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Abhandlung

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A Hittite Scribal Tradition Predating the Tablet Collections of Ḫattuša?

The origin of the ‘cushion-shaped’ tablets KBo 3.22, KBo 17.21+, KBo 22.1, and KBo 22.2

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Abstract: This article discusses the origins of a group of four Hittite OS tablets, which share some unique and peculiar features with respect to their shape, spelling conventions and palaeography. It argues that these four tablets are the oldest documents of the Hittite corpus, and that they were not created in Ḫattuša, but have been imported from elsewhere. Originally, they belonged to an older writing tradition, predating the establishment of Ḫattuša as the Hittite capital. This implies that the royal tablet collections in Ḫattuša do not reflect the very first beginnings of Hittite cuneiform, but only the start of a royal administration there. The typical Hittite ductus was already created in the 18th century BCE – in Kuššara, Nēša or elsewhere in Anatolia.

In a 2011 paper on petrographic aspects of some 65 Hittite clay tablets kept in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, Goren/Mommsen/Klinger note that one of them, the OS tablet KBo 3.22 containing the Anitta-text (CTH 1), is made of a somewhat different type of clay than the other examined tablets found in Ḫattuša. They therefore cautiously suggest that this tablet may belong to “an older Hittite writing tradition starting in a different place [than in Ḫattuša]” (2011, 693).

In the present article we will follow up on this intriguing suggestion. We will argue that this idea may very well be true, and may in fact also apply to a small group of other OS tablets, which share some remarkable and unique characteristics with KBo 3.22 with respect to their physical features (notably their ‘cushion-shape’), palaeography and spelling conventions. Moreover, these tablets

all contain texts that were in all likelihood composed *before* the formation of the Hittite royal tablet collections in Ḫattuša. All these facts together imply that this group of tablets may originally stem from elsewhere, predating the establishment of Ḫattuša as the Hittite capital.

In sections 1–3 we will discuss the formal features, palaeography and spelling conventions of these tablets, arguing that they form a coherent group. In section 4, the possible date and place of composition of the texts that these tablets contain will be addressed. We end with a summary of the main conclusions and their implications, providing an outlook for possible further research (sections 5–7).

1 Coherence in tablet shape: ‘cushion-shaped’ tablets

In her monograph on the diplomatic features of Hittite clay tablets, Waal distinguishes several types of tablet shape, one of which is type A IV: rectangular plano-convex tablets of which “the edges are quite round and the obverse is also fairly spherical. At the top and bottom of the tablets [...] there is a flattened circular segment on both sides and the corners of the tablets are very lightly squeezed together. Their appearance has been described as ‘cushion-shaped’” (Waal 2015, 23). According to Waal, there are four tablets that assuredly belong to this group, which are all single-columned. These are:

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1. KBo 3.22 (the Anitta-text, CTH 1);
2. KBo 17.21+ (outline of a part of the KI.LAM festival, CTH 627.3.a);
3. KBo 22.1 ('instruction text' for officials, CTH 272);
4. KBo 22.2 (the Zalpa-text, CTH 3.1).

This group thus includes “some of the tablets that are regarded to be among the oldest Hittite compositions”, and “[o]ne may very cautiously label tablet type IV as one of the oldest – if not the oldest – Hittite tablet type” (Waal *ibid.*).¹

2 Coherence in palaeographic dating: the dating of KBo 22.2

Three of the four documents that have this peculiar ‘cushion-shape’ are generally regarded as showing Old Script (OS): KBo 3.22, KBo 17.21+, and KBo 22.1. The dating of the fourth tablet, KBo 22.2, is somewhat controversial. In his edition of the Zalpa-text, Otten (1973, 3) states that KBo 22.2 is written in an “alter Duktus”, i. e. Old Script. This dating has been followed by, for instance, the Chicago Hittite Dictionary (CHD), which consistently dates KBo 22.2 as “OS” (in all the fascicles that thus far have appeared), and also Hoffner/Melchert (2008, *passim*) date it as “OS”.

A different opinion can be found in the influential Konkordanz der hethitischen Keilschrifttafeln (Hetkonk), however, where KBo 22.2 is palaeographically dated as “mh.”, i. e. as showing Middle Script (MS). This dating has been taken over by, for instance, Holland/Zorman (2007, 14), Groddek (2008, 4), and Gilan (2015, 179). As a justification for this dating, Košak (*apud* Holland/Zorman 2007, 13f.) states that “above all [...] the signs TAR, ID and DA [...] have forms that are characteristically Middle Hittite” (likewise in Hetkonk: “die Zeichen TAR, ID, DA usw. mh.”).

If the Konkordanz’s dating of KBo 22.2 as MS would be correct, it would mean that the four cushion-shaped tablets do not form a coherent group with respect to their dating. However, to our mind, the MS dating of KBo 22.2

cannot be upheld. If we look at the shapes of the signs TAR, ID and DA in KBo 22.2 and compare these to the other texts belonging to the group of cushion-shaped tablets, we see that they do not differ much from each other:²

Tab. 1. Comparison of the signs TAR, ID and DA.

	KBo 22.2 (dating contested)	OS tablets		
		KBo 3.22	KBo 17.21+	KBo 22.1
TAR		(unatt.)		
	(rev. 4)		(obv. 30)	(rev. 22)
ID				
	(rev. 8)	(rev. 58)	(obv. 1)	(rev. 25)
DA				
	(rev. 8)	(rev. 53)	(rev. 66)	(obv. 12)

In the case of the sign TAR, KBo 22.2 shows the same basic shape, i. e. with an oblique orientation of the upper two wedges, as found in KBo 17.21+ and KBo 22.1 (in KBo 3.22, no example of TAR is attested). Since these latter texts are generally dated as OS, the shape of the sign TAR in KBo 22.2 cannot be used as an argument against its dating as OS. In the case of ID and DA, KBo 22.2 shows the canonical OS version of the signs, i. e. with the heads of the upper and lower horizontal wedges being more or less placed on the same vertical line. Their shape is thus in agreement with the shape of ID and DA as found on KBo 17.21+, the OS status of which is unchallenged. Interestingly, the signs ID and DA as found on KBo 3.22 and KBo 22.1 do have a more Middle Hittite-like appearance: the head of their lower horizontal wedge protrudes to the left when compared to the head of their upper horizontal wedge. Nevertheless, the OS status of KBo 3.22 and KBo 22.1 seems to be generally accepted.³

Having thus eliminated the main arguments in favor of an MS dating of KBo 22.2, we would further like to point out that this text does show several other features that are

¹ This paper only discusses clearly cushion-shaped tablets from the OS period. The oracle tablet KBo 18.151 (CTH 827), which has a similar but somewhat different shape (Waal 2015, 237⁸, see also below, footnote 41), and the MS text KBo 17.60, which may “possibly” belong to this group as well (Waal 2015, 237⁶), are therefore not included. Likewise, the MS land deeds (edited by Rüster/Wilhelm 2012), which can also have this typical cushion-shape, fall outside the scope of this article. However, it should certainly not be excluded that these tablets, too, reflect the offshoots of a different (older) scribal tradition.

² For this table, we have used excerpts from the 3D scans of KBo 22.2, KBo 17.21+, and KBo 22.1, and from the photographs of KBo 3.22, all of which were taken from Hetkonk.

³ Although van den Hout (2009a, 76³⁰) states that KBo 22.1 may be MS, precisely because of the shape of the signs ID and DA.



Fig. 1. 3D scan of KBo 17.1 iii 3–7 (right part of the lines)

prototypically Old Hittite, like the ligature of *a+na* (e. g. obv. 4, 17), the very dense spacing, etc.⁴ All in all, there is no reason not to regard KBo 22.2 as an OS tablet.

