The last Kings of Qatna

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Résumé – Malgré l’identification précoce de Qatna avec la ville de Mishrifeh et les nombreuses mentions qui en sont faites dans des textes akkadiens, égyptiens et hittites, son histoire reste largement inconnue. Cet article se propose de reconstruire le paysage et l’histoire de cette ville, du xv° au xiv° s. Dans cette reconstruction, nous émettons l’hypothèse que l’expression « les Terres de Nuhashe », fréquente dans les textes, possède deux significations différentes : l’une politique, l’autre géographique. Ainsi, l’identification de l’Addu-nirari mentionné dans les textes de Qatna avec le roi homonyme de EA 51, comme proposée par Thomas Richter, peut être acceptée, mais sans que cela implique qu’il soit aussi roi d’une coalition appelée Nuhashe. Au cours de son règne et de ceux de ses successeurs, Idanda et Akizzi, Qatna se trouva confrontée aux menaces des grands royaumes d’Égypte et du Hatti ainsi que des petits royaumes voisins. Ni sa lutte pour la survie ni les revirements politiques qu’elle connut ne suffirent pour permettre à la ville de résister à ces années turbulentes.

Keywords – Qatna, Akkadian texts, Egyptian texts, Hittite texts, landscape, 15th-14th cent., « Terres de Nuhashe », Addu-nirari, Idanda, Akizzi

Abstract – Despite its early identification with the modern Mishrifeh and its numerous mentions in Akkadian, Egyptian and Hittite texts, the history of Qatna remains largely unknown. This article attempts to reconstruct the landscape and the history of the city between the 15th and 14th cent. In this reconstruction it is assumed that the expression “the Lands of Nuhashe”, that occurs frequently in the texts, had two different meanings, a geographical one and a political one. In this way, the identification of the Addu-nirari mentioned in the texts found at Qatna with the homonymous king of EA 51, proposed by Thomas Richter, can be accepted, but without the need to assume that he was also king of a coalition called Nuhashe. During his reign and those of his successors, Idanda and Akizzi, the city faced many threats from the great kingdoms of Egypt and Hatti, as well as from the small neighbouring kingdoms. Their struggle for survival and a couple of political turnovers were not enough to let the city outlive those turbulent years.

Mots-clés – Qatna, Akkadian texts, Egyptian texts, Hittite texts, landscape, 15th-14th cent., « Lands of Nuhashe », Addu-nirari, Idanda, Akizzi

ملخص – على الرغم من التحديد المبكر للبلدة في مدينة المشريفة والإشارة إليها في العديد من النصوص الأكادية وال المصرية والحلية، يبقى تاريخها غير معروف إلى حد كبير. وتقترح هذه المقالة إعادة بناء مشهد المدينة وتاريخها من القرن الخامس عشر إلى القرن الرابع عشر قبل الميلاد. في عملية إعادة البناء هذه، نقترح أن تعبير “أراضي نوخاشا”، الذي يمكن مشاركة في النصوص، يحمل معنيين، أحدهما سياسي والأخر جغرافي. وبالتالي، فإن مدة حكم الملك الداحي-نيراري، الذي يظهر في نصوص نوخاشا، الذي يتجنس له فتحه مع اسم مكان الفتح، توزع على نظام الملك EA 51 (د. 51). من الممكن القبول فيه لكن دون أن يعني ذلك أنه كان ملكاً لائتلاف يدعى نوخاشا. خلال فترة حكم الملك الداحي-نيراري والملوك الذين خلفاه، إدانا وأكيزي، تعرضت مدينة نوخاشا لهجمات من ممالك مصرية وحشية كبيرة ومن ممالك صغيرة محاربة. ومع ذلك، فإن تساقطها من أجل البقاء أو التحولات السياسية التي عاشتها، لم يكن كافياً للسماح لها على تحمل هذه السنوات المضطربة.

كلمات محورية – نوخاشا، نصوص محلية، الأكاديون، المصريون والثنايين، المشهد والتاريخ، القرنان الرابع عشر والخامس عشر، ديار نوخاشا، الداحي-نيراري، إدانا، أكيزي

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The ancient city of Qatna, located on a major tributary of the middle Orontes, has been known to modern scholarship since the discovery at el-Amarna of letters sent by the petty Syro-Palestinian kings to the pharaoh, and the site was identified as that of present-day Mishrifeh in 1927. Nevertheless, and despite numerous references to be found in Akkadian, Egyptian and Hittite texts, the history of the city still remains largely unknown.

From a couple of letters sent to Zimri-Lim several years before Mari was conquered by Hammurabi of Babylon, we know that in around the mid-18th cent. in the Near East no one king was dominant, but four or five were equally powerful: Hammurabi of Babylon, Rim-Sin of Larsa, Amut-pi’el of Qatna, Yarim-Lim of Yamhad, and perhaps Ibalpi’el of Eshnunna. Each of these monarchs was served by 10-15 less powerful kings, with the exception of Yarim-Lim, who had 20 such kings under his sovereignty.

In the LBA the situation had changed, but —although no longer the large, powerful regional kingdom that it used to be— Qatna still remained an extensive political entity in central Syria.

**QATNA IN THE LBA: THE LANDSCAPE**

According to a text dating to the time of Addu-nirari, king of Qatna, in this period its territory reached the Lebanon Mountains to the south-west (TT 6: 21-24). Southwards it was probably bounded by another natural frontier, the forest of Lebo which is mentioned in several LBA Egyptian texts. The mouth of the Beqa Valley, south of Qadesh, is sparsely populated even today, and it is plausible that in antiquity the area was largely uninhabited—or at best a land of nomads.

To the north, the kingdom reached at least al-Rastan, with the possibility that even Hama was included in its domains, if we may equate the Amata of a text found in the Lower City Palace with the Iron Age Hamat (map 1).

