the West.

It is the task of Hittitologists to preserve, study, as well as make known and accessible to a wider audience the achievements of Hittite culture and society. The first and most important tool is a good, reliable dictionary based on as much material as possible. That is what the Chicago Hittite Dictionary is.

THE HITTITE DICTIONARY OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, or CHD as we call it, is a comprehensive, bilingual Hittite-English dictionary. The CHD is not just a list of words and their meanings, but rather a lexicon of Hittite society that reflects its ideas and material world in all its aspects. A good dictionary is like an encyclopedia reflecting a culture through its lexicon. Published
šalaštūri-

“canal, ditch”); 2 tallai KÜ.GI 1-EN MUŠAKILU KÜ. GI 2 GIS ša-la-aš-tu-rí GIS-ŠI KÜ.GI GAR.RA ŠA.BA 7 SAG SU ZU₅ AM.SI “Two golden perfume containers(?), one golden MUŠAKILU-implement, two š.-s of wood inlaid with gold, seven of their heads (tops?) are ivory” KUB 12.1 iv 28-29 (inv. of Manninni), ed. Košak, Linguistica 18:102, 106 (no tr.), Siegelová, Verw. 450f. (following sections recording GISŠU.A(-ḫṳ) stools, quivers, bows, arrows and GISBAR KÜN covers/layers (Akk. SIPHUPU):) § 2 GIS ša-la-aš-du-rí ŠA.BA 1-EN HURRI 4 GISBAR. KÜN KÜ.GI 1-EN […] “Two š.-s one of which is Hurrian. Four gold covers/layers, one of which is […]” KUB 42:81:10 (inv. NH), ed. Thehe 10:99, Siegelová, Verw. 492f. associated w. a šušumanni-carr: ta GIS šušumanni x […] n ša-as-ha LUGAL-ud x […] ša-la-aš-tu-[u]-ri-[] […] ANA GAL DUMU.MES.E GAL […] “In a carriage […] the king […] a š. […] to the chief of the palace servants […]”] KUB 30:98 + KUB 30:110 iii 12-15 (fasc. frag.): § 5 GISGIBAŠIŠEŠ 3 ŠI ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] EŠ 2 GISŠU ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] GISŠU ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] KUB 2.12 ii 15-17 (OH/NS), for the dating cf. StBoT 25:37 (“junghethische Niederschrift”), for the emendation cf. StBoT 27:25 n. 9, but incorrectly read as Akkadian. StBoT 25:38 n. 104 of the possible reading KUB 20.16 i 1 as GIS ša-la-aš-[du]-ri-[:]; cf. […] G[a][u][n] 5 ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] and ibid. 2 w. KUB 2.12 ii 17-18 [ ] it is unclear here if the gen. ŠA KISLAŠ the “threshing floor” modifies what precedes it or the following 5 š. […] šAŠ 7 LU.MEŠ AGRIG ienzi […] apē-pat ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] GISŠU ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] GISŠU ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] GISŠU ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:] GISŠU ša-aš-ta-[u]-ri-[:], “Seven administrators make red […]-s. Those same (administrators) pour out […] š.-s are piled in three (piles)” KUB 16:8 i 17-19 (MH/MS?).

On the formation cf. GIS šaš-uru, U(R)U(gal)gal-taš-uru, GIS apatti-uru, GIS giša-taš-uru, GIS giša-taš-uru, etc.

Košak, Linguistica 18 (1978) 111 (“make-up palette”); Siegelová, Verw. (1986) 615 (an implement that can be found among weapons and toiletries).

šalatiya

Lexical and bilingual section

1. greatness: [n]ašša mān ANA DINGIR.MEŠ [ammēš?] / U[?] ŠA DUMU.MES LUGAL TI-tar ha[d]dušaštar […] MU.HA GIDA ŠAL-la-aš-ta[tar] [...] zilatya UL wewakkisišiš / nu-ma muš šān mān DINGIR.MEŠ [UL] / mukkiššiš “If in the future you do not regularly ask the gods for life, god[health, ...], longevity, greatness, val[or ...] [for (lit. of) me] and the princes, and if you do not regularly beseech the gods on my behalf, (let this matter be subject to your oath)” KUB 34:42:7 (instruction).

2. kingship, rulership: ANA “ša-piššiši šEŠ, DUG.GA.YA ANA DUMU.MEŠ 2ŠU DUMU. MEŠ.DUMU. MEŠ ŠU ziliššaššiša ša-la-an-ni ki šiḫša iyun “I made this treaty for the future rulership of Piyaššili, my dear brother, [his] sons and his grandsons” KUB 1.28 obv. 6-10 (treaty, Amm. II), ed. Otten, MIO 4:181; :[...] tar šetišaššiša ša-la-an-ni ki ša-dušu šašša [...] “your […]-ship is provided for […] you for greatness” KUB 3.21 i 3 (hymn to ṢKUR/Adad, OH/NS), ed. Archi, Or NS 52:23, 26; see also above in bil. sec.

Semiotic section (transliteration, translation, text reference, text genre)

On the formation cf. GIS šaš-uru, U(R)U(gal)gal-taš-uru, GIS apatti-uru, GIS giša-taš-uru, GIS giša-taš-uru, etc.

Košak, Linguistica 18 (1978) 111 (“make-up palette”); Siegelová, Verw. (1986) 615 (an implement that can be found among weapons and toiletries).

šalatiya

“The Oriental Institute Chicago Hittite Dictionary Project

3

Page 91 of CHD Š/1 with parts of dictionary indicated.
letter by letter, the CHD is a long-term project and the result of a painstaking process of cultural, historical, and lexical investigation. The CHD is the only such project in the English speaking world. The CHD is published in printed form and, thanks to the World Wide Web, in electronic form as the eCHD, which also has Turkish meanings added to the English.

The CHD is a comprehensive dictionary, covering the entire lexicon known from published texts. Because Hittite is no longer a living language, the CHD is a passive dictionary, that is, it is meant to be used in translating and interpreting the source language (Hittite) into the target language (English) only. In such a field with native speakers no longer available, a top-quality dictionary is the most important tool of every philologist and an indispensable work of reference for historians and all others professionally involved in the study of the ancient Near East. According to its reviewers, the CHD is a top-quality dictionary.

The CHD, the eCHD, and the Future

Dictionary projects like the CHD are long-term undertakings. With a staff of four scholars, the CHD needs many more years to be completed. The CHD project has long been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), but is on its own now. As a consequence, we are building an endowment that will secure the existence of our dictionary project through its completion.

What happened to the letter of the Egyptian queen?

After initial hesitation, Suppiluliuma decided to grant her request and sent one of his sons, Zannanza, off to Egypt. But he was murdered on the way and the two countries never became one.