3 Coherence in spelling: lack of word space after *nu*, *ta* and *šu*

In its lemma on the conjunction *nu*, CHD (L-N, 461) states that in some OS texts, *nu* is directly attached to the following word, without a word space.⁵ As examples, CHD cites KBo 3.22, 55, 59, 71, 74; KBo 17.1 iii 5, iv 24; KBo 19.1 (+ KBo 6.2) ii 24; and KBo 22.1, 24, 30. When one looks closely at these examples, inspecting not only the hand copies of these texts, but also, when available, photographs and/or 3D scans (through Hetkonk), it turns out that not all of them can be upheld. This applies to the following three cases:

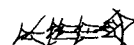
1. *nu(-)A.šā^{H1.A}* (KBo 19.1 (+ KBo 6.2) ii 24): although the hand copy of this text indeed shows no word space between *nu* and the following *A.šā^{H1.A}*, the photograph of this tablet clearly shows the presence of a word space:

KBo 19.1 ii 24	hand copy	photograph
<i>nu(-)A.šā^{H1.A}</i>		

2. *nu(-)i-it* (KBo 17.1 iii 5): the hand copy of this text shows no word space between *nu* and the following *i-it*, which is supported by the 3D scan of this tablet:

KBo 17.1 iii 5 hand copy 3D scan

nu(-)i-it



However, the 3D scan also shows that the paragraph in which this form occurs contains more instances of lack of word space (cf. fig. 1 above). It therefore becomes dubious whether the absence of a word space in *nu(-)i-it* is significant.

3. *nu(-)LÚ.ḪUB-za* (KBo 17.1 iv 24): the hand copy of this text shows hardly any word space between *nu* and the following *LÚ.ḪUB-za*, but the photograph of this tablet does show a word space:

KBo 17.1 iv 24 hand copy

nu(-)LÚ.ḪUB-za



photograph



These three cases should thus be removed from the list cited by the CHD. The examples of absence of word spacing between *nu* and a following word in KBo 3.22 and KBo 22.1, on the other hand, are solid.⁶ It may further be noted that on these tablets this phenomenon is not restricted to *nu*: Kloekhorst (2014, 601f.) has argued that in these texts there are also examples of *nu* + clitics, and cases of the conjunctions *ta* and *šu* (with or without further clitics) to which the following words are directly attached without any word space.

It is interesting that these two tablets, KBo 3.22 and KBo 22.1, belong to the group of cushion-shaped tablets identified in section 1. This becomes even more telling when one takes into account that the two other cush-

⁴ Cf. Neu (1980, XIV f.) and Starke (1985, 23) for these criteria.

⁵ This is an indication that *nu* was a proclitic element that was accentually dependent on the word that follows it, cf. Kloekhorst (2014, 601–3).

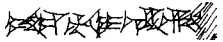
⁶ Cf. the examples given by Kloekhorst (2014, 601f.).

ion-shaped tablets, KBo 17.21+ and KBo 22.2, also show examples of the absence of a word space after *nu*, *ta*, *šu* (+ clitics).

In the case of KBo 17.21+, this phenomenon is found twice:

1. *ne-ti-i-en-zi* (KBo 17.21+ rev. 48): on the hand copy of this text (published as KBo 17.46 ii 24), it is not fully clear whether there is a word space between *ne* (*n=e*) and *ti-i-en-zi*. The 3D scan of this tablet is much clearer, however; there is no word space:

KBo 17.21+ hand copy 3D scan
rev. 48

ne-ti-i-en-zi  

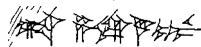
This absence of a word space is significant, since further on in the same line we do find a clear word space, namely between *TUŠ-aš* and *ḫal-la-ra-an* (although the word-space between [LU]GAL-uš and *TUŠ-aš* is rather narrow), cf. the following picture of line KBo 17.21+ rev. 48 (from the 3D scan of this tablet):



ne-ti-i-en-zi[LU]GAL-uš *TUŠ-aš* *ḫal-la-ra-an*[...]

2. [*ta-aš-t*]*a*-ZA.LAM.GAR-*az* (KBo 17.21+ rev. 67): on the hand copy of this text (published as KBo 20.33 rev. 8), a word space is drawn between [*ta-aš-t*]*a* and ZA.LAM.GAR-*az*. The 3D scan of this tablet does not show a word space, however:

KBo 17.21+ rev. 67
[*ta-aš-t*]*a*-ZA.LAM.GAR-*az*

hand copy 3D scan
 

This absence of a word space is all the more significant, since the rest of the line in which this form occurs contains very large word spacings. The final word *ú-ez-zi* is even stretched out by means of a large blank gap between its last two signs to fill the complete line (cf. the 3D scan of KBo 17.21+ rev. 67 below). This kind of ‘right justification’ is attested more often in the last line of a paragraph (Waal 2015, 110).



[*ta-aš-t*]*a*-ZA.LAM.GAR-*az* *ú-ez-zi*

Unfortunately, KBo 17.21+ does not contain any other examples of the conjunctions *nu*, *ta* or *šu*. Since the only two examples that we do find in this text are not followed by a word space, it is attractive to assume that this was the standard spelling for this tablet, just like for KBo 3.22 and KBo 22.1. Regardless of its frequency, the phenomenon is in any case safely attested for KBo 17.21+.

In KBo 22.2, we do find many instances of *nu*, *ta*, and *šu* (with or without further clitics), but the vast majority of these attestations are followed by a clear word space. Only in one case we may find the absence of a word space after *nu*:

1. *nu(-)URU-an* (KBo 22.2 rev. 15): although the hand copy of this text shows a relatively large space between *nu* and *URU-an*, on the 3D scan of this tablet, the space is clearly absent:

KBo 22.2 rev. 15 hand copy 3D scan
nu(-)URU-an  

This absence of a word space seems meaningful, since both before *nu* and after *URU-an* clear word spaces are present, cf. the following picture of the latter part of the line KBo 22.2 rev. 15 (from the 3D scan of this tablet):



kat-ti-iš-mi nu-URU-an ḫar-ni-ik-ta

So, although in KBo 22.2 we find only one example of the absence of a word space after *nu*, it does seem to be a genuine attestation.

All in all, we can conclude that KBo 3.22, KBo 17.21+, KBo 22.1, and KBo 22.2 (although less pronounced than the other three) form a coherent group with respect to the fact that the conjunctions *nu*, *ta*, and *šu* (with or without further clitics) are sometimes (or consistently) directly attached to the word they precede, without a word space. This graphic peculiarity clearly sets these tablets apart from other OS texts, where this phenomenon, with one possible exception,⁷ is not found.

⁷ Theo van den Hout (p.c.) has kindly pointed out to us that, although not mentioned by CHD, also KBo 7.14 + KUB 36.100 (the so-called Zukraši-text, formerly CTH 15, nowadays classified as CTH 14.IV.A) shows a consistent absence of word space after *nu*: obv. 4 (*nu-me-e-na-aḫ-ḫa-an-da*), 6 (*nu-tu-uḫ-ḫi-ja-at-ti-it*), 8 (*nu-a-pi-ja*),

4 Coherence in content: date and place of composition

After having established that the four cushion-shaped tablets are coherent in their shape, palaeographic dating and spelling peculiarities, it seems opportune to investigate whether they also show coherence in their contents. To our mind, they do, in the sense that all four tablets contain compositions that may (and in some cases clearly should) be dated to the period from before the establishment of the Hittite royal archive at Ḫattuša. We will discuss each tablet separately below.

4.1 KBo 3.22

KBo 3.22 contains the famous Anitta-text (CTH 1),⁸ which is attested on several younger duplicates as well. In this text, a man called Anitta relates how first his father Piṭḫāna, king of Kuššara, conquers Nēša, and how, later on, he himself succeeds his father as king of Nēša. Anitta then goes on several campaigns, against, e. g., Ḫattuša, Zalpuṣa and Šalatiṣara, thus expanding his kingdom to the extent that he even obtains the status of Great King (LUGAL.GAL). As the text itself states, it was (meant to be) inscribed on the city gates of Nēša:

KBo 3.22 rev.

33 *ke-e ʔd-d[a²-]a²-ar² [(tup-pí-ja-a)]z I-NA KÁ.GAL-IA x[...]*

‘These words on a tablet at my gate [...]’