So we can suppose that at the time of Addu-nirari, the territories controlled by the kingdom of Qatna were bordered by the Lebanon Mountains, the forest and Qadesh to the south, Tunip and Zinzar to the north—if these sites correspond to modern Asharine and Qalat Shayzar—and possibly by Tunanab to

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1. Virolleaud 1930, p. 311.
2. The existence of four powerful kings is mentioned in ARM XXXVI/2: p. 56-59 (text 303: 21’-22’), dated to the 9th year of the reign of Zimri-Lim. The identification of these four kings was proposed by Durand 1998 (ARM XXVI/2: p. 58 fn. j.), who connects this text with another published in Dossin 1938, p. 117-118. Here there is also a fifth king, that of Eshnunna, no longer present at the time the first letter was written. Cf. Klengel 1992, p. 57.
3. TT refers to the tablets discovered in the Royal Palace of Qatna in 2002 and published in Richter & Lange 2012.
4. See e.g. the report of the first Syrian expedition of Amenhotep II (Edel 1953, p. 146-156) or the relief connected with the Battle of Qadesh (Gardiner 1960, p. 36-37). This location must not be confused with the city of Labana, mentioned several times in the Amarna letters—such as EA 53 and EA 54 written by Akizzi. See Gore, Finkelstein & Na’aman 2004, p. 99 and Turri 2015, p. 249-252.
5. Between Khirbet Busabis, the northernmost known site in the LBA, 5 km NEE of Hermel (Marfoe 1995, p. 280 no. 374) and Tell Nebi Mend/Qadesh, there is a distance of 18 km as the crow flies. There appear to be no LBA sites in the area, except perhaps for a small settlement of uncertain date situated a couple of km south of Tell Nebi Mend (see site SRH 203 on the map in Philip 2007, p. 236 fig. 3 and Turri 2015, p. 78-80 and 85).
6. URU-a-ra-aš-ta-an is mentioned in two administrative tablets found in the Royal Palace, TT 36: 3 and TT 43: 16. Ar-Rastan seems to have been occupied almost continuously from the 4th millennium until the classical era (al-Maqdisi 2007, p. 26). Richter proposes that the toponym could have migrated and that the ancient site might correspond to a tell located near the modern city, Tell Qini, where a cuneiform text and one in Luwian hieroglyphics were found. For Tell Qini see references in Lehmann 2002, p. 491.
7. For the text see Eidem 2007, but no suggestion is given there for the identification of Amata (l. 45’, URU-a-ma-ta). The settlement in Hama is ancient, but the name is known with certainty only from the 1st millennium (KURU’a-ma-at-, a-ma-, ha-(am)-(ma)-(at)-i-ta/e/i/u), when the city became the most important one in central Syria. But a similar name (’a-ma-ad/du/tim) is used several times in the texts found at Ebla (see Bonelli 1993, p. 36-37) and it is possible that the toponym no. 122 of the great topographical list of Thutmose III (i-m-t) corresponds to the city. See Turri 2015, p. 167 and 221 and Klengel 1970, p. 55-56. The list is published in Simons 1937 (list no. 1); on its composition see Helk 1971, p. 107-167 and Turri 2015, p. 161-173.
the north-east. Niya and Nuhashe were probably just to the north of this territory. Other surrounding natural barriers were the Shin plateau to the west, and the foothills of the Jebel Abu Rujmayn and the desert to the south-east.

The area around the city is fertile, underlain by a bedrock of marly limestone over which several streams flow, forming a complex system of wadis, most of them very small. Two of the larger streams flanked the city to the east and west —enclosing it in a sort of triangle— and a third ran between them. These watercourses are now dry for most of the year and their discharge is not commensurable to the size of their beds, not even in the rainy season, implying that in the past there was a greater availability of water and a wetter climate. They are known as Wadi el-Slik or Wadi al Saan al Aswad to the west, Wadi Zurat in the middle, touching the city itself, and Wadi Maydani to the east. They flow northwards and join together north of Mishrifeh, continuing beyond a basalt outcrop and running into the Orontes after a further 10 km. Their catchment basins are limited in size, but they are fed by karst springs, thanks to the permeability of the marly limestones (deeply fractured and affected by weathering near the surface, which facilitates underground water accumulation). These watercourses are now dry for most of the year and their discharge is not commensurable to the size of their beds, not even in the rainy season, implying that in the past there was a greater availability of water and a wetter climate. They are known as Wadi el-Slik or Wadi al Saan al Aswad to the west, Wadi Zurat in the middle, touching the city itself, and Wadi Maydani to the east. They flow northwards and join together north of Mishrifeh, continuing beyond a basalt outcrop and running into the Orontes after a further 10 km. Their catchment basins are limited in size, but they are fed by karst springs, thanks to the permeability of the marly limestones (deeply fractured and affected by weathering near the surface, which facilitates underground water accumulation).

The surveys conducted by the Syrian and the Syro-Italian teams that have worked in Mishrifeh show that most of the sites in the region are located along these three wadis, on slightly elevated areas and often near small lakes (that no longer exist, but whose presence in the past is suggested by sporadic patches of dark soil that may be seen on the surface). Although the central wadi is the largest, it is also the one with least attested settlements —and not only in the LBA. This paucity may be explained by the possible presence in this wadi of fields cultivated and controlled directly by the city. In the LBA, the most densely inhabited wadi seems to have been the eastern one, with four identified sites vs. two or three on the western one.

The biggest settlements were occupied continuously from the EBA to the IA —sometimes even until the Classical Age— and the geographical positions of these would seem to be significant: Tell Qadah (Geo-Su 20, 3 ha), the biggest tell of the region after Qatna, is the first on Wadi el-Slik; Tell al-Wasmah (Geo-Su 6, 1.5 ha) is its eastern equivalent on Wadi Maydani; while Geo-Su 27, slightly smaller (1.3 ha), is further to the north, where the wadis join the Orontes. Thus these three tells seem to be at the vertices of a triangle that encloses the area, with Mishrifeh at its centre.

Another site is worthy of note: between site Geo-Su 27 and Mishrifeh, where the western wadi joins the central one and the eastern starts to flow parallel to this, there is a sort of pyramid of basalt blocks (Geo-Su 30), surrounded by a rectangular enclosure of the same material, where LBA sherds were found.

8. Dussaud 1927, p. 111 identified the ancient Tunanab as modern Tannuneh, 12 km west of Homs, at the end of a subsidiary wadi of the Orontes. Klengel preferred to connect it with Dunaiba, 16 km north-east of Mishrifeh (Klengel 1970, p. 93-94). Here the tell, Tell Hana, where Mesnil du Buisson made some soundings in the twenties and found the remains of ancient fortifications, is actually 3.5 km east of Dunaiba and of considerable size —300 m in diameter (Mesnil du Buisson 1930a). If Tannuneh were the correct location, the settlement would have been between Qatna and the Lebanon Mountains, implying that the territory under the sovereignty of the kingdom of Qatna had been reduced since the time of Addu-nirari. On Tunanab (or Tunanat, as it is written in EA 53), See Turri 2012 and Turri 2015, p. 233-236.


10. On the topographical map NI37.NW.4.d the name is given only to the southern portion of the stream, while the central and the northern parts are named Wadi al-Majri and Wadi al-Jahash.


12. For these surveys, see Morandi Bonacossi 2007, Cremaschi et al. 2008, Al-Maqdisi 2011, and Turri 2015, p. 89-99. Geo-Su is the code given to the sites recorded by the Syro-Italian survey.