4.1.1 The authorship of the Anitta-text

Although in the early years of Hittitology the authenticity of the Anitta-text was sometimes doubted,⁹ it is nowadays commonly accepted that it must have a historical background: at the site of Nēša (called Kaniš in Akkadian, modern-day Kültepe) several Old Assyrian texts have in the meantime been found in which Piṭḫāna and Anitta are

mentioned as kings of this city. On the basis of the latest insights into the chronology of the Old Assyrian period, their reigns can be dated to approximately 1750–1725 BCE.¹⁰

Since the internal coherence of the Anitta-text is not always clear, Steiner (1984) argued that the text in fact consists of three independent compositions, namely part A (lines 1–35), part B (lines 36–51), and part C (lines 52–79). In his view, part A was composed by Anitta himself, but parts B and C may have been composed by one or more later kings of Nēša. According to, e. g., Carruba (2001), this analysis goes too far, however, and he recognizes only two compositions, part α (lines 1–51) and part β (lines 52–79), which both would be composed by Anitta. Whichever one of these views is correct, for the present discussion it is important that the Anitta-text was composed by one or more kings who ruled at Nēša, not at Ḫattuša. In fact, the text explicitly describes how Ḫattuša was conquered and destroyed, and the author even utters the following curse:

KBo 3.22 rev.

49 *ku-iš am-me-el a-ap-pa-an LUGAL-uš ki-i-ša-r[i]*

50 *nu URUḫa-at-tu-ša-an a-ap-pa a-ša-a-š[i]*

51 *na-an ne-pí-ša-aš ʔIŠKUR-aš ḫa-az-zi-e-e[t-tu]*

‘Whoever becomes king after me and resettles Ḫattuša, may the Storm God of Heaven strike him!’

4.1.2 The transmission of the Anitta-text

The recognition that the Anitta-text was composed in Nēša, and not in Ḫattuša, and that (at least a part of it) must date back to the latter part of Anitta’s reign, ca. 1725 BCE,¹¹ raises several intriguing questions. It is generally assumed that Hittite writing did not start until the reign of Ḫattušili I (ca. 1650–1620 BCE), and that the typical Hittite ductus, which developed out of the Old Babylonian ductus as used in North Syria at that time (as exemplified by the tablets from Alalakh, level VII, 18th–17th c. BCE), was brought to Anatolia by Ḫattušili I after one of his campaigns in that region (which probably included the destruction of Alalakh VII), i. e. well after ca. 1650

rev. 4 (*nu-a-pé-e-a*), 6 (*nu-ÉRIN^{MEŠ}-an*), 10 (*nu-^{ci}ŠKIRI₆-ša*), 16 (*nu-m[a-...]*). Since this tablet is not cushion-shaped (cf. the photos available through Hetkonk), it shows that the absence of word space after *nu* is not restricted to the cushion-shaped tablets only. However, we believe that KBo 7.14 + KUB 36.100 may have a close connection to the group of cushion-shaped tablets, see below, footnote 41.

⁸ See Neu 1974 for an edition of this text.

⁹ Cf. Steiner (1984, 547) for references.

¹⁰ Barjamovic/Hertel/Larsen 2012, 40.

¹¹ According to Kryszat (2008a, 207), the destruction of Ḫattuša by Anitta can be dated to ca. 1728 BCE, which then serves as a *terminus post quem* for the period in which the Anitta-text was composed. If one adheres to Steiner’s analysis that the latter two parts of the Anitta-text may have been composed by successors of Anitta, its first and oldest part would still have been composed by Anitta himself.

BCE.¹² This event would thus mark the beginning of the Hittite royal archives at Ḫattuša. Recently, van den Hout has argued that, although from the times of Ḫattušili I “writing [was] going on” in Ḫattuša (van den Hout 2009b: 30), at first all texts were written in Akkadian (Old Babylonian), and only from the times of Telipinu (ca. 1525–1500 BCE) onwards, the cuneiform script was also used for the Hittite language. In this view, it was not until this period that compositions from before that time would have been translated into Hittite.

If these assumptions on the introduction of writing into Ḫattuša are correct, how should we imagine that the Anitta-text, which was composed some 75 years before the start of the reign of Ḫattušili I, in a place some 150 km away, ended up in the tablet collections of Ḫattuša? And in what language was the original text written? Several scenarios have been offered by various scholars to answer these questions.

With respect to the language, the only written documents that have thus far been found in Nēša/Kültepe are clay tablets inscribed with the Old Assyrian variant of the cuneiform script, in the Old Assyrian language. This has led some scholars (e.g. van den Hout 2009a, 88¹⁰²; Archi 2015; see also footnote 20) to conclude that the original composition of the Anitta-text was written in Old Assyrian and that it was later translated into Hittite. Though this is possible, it does not seem to be the most likely scenario. As far as we can tell, Assyrian was mainly used and spoken by the Assyrian merchants (although there also were some Anatolians who could speak and write this language, cf. e.g. Kryszat 2008b). As recently proposed by Wilhelmi (2016, 236), the Anitta-text may have been a decree issued by Anitta for the city of Nēša. Regardless of its precise purpose, the inscription of Anitta was primarily aimed at the population of Nēša at large, and not (only) the Assyrian merchants. It therefore seems improbable that Anitta

would choose for his monumental inscription the language of the Assyrian merchants, which was restricted to a limited group of people and mainly used for purposes of trade. Further, if the text was indeed written in Old Assyrian, this leaves the problem of when and where the text was translated. If we assume that this translation into Hittite would have been carried out in Ḫattuša at the times of Ḫattušili I (or in van den Hout’s scenario: at the times of Telipinu), this would have been more than 75 years (in van den Hout’s scenario: more than 200(!) years) after the Assyrian *kārum* in Ḫattuša had disappeared,¹³ which seems improbable.¹⁴

Apart from the Old Assyrian cuneiform, another writing system may have been in use in Nēša: in Old Assyrian texts reference is made to *iṣurātu*, documents that were only used by local, Anatolian people, and not by the Assyrian merchants. According to Waal (2012), these *iṣurtum* documents may have been wooden documents written on in Anatolian hieroglyphs, either in the Luwian or in the Hittite language. If this assumption is correct, the original version of the Anitta-text could theoretically have been inscribed in Anatolian hieroglyphs. Since the only concrete evidence for hieroglyphic writing from the Old Assyrian period consists of very short (owner’s) inscriptions on pottery and there is no evidence that this script was in use for longer compositions, this is, however, speculative and therefore not an attractive scenario.

A third option that has been proposed is that the Anitta-text may have been transmitted orally. However, since the text shows all the characteristics of a written composition, and the text itself refers to the fact that at least its initial part was written down on a tablet (see above), this scenario is not convincing either.¹⁵

¹² E.g. Rüster/Neu 1989, 15; van den Hout 2009b (who provides an excellent *Forschungsgeschichte* of the ideas regarding the origins of the Hittite cuneiform). Cf. Kloekhorst (2010) for a comparison between the Hittite and the Alalah VII ductus with regard to sound values of the CV-signs denoting stops, concluding that the two largely match each other (Popova’s 2016 rejection of some of Kloekhorst’s conclusions is based on a misinterpretation of the material). A similar comparison with regard to sign shapes and ductus has been executed by van den Hout (2012), who concludes that the “Alalah VII ductus [can be seen] as a serious candidate for the source of the Hittite cuneiform” (o.c., 163), although he rightly warns that “it must not necessarily and specifically have been the settlement of Alalah that provided the unique inspiration for the Hittite ductus”: it just happens to be so that “Alalah VII is our only real substantial example of the type of cuneiform used [in North Syria]” (o.c. 165).

¹³ The destruction of Ḫattuša by Anitta in ca. 1728 BCE (see footnote 11 above) marks the end of its *kārum* period.

¹⁴ The difference between Old Babylonian (which is assumed to be the original source for Hittite cuneiform) and Old Assyrian is substantial, not only with regard to the languages themselves (differences in phonology, morphology, and lexicon), but also with regard to the way they were written down: the Old Assyrian version of the cuneiform script is quite distinct from the Old Babylonian one, and uses different spelling conventions. One therefore wonders whether scribes who were trained in Old Babylonian would automatically have been able to read Old Assyrian as well.