13. In the MBA the situation seems to be the same, with five sites settled on the western wadi and three on the eastern one. The lack of sites in the LBA in the north-western area, along Wadi el-Slik, does not seem to have an obvious explanation. This gap may actually be only apparent. The 1:50,000 topographic map of the Levant (sheet NI37.NW.4.d), shows at least two tells in this area that were not included in the survey. In analyzing the data, therefore, we must take into account the brevity of the survey, conducted by a small group of people, and its essentially geomorphological focus (Crema et al. 2003, p. 71); it is possible that this has affected the completeness of the data. Only the sites surveyed by the Syro-Italian team are analyzed here.

14. There is only one other site with an area of 2 ha, Tell Hajbah (Geo-Su 18).
found. Its function is not known, but in view of its position, it may have been some kind of landmark. In fact, the modern place-name for the high ground where this construction stands, Rahm al Kharj—which contains the Arab root meaning “exit” (kh-r-j)—seems to reflect well the distinctive nature of the area, located at the convergence of the three wadis, at the end of the wide, fertile plain that they enclose.

Altogether, 12 LBA sites were identified in the area, just a couple less than for the MBA, and almost all are tells. Eight of them were already inhabited in the MBA, and three of the others had been previously occupied during the EBA. Considering also that the few MBA sherds found in the side of a channel (Geo-SU 25) could be evidence of a small, short-lived rural settlement, it seems possible that such settlements were more numerous in the area than is indicated by the survey data.

The epigraphic data seem to support this suggestion. First of all we must notice that, unfortunately, the river and its valley were almost never mentioned in the LBA texts, which document the country with its settlements. The administrative texts found in Mishrifeh list a number of otherwise unknown toponyms, that probably refer to settlements situated not far from the central city. The largest and best preserved tablet found in the Lower City Palace lists quantities of beer issued to about 500 men who came from thirteen to fifteen different localities, probably soldiers stationed in important military posts inside or just outside Qatna, where they were in service. Each toponym is associated with between 120

15. Besides Geo-Su 30, mentioned in the text, there is only one other settlement not on a tell. This is Geo-Su 28, located on a colluvial deposit on the side of Mount Zahra el-Ayn, near Asilah.
17. See the text in Eidem 2007.
and 4 units of beer, and the differences in these quantities could be tentatively connected to the different sizes of the settlements. Even the conscription lists found in the Royal Palace assign only a few personal names to each toponym, probably indicating that they were small settlements or farmsteads. It seems reasonable to imagine that a large part of the population of the region lived in these settlements rather than in the main city.

During the LBA, in spite of the enormous area encompassed by its ramparts (110 ha), Qatna was in fact mainly a political-administrative centre, lacking extensive residential areas. It seems likely that in times of necessity, the city would have offered protection to the inhabitants of the small satellite settlements scattered along the three wadis, but it must have been place of abode only for the upper classes and those who worked closely with the executive apparatus: scribes, specialized artisans and so forth. Even the farmers who worked the fields under direct control of the palace might well have lived in farmsteads outside the city.

The presence of a massive rural population might also account for changes brought about by anthropic action on the landscape, which became more open between the Middle and Late Bronze Age. At this time, the juniper forests that had previously characterized the area disappeared, giving way to scattered deciduous oaks and a more open landscape. A more intensive use of the soil was reflected in the increasing presence of cereals—the most common was barley—and nettle, the pollen of which were found in cores drilled just outside the huge ramparts that protected the city. Edible fruit included grapes, chestnuts and (to a lesser extent) figs, although it is almost impossible to determine whether they were wild or cultivated species. Some areas were used as pasture, too, as evidenced by the presence of the pollen of plantain.

Gifts to the gods and international correspondence: the written sources

With regard to the city’s history in the LBA, until recent years the only information available derived from the few texts found at Mishrifeh in the twenties by Count du Mesnil du Buisson in a room of the Royal Palace, where long lists of precious objects offered to the gods of Qatna were discovered. From their colophons we can obtain the names of two certain kings: Addu-nirari, who reigned for at least 45 years (colophons IA and IC), and Idanda, son of Ulashuddu (colophon ID). From the gift lists we learn that there was also a king named Napilima, who predates the other two. Other persons are mentioned in the tablets, but since titles are not used consistently in the texts, it is not always possible to establish for certain the role of these characters. Both Addu-nirari and Idanda are now also known from the texts recently discovered in the Royal Palace by the Syro-German team that has worked in Mishrifeh.

A further king of Qatna, Akizzi, who must be placed after the kings mentioned in the lists, was previously known from the Amarna letters EA 52-57. From these we know that Akizzi was monarch at

19. During the 2nd millennium, the phenomenon of such “hollow cities” is well known throughout the Near East. See Morandi Bonacossi 2007, p. 80-81 for Qatna and fn. 68 for the Near East.
21. The sharp fall in the number of junipers at the MBA/LBA transition was in part due to climatic change, in particular a decrease in precipitation, but also to human factors, such as their possible exploitation as fuel (Valsecchi 2007, p. 111).
24. On the discovery, see Mesnil du Buisson 1935a, p. 9. The tablets were published by Virolleaud 1928 and 1930 and then by Bottéro 1949 and 1950.
25. Bottéro 1949, p. 31. Some minor variations were proposed by Epstein 1963 and Fales 2004.
27. “Idanda’s Archive”, which includes letters and legal and administrative texts, was discovered mainly in 2002 and is published in Richter & Lange 2012. Other LBA texts were found by the Syro-Italian team in the Lower City Palace. See Eidem 2003 and 2007.
Qatna (EA 57: 2) during the reign of Akhenaton, who is the addressee of the letters, at a time when Etakama was already king of Qadesh (EA 53). Akizzi’s letters were written after Shuppiluliuma’s First Syrian War, because it was late in this campaign that the Hittite king was attacked near Abzuya by the father of Etakama, Shutatarrar, king of Qadesh and Egyptian vassal. Shutatarrar and his son were defeated and deported to Hatti, but soon Etakama was sent back to Qadesh as king. By crowning a direct descendant and pleading self-defence as motive for the attack, Shuppiluliuma avoided provoking a reaction from Egypt, which considered the city its possession.

In his letters Akizzi wrote about a Hittite raid on the city in which “the king of Hatti has taken its gods and the fighting men of Qatna” (EA 55: 42-43). The first known Hittite intromission in the city is known to have occurred before the clash between Shuppiluliuma and Qades, but, if we consider that one of the letters sent to Idanda recently discovered at Qatna was written by a certain Hanutti together with a person called Takuwa, we can conclude that Idanda’s reign—or at least part of it—must have occurred when “the land of Mitanni falls in ruins” (TT 4: 35), after the defeat of the Hurrian allies during the First Syrian War. So the raid mentioned by Akizzi is likely to have been a later one.

The presence among the senders of Idanda’s letters of a certain Takuwa is suggestive of the homonymous king of Niya, who submitted himself to the Hittites at the beginning of the war. The fact that this person wrote a letter jointly with Hanutti, whose name is clearly Hittite and who is known from other texts, gives support to the hypothesis that these two Takuwas were actually one and the same. This would furnish a chronological framework for all the other events.