¹⁵ A variant on this view is proposed by Carruba (2001, 68f.). Although he acknowledges that during the Old Assyrian period the several parts of the Anitta-text originally must have been written down as “Inscriften”, he cannot imagine how these texts could have been preserved up to Old Hittite times. He therefore assumes that in the time between the end of the *kārum*-period and the beginning of the Hittite scribal tradition, the several parts of the composition existed only orally, and were combined into a single compilation only in the

A fourth possibility has been put forward by Erich Neu (1974), in his edition of the Anitta-text. As we have seen above as well, it is usually thought that the typical Hittite ductus was brought to Anatolia by Ḫattušili I after one of his campaigns in North Syria (probably including the destruction of Alalaḫ VII). Neu, however, states that the heydays of Alalaḫ VII must have been contemporary with the period during which the dynasty of Piṭḫāna and Anitta ruled over Kuššara. He therefore speculates that it might have been one of the kings of this Kuššaran dynasty, and possibly even Piṭḫāna himself, who had organized a campaign into North Syria and brought with him the Old Babylonian ductus to Kuššara. This city would then be the place where a spelling system for Hittite (the language of the Kuššaran dynasty) was devised, and thus a specifically Hittite (= “Kuššaran”) ductus was developed.¹⁶ When later Piṭḫāna and Anitta ruled over Nēša, Anitta would have used this “Kuššaran” ductus to write down his deeds in his own language, which later on was called ‘Nešite’. In Neu’s view, “die auf uns gekommene alte Tafel aus Boğazköy [= KBo 3.22, AK&WW] [kann] nur eine (sehr gute) Abschrift (16. Jh. v. Chr.) einer älteren Vorlage sein”. To his mind, this “Vorlage” would then have been written down in Nēša. Neu is aware of the speculative nature of this proposal: “Bevor nicht in Kuššara, dessen genaue Lage man noch nicht kennt, um Grabungen vornehmen zu können, oder in Neša Tontafeln in alten Duktus (ähnlich dem der alten Texte von Alalaḫ) und in hethitischer (nesischer) Sprache von Anitta und seinen Nachfolgern gefunden worden sind, muß unsere Vermutung, mit der nesischen Sprache sei auch die „nesische“ Schrift nach Ḫattuša gekommen, bloße Hypothese bleiben” (1974, 135). This hypothesis has been partly confirmed by later discoveries, however; after Neu’s publication, letters have been excavated in the *kārum* of Nēša that are not written in the Old Assyrian ductus, but in a ductus resembling the Old Babylonian one from which Hittite cuneiform has been derived, confirming that this ductus was already present in Anatolia at that time (Hecker 1990; 1996).¹⁷

Old Hittite period. This *ad hoc* solution is not very credible in our view.

¹⁶ Thus also Goetze (1957, 81). Rüster/Neu (1989, 15²) refer to this idea as something that “wurde erwogen” (in the past tense), implying that it is now no longer to be considered as a possible scenario.

¹⁷ However, as van den Hout (2009b, 26) rightly remarks, these texts were probably written in North Syria, and then sent to Anatolia, and therefore cannot be used as an argument that also in Anatolia this ductus was used for writing at that time. Cf. also van den Hout (2009a, 89¹⁰⁶): “[the existence of these letters] only means, however, that the North-Syrian scribes, not writing in Old Assyrian, assumed (or hoped) that their communication could nevertheless be read by

4.1.3 KBo 3.22: place and date of creation

Interestingly, in Neu’s scenario, the Anitta-text as a composition (i. e. in the Hittite language) and as a written text (i. e. in the Hittite ductus) would stem from Nēša, but the physical tablet on which its oldest known version is written down (KBo 3.22) does not: Neu considers this tablet to be a “(sehr gute) Abschrift” that was manufactured during the Old Hittite period (“16. Jh. v. Chr.”) in Ḫattuša. In recent times new evidence has come to light that makes it worthwhile to rethink this last assumption, however. As already referred to in the introduction, Goren/Mommsen/Klinger (2011) mention the possibility that KBo 3.22 was not created in Ḫattuša, but somewhere else. In their article they present a new method for non-destructive provenance studies of clay tablets using a portable X-ray fluorescence apparatus, with which they have tested dozens of clay tablets from El Amarna and Ḫattuša, including KBo 3.22. One of the outcomes of this study is that in principle all tablets from Ḫattuša can petrographically be classified as a single group, but that KBo 3.22 falls slightly outside of it.¹⁸ The authors of that article therefore ask themselves: “is it possible to think of an older Hittite writing tradition starting in a different place [than in Ḫattuša,] maybe in Kuššara, the hometown of Hattušili?” (*ibid.*).¹⁹ They thus not only consider the option that KBo 3.22 was manufactured outside of Ḫattuša, but also that it was created in a time predating the start of the writing tradition in Ḫattuša (which is usually associated with Ḫattušili I’s campaign to Northern Syria, shortly after 1650 BCE).²⁰

the Anatolian addressees. It does not say (yet) that Anatolians used it”.

¹⁸ Goren/Mommsen/Klinger (2011, 693): “While I[nstrumental] N[eutron] A[ctivation] A[nalysis] classified this tablet as “singular”, O[ptical] M[ineralogy] suggested that it may still be seen as a representative of the Hattuša fabric, yet coarser than the usual for this group in terms of the sand added to it as temper, thus including more diverse rock fragments and minerals. The p[ortable] X[-]R[ay] F[luorescence] data places it on the fringe of the Hattuša cluster, or somewhere near it but in the direction of the Karum Hattuš cluster”.

¹⁹ On the possible existence of a ‘pre-Ḫattušaeen’ writing tradition, see now also Wilhelmi 2016.

²⁰ Archi (2015) follows Goren/Mommsen/Klinger (2011) by stating that to him, too, it “seems probable” that KBo 3.22 “was brought to Hattusa from outside” (2015, 6). He does not follow their suggestion about the date of creation of KBo 3.22, however. According to him, the original manuscript of the Anitta-text may have been written in Old Assyrian and “was kept in Kussara or in a provincial archive; it was translated into Hittite outside Hattusa, when the writing rules were already well established [i. e. after Ḫattušili I had brought the cuneiform script to the Hittite kingdom, AK&WW], and then brought to the archives of the capital” (*o.c.*, 6–7). This would mean that KBo 3.22 would stem from the time after the establishment of the Hittite

4.1.4 Conclusions regarding KBo 3.22

In our opinion, the facts that (a) the physical tablet KBo 3.22 may have been created in a place different from Ḫattuša; (b) it contains a text that was composed in a place different from Ḫattuša (namely Nēša); (c) the composition dates to well before the establishment of the Hittite royal archives at Ḫattuša; and (d) it is very unlikely that this composition was first written down in another language and translated into Hittite only after 1650 BCE, all point to the same direction, corroborating the suggestions of Neu and Goren/Mommsen/Klinger: KBo 3.22 seems to have been created at a location other than Ḫattuša and, very likely, at a time predating the establishment of the Hittite tablet collections at Ḫattuša.

Since we have argued in the preceding sections that KBo 3.22 forms a distinct group together with the tablets KBo 17.21+, KBo 22.1, and KBo 22.2, not only on the basis of their specific cushion-shape, but also with regards to their palaeographic dating (all OS) and spelling peculiarities (all show examples of the lack of word-space after *nu*, *ta* and *šu*), it seems worthwhile to entertain the possibility that these latter three tablets, too, could have been created outside of Ḫattuša in a period predating the establishment of the Hittite royal tablet collections at Ḫattuša.

4.2 KBo 22.2

The tablet KBo 22.2 contains the Zalpa-text (CTH 3.1),²¹ of which also several (fragments of) later copies are known. The lower half of KBo 22.2 is broken off, so that we only possess the first part of its obverse and the latter part of its reverse, i.e. the beginning and the end of the composition. Fortunately, however, its younger duplicate KBo 3.38 (NS) fills large parts of this gap, so that the overall structure of the text is clear. The composition falls into two parts: a mythological and a historical one.