**Addu-nirari and the Lands of Nuhashe**

Excluding Napilima, the most ancient of the kings mentioned is Addu-nirari, who has been recently identified by Richter as the homonymous king of Nuhashe, sender of EA 51, and as the king mentioned in the Hittite treaty with Niqmaddu of Ugarit (CTH 46) —assuming that at the time of this ruler there existed a large confederation of kingdoms called Nuhashe and that Qatna was its most important city, perhaps ruled by the šakkanakku Lulu.

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28. This very fragmentary letter may be petrographically assigned to the Qatna assemblage, even though it was not written by Akizzi, who is mentioned in the 3rd person. See Goren, Finkelstein & Na’aman 2004, p. 96.
30. These events are narrated in the historical prologue to the treaty with Shattiwaza of Mitanni (CTH 51), where the First Syrian War is recounted. Because of the sentence “I (= Shuppiluliuma) plundered all of these lands in one year and brought them to Hatti”, the war is well known as the One-year War. The actual length of the campaign has been long debated, but many scholars consider the quoted sentence as to be taken literally, see e.g. Kitchen 1962, p. 42-44; Bryce 1989, p. 24 and 30 and 2006, p. 161-163; Freu 2003, p. 120-138; Richter & Lange 2012, p. 155-156. Compressing all the actions referred to in CTH 51 into one year would have required very quick actions and left no time to strengthen conquests. In fact, as described below, there were numerous revolts among the newly acquired Hittite vassals before the Second Syrian War —that was fought in the north, though, probably without the personal intervention of Shuppiluliuma in central Syria. It would make more sense and facilitate an understanding of how events may have been connected if the war had really lasted longer than one year. A rather convincing interpretation of the prologue of CTH 51, which entertains the possibility that the war was five years longer, is given in Cordano 2011a. However, in the following pages I will not focus on the duration of the campaign and will consider the events as consecutive, without taking into consideration the possibility that Shuppiluliuma returned to Hatti each winter.
31. A personage with this name was the governor of the Low Country who died in the first year of Murshili’s reign (in the Complete Annals of Murshili, translation in Del Monte 1993, p. 73-74). In the Deeds of Suppiluliuma the same person was operating in the north of the country (Güterbock 1956, p. 90-98 and Del Monte 1993, p. 133-138). See Del Monte 1993, p. 74 n. 3-4. Richter suggests that Hanutti could have been the commander-in-chief of the Hittite army (Richter 2005, p. 121).
32. Richter 2002, p. 608-610. This character is mentioned in Inventory I, l. 327, which dates him to the time of Addu-nirari. A šakkanakku’s duties are unknown in this period, so it is not possible to establish if he was an official from Qatna or the diplomatic delegate of some foreign king. Cfr. Bottero 1949, p. 31 n. 1 and Fales 2004, p. 101 n. 98.
According to this reconstruction, during the First Syrian War Addu-nirari participated—along with Aki-Teshup of Niya, Akiya of Arahati and other persons whose origins are unknown to us—in an attack against Shuppiluliuma in Arahati. These events are recounted by Shuppiluliuma himself in the historical introduction to a treaty with Shattiwaza of Mitanni (CTH 51): the Great King defeated Arahati and captured Aki-Teshup and Akiya, who were brought to Hatti with all their chariots and their possessions. Immediately after these events, the king also claims to have brought to Hatti the possessions of Qatna. Most scholars had previously thought that the deportation of the goods of Qatna happened after an incursion of Shuppiluliuma into the city, thus separating chronologically the two events. Richter points out, however, that the treaty does not speak of the destruction of Qatna and therefore he considers it more plausible to link the two events, supposing that the forces of Qatna joined those of the other two.

In support of his thesis, he emphasizes that after these events the Hittite king says he went into the land of Nuhashe, and that if he had been in Qatna, this manoeuvre would have required the Hittite army to perform a detour. This observation is important and would explain why the text does not mention the destruction or looting of the city. But neither are such actions recounted in the Hittite text with regard to Arahati, which is simply said to have been defeated, whereas a few paragraphs earlier the destruction of the District of Shuta is explicitly recorded.

Besides, to go to Nunahe the Hittite army would in any case have had to head east from Arahati, thus lengthening its march, while it could have reached the area more easily from Aleppo, where it had been previously—before Aki-Teshup, Akiya and the other cities rebelled against Hatti, a rebellion in which neither Addu-nirari, Nunahe nor Qatna are explicitly said to have taken part.

Moreover, Shuppiluliuma says that after moving to Nunahe he acquired its whole territory, but failed to capture Sharrupshi, who is not referred to as king in the text but anyway clearly seems to have been its leader—and again Addu-nirari is not mentioned. So not only do we not have any proof that the two events coincide, but the non-mention of Addu-nirari, Nunahe or Qatna would seem rather inexplicable.

That this revolt is not the same as that of Itur-Addu of Mukish, Addu-nirari of Nunahe and Aki-Teshup of Nunahe, related in CTH 46, could be indicated by the title given to the latter in the texts. In CTH 51, the king of Nunahe is a certain Takuwa and his brother, Aki-Teshup, is merely the person who started the revolt, availing himself of the absence of the king (who had gone to Mukish to submit to Shuppiluliuma). But Aki-Teshup is explicitly said to be king in CTH 46, during the mentioned revolt of Mukish, Nunahe and Nunahe.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is necessary to consider Nunahe in more detail. In an attempt to clarify the history of the region in the Late Bronze Age, Klengel wrote: “If compared with the evidence from Amarna and Ugarit, the situation could become understandable only if Nunahe formed a complex of political units ruled by several kings” and the majority of the scholars who have dealt with the problem seem to agree with him. But a careful reading of the Amarna letters or the Ugarit tablets reveals a peculiarity: the texts refer to the king of Nunahe in the singular when this is followed by mention of the kings of other countries or by the name of a specific sovereign. When the term

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33. LEWY 1961, p. 418-419 fn. 8 identified the place as modern Ariha, which is about 30 km east of Jisr esh-Shogur, and almost as far west of Ebla, on the northern slopes of the Jebel Zawiyeh. This location is consistent with the events related in the text of the treaty. This is, however, the only certain mention of Arahati and the proposal is mainly based on toponomastic evidence. We can tentatively connect it with the Arhadu of the Ebla texts which, however, according to Bonechi 1993, p. 49, was probably situated south of Ebla.

34. None of the interpretations proposed so far manages to link all the details into a coherent chronological sequence, inclusive of all the events as recounted in the sources. It is clear that the writers recorded their own versions of events, leaving out some details and including perhaps only those that served their specific purposes, and it is also possible that they were at times untruthful on some points. With the prologue of the treaty, the situation is slightly different: the Gods were witnesses and would probably not have been lied to. But this does not exclude the possibility that only some details of the story may have been told and others left out.


36. See RICHTER 2002 and related bibliography.

37. EA 53: 40-43 = ki-i-me-e a-na-ku (= Akizzi of Qatna) ... /u, ki-ia-am LUGAL KUR nu-ša-aš-še / LUGAL KUR ni-i
Nuhashe is not followed by other countries or by personal names, the texts always speak of kings in the plural \(^{38}\). The same distinction between singular and plural usage may be noticed in Hittite texts as well \(^{39}\). Moreover Akizzi, who listed in EA 53 the countries loyal to Egypt (in addition to Qatna, his hometown, there are Nuhashe, Niya, Zinzar and Tunanab), in the subsequent letter EA 55 confirmed to the pharaoh: “From the time my ancestors were your servants (…) Qatna has been your city and I belong to my Lord” (EA 55: 7-9); and a few lines later, he adds: “if my lord would take this country for his own country, then let my lord send this year his troops and his chariots so that they may come out here and all of Nuhashe (\(ki-i-me-e \text{KUR nu-ḫa-aš-še}\)) belong to my lord” (EA 55: 20-21); it is clear here that Akizzi includes Qatna too within Nuhashe.

These two of Akizzi’s writings seem to contradict each other: in the first (EA 53), Qatna and Nuhashe are two distinct entities, both loyal to the pharaoh, but later he says that Qatna is part of Nuhashe (EA 55) —and in fact according to Richter’s interpretation, the confederation of Nuhashe no longer existed at this time, having been dissolved with the defeat of Addu-nirari \(^{40}\). The issue can be resolved if we assume that the name Nuhashe was used in two different contexts, one geographical and the other political.

Examples of names with double meanings are not rare: the name Amurru, which originally designated the entire region of Syria to the west of Mesopotamia, in the Late Bronze Age acquired also two political meanings, referring at first to one of the areas under Egyptian control and then to the state of Aziru. Even today in the same area, the name Palestine indicates the geographical region in which exist the political entities of the Palestinian State, Israel and parts of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

So when the texts speak of the kings of Nuhashe in the plural, therefore, they refer in general to all the kings of the extensive region that stretched from Qatna to encompass the entire area of the middle Orontes and the plateau and highlands to the east. Within this territory, besides Qatna itself, there were also Niya, Zinzar, Tunanab, probably Tunip and the homonymous state of Nuhashe \(^{41}\).

In accordance with the positions of the other political entities, the state of Nuhashe (governed by its own king, to whom the texts refer when they use the singular) may have been located on the plateau, north-east of Hama and south-east of Maarrat an-Numaan. Probably it was not overlooking the Orontes itself, where there were Zinzar, Tunip, Niya and Mukish: as we noted previously, unfortunately the river is almost never mentioned in the LBA texts.

At this point we can put forward another proposal concerning the identity of Addu-nirari: EA 51 is normally attributed to the king of Nuhashe, but nowhere in what remains of the text does the sender actually refer to him as such. Addu-nirari, addressing Akhenaton, reminds him of “when Manahbiya (Tuthmosis III \(^{42}\)), the king of Egypt, your grandfather, made Taku my grandfather, king in the land of Nuhashe (\(i-na \text{KUR nu-ḫa-aš-še}\)) […]” (EA 51: 4-5) \(^{43}\).

The same Akizzi in EA 53 states, “of my lord alone I am the servant in the place of the land of Addu (\(i-na aš-ri \text{KUR IM}\))”, without explicitly mentioning Qatna, which is mentioned only towards the end of the letter. Considering that Akizzi does not specifically mention the city and that, in EA 55: 20-21, he seems

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38. Singular in CTH 49.II i 15-16: “the king of the land of Nuhashe, the king of the land of Niya”. Plural in CTH 62.B 4: “When the kings of the land of Nuhashe and the king of the land of Kinza became hostile, Aziru did not become hostile”.


41. As would appear from the two statements of RS 17.227 and CTH 62 (see previous notes), Qadesh and Mukish were outside the area called Nuhashe.

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to allude to his kingdom as being in the land of Nuhashe, that only the upper third of the tablet EA 51 is preserved (and we cannot know what was written in the missing part), we can assume that this Addu-nirari was indeed king of Qatna, but not necessarily of Nuhashe, considered as a political formation 45.

That the Addu-nirari letter and those of Akizzi had the same origin is suggested by the very similar composition of the clay they are made of 46 and by some peculiarities shared by the texts of the letters. Along with the letter sent by the inhabitants of Tunip to the pharaoh (EA 59), these are the only Amarna letters written by petty kings, in which the proper name of a pharaoh is used: Namhurya/Akhenaton in the letters of Qatna, Manahbiya/Tuthmosis III in EA 51 and EA 59. The pharaoh, normally addressed by other vassals with the words “the king my lord”—stressing the impossibility of the existence of another king—in these letters is often called “King of Egypt” dangerously implying that there could be other kings to be taken into consideration. These oddities could signal that the writers were unaccustomed to entertaining diplomatic relations with the pharaoh’s court 47.

Further evidence of the identification of the author of EA 51 as the homonymous king of Qatna may be found in EA 52. Here Akizzi says to the pharaoh: “Inspect, my lord, his tablets: the houses of Qatna belong to my lord”; neither in this (if he did not mention it in the thirty incomprehensible lines that follow) nor in his other tablets did Akizzi refer to previous contacts between himself and the pharaoh. That this is the first attempt to establish diplomatic relations with Egypt is evident from a following statement of Akizzi, in which he seems almost to apologize: “For 3 years, my lord, I wanted to contact my lord: I did not know of a caravan (gloss) or a messenger (going) to my lord; I did not know how to reach my lord” 48. The king of Qatna, in asking the pharaoh to consult his tablets (rather than remembering old ties dating back to their ancestors’ times), must refer to a letter written earlier but recently and received by Akhenaton himself; this was probably the letter written by Addu-nirari. In this case, the letter must necessarily have been sent in the last years of the reign of Addu-nirari, when Akhenaton was already pharaoh 49.

A resumption of ties with Egypt at this time is demonstrated by the recent discovery, in the Royal Palace, of a seal engraved with a scarab of this pharaoh 50. If the Palace—as will be suggested below—was destroyed, albeit partially, at the very beginning of the reign of Akizzi, this seal must in fact have arrived in Qatna during the reign of Idanda or in the last years of his predecessor, Addu-nirari.