The mythological part famously narrates how the Queen of Nēša puts her thirty newborn sons into baskets on the river that leads them to the city of Zalpa where they are raised. Years later, the sons go search for their mother. When they find her, she does not recognize them and intends to give them her thirty daughters (who were born some time after her sons and remained in Nēša) in

marriage. The end of the mythological part is regrettably broken off, so we do not know its ending. In the historical part of the Zalpa-text (some parts of which are badly preserved), we read how several times the city of Zalpa became rebellious, and how several campaigns were organized from Ḫattuša to Zalpa to subdue the city, until Zalpa is finally destroyed. Three rulers play a part in this: *ABI ABI LUGAL* ‘the grandfather of the King’, *LUGAL ŠU.GI* ‘the old King’, and *LUGAL* ‘the King’.

4.2.1. The authorship of the Zalpa-text

According to Beal (2003, 22–25), the three rulers mentioned in the text’s historical part as undertaking campaigns against Zalpa can be identified with three successive Hittite kings as follows: ‘the King’ = Ḫattušili I; ‘the old King’ = his predecessor Labarna I (who was the husband of Ḫattušili I’s aunt Taḫannanna); and ‘the grandfather of the King’ = Labarna I’s predecessor (the father of his wife Taḫannanna and thus the grandfather of Ḫattušili I).²² This is an attractive identification, since the fact that in the Zalpa-text the predecessor of ‘the King’ is called ‘the old King’ and not ‘the father of the King’, is a perfect match with the relationship between Ḫattušili I and his predecessor Labarna I, who was not his father, but rather the husband of his aunt. If Beal’s identification is correct, the Zalpa-text would have been composed under commission of Ḫattušili I. We may in fact be able to pinpoint the date of composition a bit more exactly, as the text provides some important clues that it was written before Ḫattuša became the Hittite capital.

4.2.2 The date and place of composition of the Zalpa-text²³

In the historical part of the Zalpa-text, Ḫattuša plays a central role, since it is from there that all the campaigns against Zalpa are organized, both during the times of ‘the grandfather of the King’ (= the predecessor of Labarna I), and during the times of ‘the old King’ (= Labarna I) and ‘the King’ (= Ḫattušili I). As Beal (2003, 24 f.) observes, this is an interesting fact, since from the early years of Hittitology onwards it was generally assumed that, after Ḫattuša was destroyed by Anitta (around 1728 BCE),²⁴ it

writing tradition at Ḫattuša. However, as mentioned above, it seems unlikely that the text was composed in Old Assyrian and that at least 75 years after the *kārum*-period in Anatolia had ended, this Old Assyrian document was translated into Hittite.

²¹ See Otten (1973) for an edition of this text.

²² Likewise, but less extensively, Sürenhagen (1998, 83³⁹).

²³ See also Kloekhorst fthc.a, where this topic is treated in more detail.

²⁴ See Kryszat (2008a, 207) for this date.

was Ḫattušili I who rebuilt the city and made it into the Hittite capital.²⁵ According to Beal, his identification of ‘the King’ as Ḫattušili I makes this view obsolete, since we now can infer that Ḫattuša “was thriving much earlier [than the times of Ḫattušili I] and was already a capital under Ḫattušili’s grandfather” (Beal 2003, 25).²⁶

Beal’s view has recently been challenged by Martínez (2016), however. He convincingly argues that, although within the historical part of the Zalpa-text Ḫattuša indeed functions as the main center from which Zalpa is attacked, a closer inspection of some passages mentioning Ḫattuša shows that at that time it was not the capital of the Hittite kingdom, but merely a “forward operating base” (2016, 181) from which the campaigns against Zalpa were undertaken. Martínez points out that this recognition “removes any literary evidence for Ḫattuša as the capital under Labarna I” (2016, 182).²⁷

Martínez’ interpretation of the role of Ḫattuša in the Zalpa-text has some significant implications. If Ḫattuša was not yet the Hittite capital during the reign of Labarna I, it implies that Ḫattušili I’s ascension to the throne in all likelihood did not take place in Ḫattuša either. However, since it is clear that during the (larger part of the) reign of Ḫattušili I the capital of the Hittite kingdom was Ḫattuša, we have to conclude that Ḫattušili I, at some moment during his reign, moved the capital from that other city to Ḫattuša. This would, of course, fit the traditional idea that Ḫattušili I established Ḫattuša as the capital of the Hittite kingdom: the only difference is that Ḫattušili I did

not *rebuild* the city: this had been done already before the times of his grandfather’s campaigns against Zalpa.

This interpretation is supported by the Telepinu-text (CTH 19),²⁸ which describes the history of the Hittite kingdom from the times of Labarna I onwards. It introduces Labarna I with the words *[kar]ū ṁLabarnaš LUGAL.GAL ēšta* ‘In the past, Labarna was Great King’ (§ 1); his successor Ḫattušili I is introduced with the words *EGIR-šū=ma ṁḪattušiliš ḫaššuēt* ‘Afterwards Ḫattušili became king’ (§ 5); but the next king, Muršili I, is introduced with the words *mān ṁMuršiliš URUḪattuši LU[GAL]-ēt* ‘When Muršili became king in Ḫattuša’ (§ 8). This explicit mention of the fact that Muršili became king *in Ḫattuša*, would not make sense if his predecessor Ḫattušili I would have ascended the throne in Ḫattuša as well. However, if Ḫattušili I ascended the throne in a different city and only later on moved his court to Ḫattuša, this statement becomes meaningful: Muršili I would then have been the first king of his lineage who ascended the throne in Ḫattuša itself (thus also, e.g., Klinger 1996, 123). Likewise, it is telling that in the Akkadian version of the annals of Ḫattušili I it is explicitly mentioned that he exercised kingship *in Ḫattuša*.²⁹ As also observed by Wilhelmi (2016, 227), this emphasis on the geographical location supports the idea that it was Ḫattušili I who first established Ḫattuša as the Hittite capital.

The question which city was the seat of Labarna I’s kingship, and thus the place where Ḫattušili I initially ascended the throne, is intriguing, but of less relevance here.³⁰ Important for now is the fact that the Zalpa-text was composed in a period when Ḫattuša was not yet the capital of the Hittite kingdom. This allows the possibility that the physical tablet on which this composition is written down, KBo 22.2, was created outside of Ḫattuša in a period predating the establishment of the Hittite royal tablet collections at Ḫattuša, just as has been argued above for KBo 3.22.³¹

²⁵ First formulated by Forrer (1926, 6*, 11*), and still found in e.g. Klengel (2011, 32). See Beal (2003, 24⁶⁵) for an overview of references in favour of this view.

²⁶ Likewise Sörenhagen (1998, 83³⁹): “Die seit E. Forrer [...] weitverbreitete Annahme, daß Hattusili I. der Gründer der neuen Hauptstadt gewesen sei, [...] wäre dann aufzugeben”. The idea that after its destruction by Anitta, Ḫattuša was rebuilt much earlier than the start of the reign of Ḫattušili I fits the archaeological records: for instance, Schachner/Krüger (2019, 207) state that in the areas from the northern part of Ḫattuša that have been excavated in 2017 and 2018, “die hethitische Bebauung unmittelbar auf die der *kārum*-Zeit [folgt]” and that – pending on absolute datings – “kein Hiatus zwischen den Epochen vorzuliegen scheint”.

²⁷ According to Martínez, this conclusion is further supported by the fact that Labarna I is absent from the Offering Lists to Royal Ancestors (CTH 661) in which, according to Forlanini (2010, 117), the names are mentioned of all deceased kings, queens and princes whose remains are present in Ḫattuša, either because they died there or because these remains were brought there at a later time. As Martínez argues, “[i]f the capital was Hattuša during the reign of Labarna I, this absence would be inexplicable”, and we therefore “can safely rule out Hattuša as the capital under Labarna I” (*ibid.*).

²⁸ See Hoffmann (1984) for an edition of this text.

²⁹ KBo 10.1 i 1: *LUGAL.GAL ta-ba-ar-na i-na URUKÜ.BABBAR-ti LUGAL-ut-ta i-te-pu-uš* ‘The Great King *tabarna* exercised kingship in Ḫattuša’.

³⁰ Martínez (2016, 182–9) himself argues for Ḫurma; Kloekhorst (fthc.a) argues for Neša; and a third possibility may be Kuššara, the place that is traditionally seen as the original hometown of Ḫattušili I.