Unfortunately, the content of letter EA 51 is two-thirds mutilated and does not give us many clues. In the surviving part of the verso, we read that Shuppiluliuma had requested an alliance with Addu-nirari and that the latter had refused, considering himself a servant of Egypt: “The king of Hatti [wrote] me for [alliance]. My Lord, the tablets and the alliance [I have refused]” (EA 51: 4-5). If we accept that the author of EA 51 was the homonymous king of Qatna, we can assume that Shuppiluliuma had tried to

45. For the mention of Addu-nirari in CTH 46, see below.
46. Goren, Finkelstein & Na’aman 2004 published the texts separately: EA 51 at p. 91-92, among the northern Syrian kingdoms, along with the tablet EA 67 attributed to Niya, and those from Ugarit; the letters of Akizzi at p. 94-98, in the chapter dedicated to the kingdoms of the middle Orontes. From the description of the clay of EA 51, it may be noted that its composition is almost identical to that of EA 53-55 and 57: both contain rounded inclusions of sandstone, limestone, chert and marl, and deposits from a body of water; minerals associated with basaltic sources, such as iddingsite, are common. It must be said, however, that these components are fairly widespread throughout the Levant (except iddingsite, which is otherwise rare among the Amarna letters), and are not sufficient to demonstrate a common origin.
47. A political link between Qatna and Tunip could perhaps be found in the person of Aki-Teshup of Tunip, probably the former king of the city, mentioned in EA 59, and a homonymous personage who has offered something to the gods in the inventory list II (l. 41).
48. Translation based on Liverani 1998, p. 291-292. Moran 1992 translates: “For 3 years, my lord, when I wanted to set out for my lord, the messengers did not know a caravan (going to Egypt). They did not know of: am-mu-li to my lord.”
49. Akhetaten (today Amarna) became capital of Egypt in the 7th year of Akhenaton, who was likely on the throne for 17 years. If we accept that the letter was sent by Addu-nirari of Qatna, it may have reached Amarna in one of the early years in which it was capital. So the pharaoh’s remaining years must have included Idanda’s probably short reign and part of that of Akizzi.
bind the city using diplomatic means. Qatna was a strategically important centre, located in a crucial position for connections between Anatolia to the north and Palestine and Egypt to the south, as well as between the coast and the Mesopotamian area. Attempting to gain friendship and support from a city through diplomatic agreements, before turning to war, is a distinctive Hittite strategy, well exemplified by the contemporary case of Ugarit. The importance, compared to smaller towns, of cities like Qatna and Ugarit (strategic for the former and commercial for the latter) must have imposed a greater caution on the methods used by Shuppiluliuma to obtain their subjugation to Hatti, so as to avoid the political consequences that reckless actions could have caused. Qatna, where Mitannian influence was also undeniable, could also boast historic ties with Egypt, dating back to the Middle Bronze Age. Rather than with cities in the Mitannian sphere, it was with respect to those that were connected with Egypt that Shuppiluliuma seems to have proceeded very gradually: offering help to Ugarit when it had trouble with its neighbours; perhaps sending alliance proposals to Addu-nirari; justifying the attack on Qadesh with the excuse of self-defence. It would be interesting to know whether Qadesh’s attack on Shuppiluliuma was prompted by an unwelcome alliance request (although this is pure speculation).

**Idanda and Sharrupshi**

A change in Qatna’s ruler was caused by Addu-nirari’s philo-Egyptian—or at least anti-Hittite—tendencies, leading to the ascension to the throne of Idanda, who was no longer young, having been active in the city’s politics for almost 30 years at the time, as may be deduced from the lists of the gifts to the deities.

Idanda’s origin is not clear, but we can imagine that he became king by accepting submission to the Hittites and approving the removal to Hatti of the city’s possessions, which is described in the historical introduction to the treaty with Shattiwaza (CTH 51). That this deportation was not exactly looting, but instead a sort of tribute to the Great King conducted with the approval of the king of Qatna, appears quite clear from the text TT 18, in which the goods taken by the Hittites are carefully catalogued.

It is also possible that the coronation of Idanda occurred just before the arrival of Shuppiluliuma, following the disappearance of Addu-nirari, who may have been eliminated by an internal coup d’état or may (considering his advanced age) have died of natural causes. In any case, Idanda’s submission to the Hittites is undeniable.

Idanda’s reign was not peaceful and the king found himself involved in the political chaos that followed Shuppiluliuma’s First Syrian War. Evidence of the continual wars among the minor kingdoms, between pro-Hittite and pro-Mitanni/pro-Egyptian factions, and repeated political reverses is given by the Hittite general Hanutti, who reports Shuppiluliuma’s words: “Barga has plundered the fields of Tunanab and previously Yaruqat has plundered the fields of Ukulzat! ... you (Idanda) have plundered...


52. This is demonstrated by a couple of objects that were discovered in Mishrifih: a sphinx of Ita, daughter of Amenemhat II (MESSNIL DU BUSSION 1928a, p. 10-11) and a cartouche of Sesostris I engraved on a vase fragment (ROCCATI 2002, p. 173-174).

53. Idanda is mentioned among the donors in the list that is dated in the colophon to the 18th year of the reign of a king whose name has been lost, but was probably Addu-nirari. If we consider that the reign of Addu-nirari lasted over 45 years (3 sections of donations separate the date in question from the first year of Idanda), at the time of his enthronement Idanda had been present in the city, with an active role in its policy, for about thirty years. Moreover, at the time of the donation Idanda had a son, who might, however, have been newly born. Thirty years later, Idanda must have been over 50 years old.

54. On the basis of CTH 63, Barga might tentatively be located in the area along the border between Nuhashe and Amurru (which at the time might also have included Tunip), close to Qatna, Ugarit and Tunanab. KLENGEL 1970, p. 74-75 proposes a more precise location, east of the middle Orontes and north-west of Apamea. See TURRI 2015, p. 231-232.

55. Richter identifies the city as both the Irqata mentioned in the Amarna letters (ir-qät/ir-qa-ta), that corresponds to the modern Tell Arqa, and as the Yaruwatta of CTH 63 (known as the Arbitration of Barga). He considers the second of these to be a mistake of the scribe who wrote the tablets and changed the spelling of the name several times in the same text.
the fields of Yaruqat and Ukulzat, and previously Niya has plundered the city of Irbid 56" (TT 4: 20-24, 27-31); and by Sharrupshi, who writes to Idanda: “my lord, I will come and you will see with me how the fortified positions of Hurri devastate one another” (TT 5: 61-63).

As already mentioned, the status of this Sharrupshi is not clear; Richter supposes that he was the regent of Nuhashe at the time of the confederation.