³¹ Such a scenario has an additional advantage, as it would accommodate the attractive suggestion of Beal (2003, 24) that the Zalpa-text may have been composed as “a prelude” to Ḫattušili I’s campaign against Zalpa as described in his Annals. In the current paradigm of the introduction of Hittite cuneiform this proposal is problematic. In the annals of Ḫattušili I we read that his campaign against Zalpa takes place in the first year of his reign (KBo 10.2 i 9–14), whereas his campaigns against cities in northern Syria, including Alalakh, take

4.3 KBo 22.1

The third tablet that we will discuss is KBo 22.1, which comprises a composition that is usually classified as an instruction text (CTH 272). However, the content of KBo 22.1 is quite different from later Hittite compositions of this genre. In his book on royal Hittite instructions, Miller (2013, 73) has therefore labelled it “A royal reprimand of the dignitaries”.³² With regards to its date, Miller states that “[t]hough nothing in the text allows one to date this OH original specifically, it is clear from numerous paleographical, morphological, syntactical, and thematic details that it belongs to the earliest of the texts presented in this volume” (*ibid.*) and that “hypothetically, [...] the composition of this text [might be placed] in a phase of early Hittite history in which writing conventions had not yet been standardized as they were subsequently” (*o.c.*, 74). In adherence to the *communis opinio* that Hittite writing started with Ḫattušili I, Miller therefore states that the text “may well date to the time of Ḫattusili I and Mursili I” (*o.c.*, 73).

Unfortunately, the text itself gives little concrete information about its possible authorship and date of composition. The upper part of KBo 22.1 is broken off, so that we only possess the lower half of its obverse and the upper half of its reverse, which means that we only have the central part of the composition, not its beginning or end. In the preserved part of the text, the name of its author, who speaks in the first person, is not mentioned. According to Gilan (2015, 107), a possible hint to the author’s identity may be the fact that he often refers to the words of his father,³³ who probably is the king; this feature is known from Muršili I as well. However, as Gilan himself notes, the author of KBo 22.1 refers to his father

in the present tense, which does not fit an identification with Muršili I: the latter was probably still a child when Ḫattušili I at the end of his life appointed him as heir to the throne. It therefore is unlikely that Muršili would have already authored such a ‘reprimand’ when Ḫattušili I was still alive. Gilan therefore states that “der ‘Autor’ [...] deswegen eher als ein in der Verwaltung tätiger[,] oder als lokaler Herr eingesetzter Prinz zu identifizieren ist[,] als der Thronfolger und derzeit regierende König Muršili”. In other words, Gilan assumes that the ‘father’ in KBo 22.1 is indeed Ḫattušili I, but that his words were not referred to by his successor Muršili I, but rather by a son of his who is further unknown. Though this is theoretically possible, we would like to offer an alternative scenario, which may fit the available evidence better.

The fact that the text of KBo 22.1 seems to have been written by a prince who acts on behalf of his father, the king, is of interest. This means (1) that this prince must have been an adult, which implies that his father must have been middle-aged at least, perhaps even of old age; and (2) that this prince must have had some official status within the kingdom, for instance the position of crown prince, *vel sim.* Moreover, on the basis of Miller’s remarks about the unique and archaic features of KBo 22.1, it is likely that this text is very old, which means that the father-son pair we are looking for cannot be too far off in time from the period of Ḫattušili I. If we look at the times following the reign of Ḫattušili I, our information regarding royal father-son pairs that would meet these criteria is unfortunately limited. Judging from the Telipinu-edict, the kings Ḫantili I and Ammuna would have lived long enough to see their children reach an adult age, but, regrettably, not much else is known about their reigns. Yet, if we turn to the period pre-dating the reign of Ḫattušili I, we do find a father and son that would perfectly fit all criteria: Piṭḫāna and Anitta. In several Old Assyrian texts from Kültepe in which Piṭḫāna is mentioned as the king of Nēša, his son Anitta is mentioned as his *rabi simmiltim* ‘Chief of the Stairway’, the highest rank after the Nēšite king. This means that during the last years of Piṭḫāna’s reign, his son Anitta was of an adult age (criterion 1) and was in a position to write governmental texts on behalf of his father (criterion 2). Moreover, in the Anitta-text, Anitta uses the term ‘my father’ several times to refer to Piṭḫāna (gen.sg. *attaš=maš* in lines 10 and 30). We therefore consider it an interesting possibility that, just like the Anitta-text of KBo 3.22, the ‘reprimand’ of KBo 22.1 was authored by Anitta, namely at the time that he was still his father’s right hand in the kingdom of Nēša (ca. 1750–1740 BCE). This would imply that this text, just like the Anitta-text, was composed in Nēša, in a time well before 1650 BCE. This scenario, if

place in the second year of his reign (KBo 10.2 i 15–21). If the Zalpa-text was indeed composed as a preamble to the campaign against Zalpa in Ḫattušili I’s first year, as Beal would have it, its composition would predate the Syrian campaign and thus the introduction of cuneiform writing in Ḫattuša (see above § 4.1.2.). However, within a scenario where the Hittite ductus predates the formation of the Hittite archives at Ḫattuša, as we advocate here, Beal’s appealing proposal that the Zalpa-text was meant as a prelude to Ḫattušili I’s campaigns against Zalpa can be upheld.

³² See also there for an edition of this text.

³³ Dardano (1997, 8–11) has argued that the ‘father of the King’, a term that occurs in several Hittite texts, may not always refer to a concrete person, but can be regarded as a stylistic means to place a certain story in an indefinite time, a past with an exemplary function (specifically so in the Palace Chronicle (CTH 8), but see Kloekhorst *ftch.b* for a different view). This cannot be the case in KBo 22.1, however, since here ‘my father’ is referred to in the present tense. He must therefore be a concrete person, and really the father of the narrator.

correct, would also account for the fact that this composition is so different from other instruction texts known from the Ḫattuša archives and contains so many linguistic and orthographic idiosyncrasies (as noted by Miller 2013, 73 f.), as this text would then have been the product of a different tradition.³⁴ Moreover, it opens up the possibility that the physical tablet on which this composition is written down, KBo 22.1, was created outside of Ḫattuša in a period predating the Ḫattuša archives, just as has been proposed above for KBo 3.22 and KBo 22.2.

4.4 KBo 17.21+

The last tablet of our group, KBo 17.21+, contains the outline of a part of the KILAM festival, dealing with the episode of the “great assembly” (CTH 6273.a). The events taking place during this festival, which extended over three days, have been described on several different tablets, of which many copies, stemming from Old, Middle and New Hittite times, exist (see Singer 1983, 11–52 for an overview of the text material and the composition of the text of this festival). As Haas (1994, 748) observes, the many Hattic ritual terms and theonyms occurring in the texts clearly indicate that the KILAM festival has a Hattic origin. He further points out that in the course of time several aspects of the festival events have been altered. Although the majority of the texts describing the KILAM festival deal with the performance of this festival in Ḫattuša, there are also texts describing a KILAM festival in Arinna and a KILAM festival in Zippalanda (Haas 1994, 767, 770). This implies that different local traditions existed, and the origins of the festivals may go far back in time.

Singer (1983, 70) remarks that the composition present on KBo 17.21+, “is a complete contextual unit, covering the events of the “great assembly” from beginning to end”. He classifies it as an “outline tablet”, which means that it only gives a summary of the events that take place during the “great assembly”. Other texts give a more detailed account of these events, however, and especially the Old

Hittite tablets ABoT 5+ and KBo 38.12+³⁵ are important sources (although other, younger, duplicates exist as well, see Singer 1983, 74).

Considering the fact that KBo 17.21+ constitutes a “complete contextual unit”, it may well have its own specific origin, that need not necessarily be the same as other texts dealing with the KILAM festival. In the following, we would like to explore the possibility that KBo 17.21+, just like the three above-discussed tablets, may have been composed at a time before the start of the writing tradition in Ḫattuša, at a different location. In doing so, we will focus on the events described in KBo 17.21+, supplemented, when necessary, by additional information from the more elaborate texts ABoT 5+ and KBo 38.12+.

In KBo 17.21+, there are not many clues that could elucidate the date and place of its composition. The main agent of the text is referred to as LUGAL ‘the King’,³⁶ but his identity is unclear. And although several place names are mentioned in KBo 17.21+, none of these need to refer directly to the place where this ritual was performed. There are, however, a number of indirect indications that may point to an origin of this text outside of Ḫattuša.

The first one concerns the spelling of Ḫattuša. The name of this city occurs once in this text, but in the peculiar shape URUḫattuš: KBo 17.21+ rev. 55 [TUŠ-a]š URUḫa-at-tu-uš ^dte-te-eš-ḫa-pi-in e[-ku-zi] ‘While sitting he drinks (to) Tetešḫapi of Ḫattuša’. Although URUḪattuš is the normal form of the name of Ḫattuša in Hattic texts, in Hittite texts it always has the form URUḪattuša-.³⁷ According to Singer, almost all deities mentioned in KBo 17.21+ are Hattic in origin, and he therefore states that URUḪattuš ^dTetešḫapin, as well as Ḫanikkun ^dK[ataḫ]ḫ[an] ‘Kataḫḫa of Ankuḫa’ (KBo 17.21+ obv. 36), are cases of deities “appear[ing] in conjunction with the Hattic names of their towns” (Singer 1983, 102). Nevertheless, the spelling URUḫa-at-tu-uš is suspicious. If this text had been composed in Ḫattuša at the time that Ḫattuša already was the capital of the Hittite kingdom, one would expect to find the common Hittite variant of its name, URUḪattuša-, and not its Hattic version.³⁸ The spelling URUḫa-at-tu-uš may thus be tentatively interpreted as an indication for an early date of composi-

³⁴ As kindly pointed out to us by Theo van den Hout, KBo 22.1 is in this respect distinctly different from the other three cushion-shaped tablets, which are relatively mainstream regarding their spelling and syntax. This may be explained by the possibly very early date of this text (before ca. 1740 BCE), which predates the Anitta-text (ca. 1725 BCE) and the Zalpa-text (ca. 1650 BCE). Furthermore, KBo 22.1 belongs to a very specific stylistic genre, which according to Miller (2013, 75) is only paralleled by the Palace Chronicle (CTH 8). Interestingly, the latter may also be connected to the group of cushion-shaped tablets, see footnote 41 below, and Kloekhorst fthc.b.

³⁵ Cf. the edition by Groddek 2004.

³⁶ Note that the more elaborate versions ABoT 5+ and KBo 38.12+ consistently talk about ‘King and Queen’.

³⁷ Possible other exceptions are KBo 43.169, 3 (NS) ([...]ḫa-at-tu-uš[...]) and KBo 37.76, 5 (undat.) ([...-a]t-tu-uš) (p.c. Adam Kryszewski). In both cases, the form is broken, however, so that it is unclear whether we are really dealing with references to Ḫattuša. The only secure example of the spelling URUḫa-at-tu-uš in a Hittite-language text is thus the attestation in KBo 17.21+.

³⁸ Cf. the fact that in the younger copy KUB 20.4 v 6 (LNS) we may

tion of this text, possibly predating the establishment of Ḫattuša as the capital of the Hittite kingdom.

Another interesting fact is that in ABoT 5+ (containing the more elaborate version of the events described in KBo 17.21+), mention is made of musicians from Nēša: [(LÚ^{MEŠ})] GIŠ.^dINANNA^{Ḫ.LA} KA-N[(I-I)]Š SÌR^{RU} (ABoT 5+ ii 22 (OS)) ‘the lyre-players of Nēša sing’ (duplicated by LÚ^{MEŠ} URU KA-NI-IŠ SÌR^{RU} ‘the men of Nēša sing’ (KBo 38.12+ i 7” (OS?)), cf. Groddek 2004, 16. 44). Nēša plays a crucial role in the above-discussed Anitta-text (§ 4.1) and the Zalpa-text (§ 4.2), which, as we have argued above, describe events predating the Hittite Kingdom period. In the Hittite period, Nēša is no longer a town of significance and does not feature prominently in the texts anymore. However, the gods and men of Nēša do occur in some festival texts from the Empire period (Haas 1994, 613; Pecchioli Daddi 1982, 605–607), which possibly reflects remnants of older traditions. The occurrence of Nēšite musicians/singers in the parallel texts of KBo 17.21+ is thus no direct evidence that this composition belonged to a different, pre-Ḫattuša tradition. Nevertheless, in the wider context of what we have seen thus far this (indirect) connection of KBo 17.21+ with Nēša is remarkable to say the least.

A third interesting observation does not concern the content of KBo 17.21+ itself, but rather another part of the KI.LAM festival, namely the so-called “procession of the animals of the gods”. This part describes how zoomorphic cult objects made of precious metals are carried forth in a procession for the king to watch (cf. Singer 1983, 59 f., 92). As had been noted by Goetze (1969, 29), the list of animals carried in this procession resembles the list of animals that according to the Anitta-text (KBo 3.22 rev. 60–63) were taken to Nēša by Anitta. Singer (1983, 93) therefore entertains the possibility that Anitta’s list “does not refer to actual animals but to cult symbols similar to those in the KI.LAM text. The proximity of this passage to the passage in which the erection of temples in Nēša is described could corroborate this possibility”. Even if the Anitta-text would in fact refer to real animals, the correspondence is striking. If the link suggested by Singer is correct, it would mean that already during the reign of Anitta (parts of) the KI.LAM festival were celebrated. This matches the fact that in Old Assyrian texts from Kültepe/Nēša mention is being made of local festivals, which may well have included a version of the KI.LAM festival. This would not be surprising, considering the fact that social and religious phenomena like festivals and rituals are overall quite persistent traditions,

that are prone to survive within changing political structures. In addition, there are more examples of cultural and religious continuity between the Old Assyrian and the Old Hittite period (see Waal fthc.). It thus stands to reason that already at that time compositions dealing with (parts of) this festival could have existed.

All in all, though in the case of the text of KBo 17.21+ the evidence is not as direct as in the case of the Anitta-text of KBo 3.22, it can certainly not be excluded that this text, too, was composed in a period before the establishment of Ḫattuša as capital of the Hittite kingdom, and possibly even at the times of Anitta (which would point to Nēša as its place of composition).

5 Conclusions

In the preceding sections we have seen that the four so-called ‘cushion-shaped’ tablets have more in common than their unique tablet form. All four of them can palaeographically be dated as OS, and they all show (at least instances of) the graphic peculiarity that the conjunctions *nu*, *ta* and *šu* are attached directly to the succeeding word without a word space. This coherence between these four tablets is remarkable, and becomes even more significant when their contents are taken into account. They all contain compositions that can be regarded as belonging to the oldest compositions in the Hittite corpus. Moreover, for one of these tablets, KBo 3.22, it is generally agreed upon that the text it contains, (the Anitta-text, CTH 1) must have been composed by Anitta, near the end of his reign in Nēša (ca. 1725 BCE). This composition must thus stem from almost at least 75 years before the times that the Hittite archives at Ḫattuša started (traditionally dated to after the North Syrian campaign by Ḫattušili I, at the beginning of his reign, shortly after 1650 BCE). For the second tablet of this group, KBo 22.2, it has above been argued that the composition it contains (the Zalpa-text, CTH 3.1) may have been composed in the period before Ḫattuša was made into the Hittite capital, thus also predating the Hittite royal archives at Ḫattuša. The third cushion-shaped tablet, KBo 22.1, contains a text (“A royal reprimand of the dignitaries”, CTH 272) which according to us may stem from a different, older tradition as well: we have argued that, just like the Anitta-text of KBo 3.22, it may have been authored by Anitta, during the reign of his father Piḫāna. Of the fourth tablet, KBo 17.21+, no definitive judgements can be made as to when and where the text that it contains (an outline of a part of the KI.LAM festival, CTH 627.3.a) was composed. Nevertheless, there

read URU¹ GIDRU-aš² *te-te-e* [š³-ḫa-pi-in] ‘Tetešhapi of Ḫattuša’, in which a Hittite genitive form is used (cf. Singer 1984, 78 for this reading).