From the Hittite texts it is clear that he was definitely a person of some importance in Nuhashe, perhaps indeed its king, even if never referred to as such, or at least its ruler. For a certain period his stance was anti-Hittite (as Shuppiluliuma himself says in TT 4: 9, in a sort of flashback) and —according to the traditional reading of CTH 51.IA 38-40— he had to escape from Shuppiluliuma during the First Syrian War. But according to a different interpretation of the events of CTH 51, proposed by Altman, it was his family that motivated Sharrupshi’s escape from Nuhashe and not Shuppiluliuma 57. If this version is correct, we can suppose that Sharrupshi, a former Mitannian vassal, had previously written to Shuppiluliuma asking for an alliance —perhaps in answer to a request from the Great King himself. If this were true, it would mean that the Hittite king, before starting out on his conquest of northern-central Syria, had made contact with almost all the important minor kings of the region. Takuwa’s visit to Shuppiluliuma in Mukish could also be explained as a positive response to such a request.

It is possible that after the submission of Qatna, Shuppiluliuma changed his direction because something happened to Sharrupshi, perhaps a vassal not yet recognized formally. He could have been the victim of an internal revolt guided by members of his own family and somehow supported by the king of Mitanni. When Shuppiluliuma arrived, Sharrupshi was still in his palace and received him (TT 4: 15-16), but before the victory of the Great King over his family, he was forced to escape, and this could be the reason why on the throne of Ukulzat Shuppiluliuma put Takip-sharri, who is clearly said to be a subject of Sharrupshi. An account relating the enthronement of Takip-sharri, immediately after Sharrupshi’s flight, means that at least the former was compliant to the Great King. In addition, Ukulzat, the city where the event took place, may have been the capital city of Nuhashe, not mentioned explicitly in any known text 58. Some time later, once the danger had passed, Sharrupshi might have returned to the throne of Nuhashe —and that could be the reason why we know nothing more of Takip-sharri.

The tangled political situation that followed Shuppiluliuma’s First Syrian War is clearly shown by the letters sent to Idanda: alliances do not seem to last long, with the small local kings at war one against the other, constantly changing sides. In the letter TT 5 mentioned above, Sharrupshi tries to convince Idanda of his good faith towards him and the king of Hatti, implying that Idanda treated him warily. We know that there were hostilities by Nuhashe against Qatna, explicitly mentioned in the letter of Takuwa: “now Nuhashe devastates your troops” (TT 2: 41-42), and vice versa, as we learn from the words of Shuppiluliuma: “Who broke into his fields (of Sharrupshi)? ... And now you do him these things not in my name!” (TT 4: 19-20, 31-33).

(Richter 2007, p. 308). In letter TT 4 of Qatna, it is said that before Barga looted the fields of Tunanab, Yaruqat had done the same with the fields of Ukulzat, that were also looted later by Qatna, along with Ukulzat. On the basis of this attestation, a site near the middle Orontes or immediately adjacent to this area is implied. The Yaruwatta nominated by the king of Barga in CTH 63 seems to have a similar position, between Barga and Nuhashe, which Ukulzat may have been part of. So the equality of the two toponyms is more than likely. Less acceptable is the link with Irqata, certainly on the coast, distant from Nuhashe and separated by the kingdom of Amurru from all the other places mentioned in the letter of Hanutti. See Turri 2015, p. 293.

56. If the city is identical to the Iriba mentioned in the texts of Ebla (see Bonechi 1993, p. 208 for the list of attestations and for the possibility that there was more than one city with the same name) and the Iripa of the treaty between Tudhaliya and the city of Tunip (CTH 135), it could have been a city on the border of Tunip that once might have been part of the kingdom of Alalah (an Iripa is mentioned once in a text found in the city, AIT 182). According to Astour 1969, p. 392, it could be equated with modern Arfa. See also Richter 2007, p. 308 and Turri 2015, p. 246.


58. This is not an uncommon situation; consider for example the contemporary case of Amurru, whose capital city is never explicitly mentioned in the texts that have survived.
But probably Idanda’s suspicion was well-founded; despite the help received from Shuppiluliuma, it seems that Sharrupshi after his return to Nuhashe followed an ambiguous political line. Takuwa himself, the most faithful Hittite ally in the region, claims to have escaped from the hands of the inhabitants of Armatte (TT 2: 39-40), a city that was probably part of Mukish 59 and that was closely involved in Sharrupshi’s manoeuvres. We can assume that at the time these letters were written, Mukish and also Nuhashe actually started to turn against the Hittites’ allies.

Meanwhile a danger was menacing Qatna. Takuwa and Hanutti, on behalf of Shuppiluliuma, asked Idanda to fortify his city and to resist until the Great King sent troops (TT 3: 10-12). Between his two Syrian Wars, Shuppiluliuma was kept busy solving the problems that had arisen in the north and so, after the discovery of Armatte’s betrayal (TT 3: 18), he was not immediately able to send troops to save Idanda. But what was this menace? If Armatte’s U-turn had already been discovered, it is probable that the clash with Nuhashe had already occurred, because it is referred to by Takuwa in TT 2 along with his problem with the inhabitants of Armatte.

It is hard to say who was threatening Qatna. In the years that separate the two Syrian Wars, Mitanni, although said to have fallen in the historical introduction to the treaty with Shattiwaza (CTH 51), had its army in action against Hatti in Murmuriga, and at the same time the Egyptian army was in Qadesh and may have headed for Qatna to monitor the situation and prevent its permanently passing into enemy hands 60.

It is at this time, on the eve of the Second Syrian War (or Hurrian War), that the other Addu-nirari, the king of Nuhashe mentioned in the treaty with Niqmadu of Ugarit (CTH 46), may have taken the power. The presence of Mitanni in the area could also have been the cause that sparked the anti-Hittite revolt of Mukish, Nuhashe and Niya and their kings Itur-Addu, Addu-nirari and Aki-Teshup. This last one, who was deported to Hatti during the First Syrian War, might have been sent back to his city by Shuppiluliuma himself, to take the place of his brother who may have disappeared during the turmoil that was distressing the region 61.

**AKIZZI’S PLEAS TO EGYPT**

Before the final victory of Hatti in the area and after the defeat of Idanda, Akizzi became king of Qatna and wrote several letters to Akhenaton, begging for intervention in the land of Nuhashe. Five of these letters have reached us: EA 52-56 62. The first attempt to contact Egypt is clearly that of EA 52, in which Akizzi states that for three years he has been seeking a way to reach the pharaoh.

In the following letter EA 53, the choice of Akizzi to pass (or rather to return) to the Egyptian side, could have been motivated by dramatic events. The statement in 1.4-5 is not very clear; Liverani, integrating Knudtzon, translates: “As I left my (previous) lord, alive and not dead, [(now) I belong] to my (new) lord”, while Moran renders it: “[My] lor[d, ...] ... has survived, and I will not de[sert]. [I belong] to my lord”. The latter translation could imply a real threat, such as a military incursion in the city. The traditional translation, on the other hand, may simply refer to the voluntary desertion of the previous overlord in favour of Egypt. According to Liverani, this previous lord could have been the king of Mitanni, “not yet completely removed from the political scene” but, considering that Mitanni was at peace with Egypt and that Idanda was, however briefly, subjected to the Hittites, it is more likely that he was the king of Hatti.

59. Even if there is no Alalah text that proves that Armatte was part of its domain, the numerous citations make this very plausible. See BELMONTE MARIN 2001, p. 33 for the list of attestations and TURRI 2015, p. 228. With the exception of Qatna, Armatte is the toponym that appears most often in the text found in Mishrifeh, and always in connection with some troublesome circumstances. If we add to this the fact that in the Alalah tablets AIT 166:32, AIT 174:17 and AIT 181:12, the name of the city is connected with soldiers or troops, we can suppose that the city was located in a place of strategic importance, probably on the border between Niya and Mukish.

60. All these events are related in fragment 28 of the Deeds of Suppiluliuma (see GÜTERBOCK 1956 or DEL MONTE 1993, p. 133-138).

61. The sending back to his country as king of a legal heir who had been deported to Hatti is elsewhere attested, see e.g. the case of Etakama.

62. Letter EA 56 is fragmentary and the first part is missing, so the names of the sender and addressee are lost, but the text seems to be similar in content to EA 54, itself equally fragmentary.
The letter then dwells on the danger represented by Etakama, king of Qadesh, who had attempted to bring Akizzi over to the Hittite side, as he did with the land of Amqi and with Tewatti of Labana and Arzawiya of Ruhiya—which subsequently attacked the land of Ube, controlled by Biryawaza. It stresses the loyalty of Qatna, as well as that of the kings of Nuhashe, Niya, Zinzar and Tunanab. It may be noted that, except for Zinzar and Tunanab, mentioned in the Amarna letters only on this occasion, the other two kingdoms were among the three said to have rebelled against Hatti in CTH 46. Thus it would seem that the revolt of Mukish, Nuhashe and Niya began toward the end of the reign of Idanda and continued for a few years before the Hittite king, whose army was engaged on the northern front, managed to tame it.

In the subsequent very fragmentary letters EA 54 and 56, there is also mention of the visit of a messenger from the pharaoh who declares to Akizzi: “I am going to the land of Mitanni (i.e. to the Syrian region that, according to the peace agreement with Egypt, was under Hurrian control), there are three or four kings hostile to the king of Hatti. All of them are at my disposal”. Again, these three or four kings hostile to Hatti might well be the ones mentioned in the treaty concluded by Shuppiluliuma with Niqmepe of Ugarit (CTH 46) and/or those listed by Akizzi in letter EA 53.

The request to the pharaoh to return to the region of Nuhashe is accompanied by explicit mention of a former visit by the Egyptian army to Qatna in Akizzi’s last known letter, EA 55: “My Lord, when the troops and chariots of my lord have come here, food, drink, oxen, sheep and goats, honey and oil, were produced for the troops and chariots of my lord. Look, there are my lord’s magnates; my lord should ask them”. And we may wonder if this was the menace mentioned by Takuwa in TT 2, that led to the fall of Idanda and the consequent enthronement of Akizzi in Qatna.

The letter ends with the report of a fire in the palace of the city caused by the king of Hatti, who carried away from Qatna gods and men, while other men were taken away from Aziru. Was this the possible threat mentioned in EA 52 from which Akizzi had escaped? If so, the only fire archaeologically attested in the Royal Palace of Qatna, a fire that was actually quite limited in extent, should be linked to the beginning of the reign of Akizzi and not to the time of Idanda, when the removal of the possessions of Qatna was conducted with its king’s assent. If Idanda’s reign was quite short and the fire and the deportation of the divine statues happened immediately after his disappearance, at the very beginning of Akizzi’s reign, this would explain not only the interruption of the deity donation lists shortly after mention of the first year of Idanda’s reign, but also the presence of only Idanda’s tablets in the burnt layers of the Royal Palace. The Hittite offensive could also be the answer to the interference by the Egyptian army that put an end to the reign of Idanda.

Conclusion

In summary, Addu-nirari’s reign ended during—or immediately before— the First Syrian War of Shuppiluliuma, who subjugated the city without destroying it; Idanda succeeded him. He either became king before the Hittite arrival in the city or thanks to it, and immediately showed his loyalty to the Great King by paying him a tribute, as shown by text TT 18. Neither Egypt nor Mitanni liked the choice of Idanda and in the period between Shuppiluliuma’s two Syrian wars, the army of one of them (or one of their allies) —on the basis of EA 55, it seems likely that it was the Egyptians— put an end to Idanda’s reign, although the king of Qatna had been warned by Takuwa of the imminent threat.

After the disappearance of Idanda, Akizzi became the new king. During his reign, probably towards the beginning, a raid by the Hittite army occurred, causing the fire in the Royal Palace. It is unclear how

63. It is probable that in order to quell the revolt, the Great King himself did not travel to central Syria, but instead sent a military expedition.

64. Unfortunately the reference to the fire follows the only substantial gap in the tablet and we do not know when exactly it happened, after the Egyptian army’s visit or before it.

65. In l. 55-57, Akizzi mentions explicitly the theft of the statue of Shimigi and reminds the pharaoh of its ancient Egyptian origin, but in l. 41-42 he speaks generally of “divine statues” in the plural.
Akizzi was able to keep his throne after such an event. Perhaps the Hittite army was too busy repressing the numerous revolts that affected both the Syrian and Anatolian regions to worry about Akizzi, who tried desperately (but in vain) to resume contacts with Egypt, asking for military assistance to rescue prisoners and economic support to rebuild the city (EA 55: 48-53) 66.

It is currently impossible to establish what happened next. After these events, we do not have any more news of either Akizzi or Qatna. Perhaps the political and economic instability of this last period and the city’s vulnerable position in the border zone, between the territories controlled by Egypt and those by then under Hittite dominion, determined its decline. The city is in fact named in some later Egyptian lists 67 and archaeological evidence shows that the site was inhabited in the last phases of the LBA 68 and then again in the Iron Age. It is not easy, however, to say what its actual size was 69, nor whether the presence of its name in Egyptian texts is due merely to erudite references to a once mighty city, by then fallen or no longer extant. Or it may of course have been reborn, but with a different name.

66. We may wonder if the death of Akhenaton was the real reason why the pharaoh never answered the requests.
67. See e.g. lists 12, 13 (Horemheb) and 16 (Seti I) in Simons 1937.
68. A final LBA II residential area has been partly excavated by the Syrian Team working in the site, at the foot of the so-called Coupole de Lot, according to Morandi Bonacossi 2007, p. 79, who quotes a personal communication of M. Al-Maqdissi.
69. For a preliminary reconstruction of the IA settlement, see Morandi Bonacossi 2006.