Tab. 2: Shared characteristics of the cushion-shaped tablets.

	shape	palaeo-graphic dating	use of space after <i>nu, ta, šu</i>	date of composition	original place of composition	origin of the tablet (petro-graphically determined)
1. KBo 3.22	cushion-shaped	OS	often no space	reign of Anitta	Nēša	possibly outside of Ḫattuša
2. KBo 22.2	cushion-shaped	OS	once no space	very beginning of the reign of Ḫattušili I	probably not Ḫattuša	not determined
3. KBo 22.1	cushion-shaped	OS	often no space	possibly reign of Piḫāna	possibly Nēša?	not determined
4. KBo 17.21+	cushion-shaped	OS	in both relevant cases no space	possibly before the establishment of Ḫattuša as Hittite capital	probably not Ḫattuša, possibly Nēša?	not determined

are some indications that this composition predates the establishment of Ḫattuša as capital of the Hittite empire, and there are some (indirect) links to be found with Nēša.

It can hardly be a coincidence that all these four tablets contain compositions that certainly or possibly stem from places other than Ḫattuša and treat events that probably took place before the traditionally assumed date of introduction of the cuneiform script into Ḫattuša.³⁹ If we then add the fact that the clay of one of these tablets, KBo 3.22, may stem from outside Ḫattuša (unfortunately, the other three tablets have not yet been subjected to petrographic analyses), it is attractive to assume that all these tablets stem from an archive that was situated at a different location than Ḫattuša, and that predates the establishment of the Hittite royal archive at Ḫattuša.

The exact location where this archive was kept cannot at this moment be determined with certainty. An interesting possibility is that it may have been located in the city that was the Hittite capital before Ḫattušili I moved the Hittite royal court to Ḫattuša. As we have seen above (section 4.2.3, with footnote 30), there are several candidates for this: according to Martínez (2016), this place was

Ḫurma; Kloekhorst (fthc.a) rather argues for Nēša;⁴⁰ whilst Neu (1974, 135) and Goren/Mommsen/Klinger (2011, 693) have suggested that the Hittite writing tradition started in Kuššara.

6 Consequences

The assumption that the cushion-shaped tablets treated in this article stem from an archive that predates the establishment of the Hittite royal archive at Ḫattuša has direct consequences for the date of the introduction of Hittite cuneiform. As mentioned above, general consensus has it that the specifically Hittite cuneiform ductus (which is distinct from the Old Assyrian ductus, and is rather based on the Old Babylonian variant of the cuneiform script) was not created until after Ḫattušili I's campaigns in North Syria (shortly after 1650 BCE), when cuneiform scribes were brought to Ḫattuša. However, if our hypothesis is true, the Hittite ductus would have been in use in earlier times, already well before the reign of Ḫattušili I, possibly

³⁹ It is further of interest that two of these, the Anitta-text and the Zalpa-text, are specifically mentioned by van den Hout (2009a, 95) as Old Hittite compositions with a historical narrative of which no Akkadian version has been found, and which thus contradict his idea that in the times before Telipinu Akkadian was the sole language for writing. This also holds true for the “royal reprimand of the dignitaries” and the outline of the KILAM festival (see footnote 41 for the Zukraši-text and the Palace Chronicle, which, too, are mentioned by van den Hout as such cases). The absence of an Akkadian version of all these texts could be explained by assuming that they stem from a scribal tradition different from and predating the Ḫattuša tradition.

⁴⁰ As was discussed in section 4.1 as well, Neu (1974, 135) assumed that KBo 3.22 was a very good copy (“sehr gute Abschrift”) made in Ḫattuša on the basis of a Hittite-language original that was written down in Nēša. This view implies that this Nēšite original was at a certain point in time brought to Ḫattuša, but Neu does not make explicit when and how this would have taken place. Within a scenario that the original archive to which this tablet belonged was located in Nēša, there is no need any more to assume a moment of copying in Ḫattuša: we could then assume that KBo 3.22 in fact is this original Nēšite document that was brought to Ḫattuša, for instance at the moment that the Hittite court was moved from Nēša to Ḫattuša by Ḫattušili I (cf. Kloekhorst fthc.a).

even to up to 90–100 years earlier (if the assignment of the composition of KBo 22.1 to the times when Anitta was the *rabi simmiltim* of Piṭḫāna at Nēša, ca. 1750–1740 BCE, is correct). We therefore want to revive Neu’s hypothesis (1974, 134f.) that the specifically Hittite ductus (based on a North-Syrian model) was already created in the 18th century BCE – in Kuššara, or possibly elsewhere in Anatolia. The oldest Hittite tablets found in Ḫattuša thus do not so much reflect the very first beginnings of Hittite cuneiform, but rather the start of a royal administration there.

7 Outlook

We are fully aware that at this moment our proposal for the existence of a Hittite scribal tradition predating the tablet collections of Ḫattuša must remain a hypothesis. This hypothesis could be confirmed or denied by petro-

graphic analyses. We would therefore welcome a petrographic study in which the clay of the tablets KBo 17.21+, KBo 22.1, and KBo 22.2 is compared to the clay of KBo 3.22, in order to determine whether or not all four tablets could have the same provenance outside of Ḫattuša. Further, in order to establish whether or not they may stem from Nēša, a petrographic comparison with the Old Assyrian tablets excavated at Kültepe/Nēša would be most desirable – unfortunately, the locations of Ḫurma and Kuššara are still unknown. Ideally, this study would also include other tablets with a potentially ‘non-Ḫattušan’ origin. In the present article we have confined ourselves to four OS tablets that share a number of very peculiar and unique features. There are, however, a few other tablets that show some, but not all, of these characteristics, and sometimes display other idiosyncrasies as well.⁴¹ We plan to explore the tantalizing possibility that these tablets may also stem from outside of Ḫattuša on another occasion.

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⁴¹ As mentioned in footnote 1, the KIN oracle KBo 18.151 (CTH 827) may have a similar cushion-shape. This tablet, which is notorious for its strange spellings (e.g. Soysal 2000, 113–4; Kloekhorst 2010, 208²⁹; 2014, 240⁸⁶⁷; van den Hout 2012, 166), is palaeographically dated as “mh.” by Hetkonk, but Soysal (2000, 107–16) convincingly argues that it must stem from the Old Hittite period. Van den Hout (2012, 166) even states that it is “a good candidate to be one of the earliest texts completely written in Hittite, when there was not yet a standardization of spelling”. Since the text may contain a reference to the city of Nēša/Kaniš (rev. 4: ^{URU}*ka-an-ni-eš*, thus read and interpreted by Soysal 2000), it is an interesting possibility that this text stems from the time preceding the abandonment of Nēša (around 1650 BCE), and thus, like the other cushion-shaped tablets, would stem from before the beginning of the reign of Ḫattušili I, i.e. from before the traditionally assumed establishment of the Hittite tablet collections at Ḫattuša. Likewise, KBo 7.14 + KUB 36.100, containing the Zukraši-text, which shows a consistent absence of word space

after *nu* (see above, footnote 7), may also have a close connection to the group of cushion-shaped tablets, judging from its date of composition. It contains references to a man called ^{URU}*zu-uk-ra-a-ši* UGULA UKU.UŠ.E.NE [LÚ ^{UR}]*ḫa-la-ap* ‘Zukraši, chief of the heavily armed troops of the king of Aleppo’ (obv. 14–15), who is generally equated with the Zukraši mentioned in the Alalah text AIT 6 (= 21.01 in Dietrich/Loretz 2004). This man was a contemporary of Ammi-takum, the governor who ruled over Alalah in the period before it was destroyed by Ḫattušili I (see e.g. van Soldt 2000, 109). This places the composition of this text to the very beginning of Ḫattušili I’s reign at the latest, which could point to a very early date for the creation of the physical tablet as well (which is palaeographically dated by Hetkonk as “ah.*/mh.?”), i.e. as either OS or MS). To our mind, the OS tablet KUB 36.104, containing the Old Hittite version of the Palace Chronicle (CTH 8), may also be connected to the group of cushion-shaped tablets treated in this article: see Kloekhorst fthc.b for a detailed argumentation.

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