

Ammishtamru's Letter to Akhenaten (EA 45) and Hittite Chronology

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[A new restoration and interpretation is suggested for letter EA 45 sent by Ammishtamru I of Ugarit to an unnamed Pharaoh. An analysis of the Amarna letters indicates that Shuppiluliuma I must have ascended the throne either in the final years of Amenophis III, or in the early years of his heir, Akhenaten. The reign of 'Abdi-Asirta ended about 1355 B.C., and Amenophis III lived one or two years more (1353 B.C.). Letters EA 17 and EA 75 were written during the last years of Amenophis III and reflect an early stage of the struggle between Hatti and Mitanni. Letter EA 45 was sent to Akhenaten, and refers to the episode of Ammishtamru I and Niqmepa mentioned in the treaty of Aziru and Niqmaddu II of Ugarit.]

I

The Amarna letter EA 45 was sent by Ammishtamru I, king of Ugarit, to an unnamed Pharaoh. Some scholars dated it to the late years of Amenophis III.¹ Kitchen² and Astour³ attributed it to the time of Shuppiluliuma's 'first Syrian foray'. Houwink Ten Cate, on the other hand, attributed it to Shuppiluliuma's 'second Syrian foray', hence to the early years of Akhenaten.⁴

The main problem in the discussion of EA 45 is its fragmentary condition. Knudtzon restored LUGAL KUR [*ha-at-te*] in lines 22 and 30,⁵ a restoration that makes a good sense and was accepted by other scholars.⁶ Further advance in the study of the letter was made by Huehnergard,⁷ and by Moran.⁸ I believe that some other parts of the letter may be reasonably restored, and that these restorations may contribute to a better understanding of its contents and a re-evaluation of its place in the international relations of the Amarna period.

In what follows I shall suggest first a transcription and translation (followed by textual notes) for letter EA 45 (except the introductory lines, which are omitted), and then examine the letter's place in the Egyptian-Hittite relations of the 14th century B.C.

12. [x x x] x-ni-šu-nu ak-š[u-ud-šu-nu]

13. [û a-k]ân^{AN}-na-am a-na-ku [aq-ta-bi-(ma)]

14. [an]-nu-tu, šu-nu LÚ^{MES} [KUR Amurri?]

1. K.A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, Liverpool 1962, 34-35; H. Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v.u.Z.*, vol. II, Berlin 1969, 340; M.C. Astour, "Ugarit and the Great Powers", in G.D. Young, ed., *Ugarit in Retrospect. Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, Winona Lake 1981, 17-19; M.S. Drower, "Ugarit", *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., vol. III/2, 1975, p. 133.

2. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma*, 1962, 34-35, 40.

3. Astour, "Ugarit and the Great Powers", 17-19; idem, *Hittite History and Absolute Chronology of the Bronze Age*, Partille 1989, 72.

4. P.H.J. Houwink ten Cate, Review of K.A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, *BiOr* 20 (1963) 272-273.

5. J.A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln*, vol. I-II, Leipzig 1915.

6. A different opinion was expressed by M. Liverani, *Storia di Ugarit nell'età degli archivi politici*, Roma 1962, 64.

7. J. Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit*, Atlanta, GE 1989, (see index).

8. W.L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore and London 1992, 117.

15. *am-mi-ni-im-ma a-na* [KUR *Hatti*² *illiku*²]
 16. *ù u-še-šer₉ an-n[u²-tu₄² a-na¹ ...]*
 17. *ù i-ra-aš-ši x [... .. ù]*
 18. *ad-din-šu-nu-ma a-[na¹ UTU-ši EN-ia]*
 19. *ù DUMU ši-ip-ri á[š-ta-par² ù]*
 20. *a-na pa-ni¹ UTU-ši [EN-ia ...]*
 21. *i-na-an-na ad-di[n-šu-nu]*

 22. *[ša]-ni-ta₅ LUGAL KUR [Hatti iš-pur-ma]*
 23. *am-mi-ni-mi [LÚ^{MES} an-nu-tu²]*
 24. *ta-ša-bat-mi [ù DUMU ši-ip-ri-šu]*
 25. *iš-pur-ma 2-šu [a-na ia-ši²]*
 26. *ù ki-ia-am iq-[ta-bi a-na KUR Mitanni]*
 27. *ù a-na KUR mi-iš-r[i LÚ^{MES} an-nu-tu²]*
 28. *šum-ma-mi tu-še-bá-[al ù a-na-ki-ir-ka]*
 29. *a-nu-um-ma [İR] a-[n]a¹ [UTU-ši EN-ia a-na-ku]*

 30. *ša-ni-ta₅ as-sú-ri-im-[ma LUGAL KUR Hatti]*
 31. *it-ti-ia i-na-ki-ir [...¹ UTU-ši EN-ia]*
 32. *TI.LA^{MES} ba-la-a-tá ša-a [UZU²ZI-ia ù UZU²pi-šu²]*
 33. *li-iq-bi TI.LA^{MES} UZU²ZI-ia ù¹ UTU-ši EN-ia]*
 34. *lu-ú i-d₃-mi šum-ma-mi [i-na-ki-ir KUR Hatti]*
 35. *[a-n]a KUR^{URU} u-šga¹ri¹-[ta ...]*

[... they ...] them for me (and) I ho[ld them]. [And] I myself [said a]s follows: "These men are the sons [of Amurru]². Why should [they go] to [the land of Hatti]²? So I shall prepare th[ese]² for [...] and acquire a [ship]² ..., and] hand them over [to the Sun, my lord]." So I am s[ending] a messenger to the Sun, [my lord, and] now [indeed]² I shall han[d them over].

Moreover, the king of [Hatti wrote thus]: "Why do you seize [these men." And] he sent [his messenger to me] a second time and he sp[oke] thus: "If you sen[d these men to Mitanni] or to Egy[pt, then I will turn against you]." Now I am [a servant] to the S[un, my lord].

Moreover, heaven forbid that [the king of Hatti] turn against me. [May the Sun, my lord, send me] the life of [my spirit and may his mouth] speak the life of [my] spi[rit]. [And] may [the Sun, my lord], know (this): If [Hatti shall turn against] Ugar[it ...

Notes:

Line 12: The signs *ak-š[u]* are quite clearly seen in Schroeder's facsimile.⁹ The first sign in the line is certainly not an [i]n (as suggested by Knudtson). Tentatively, it may be read as a [d]u and thus restored - (with a big question mark) - [i²-(te)²-d]u²-ni-šu-nu ("pursued them for me").

Lines 14-15: The extradition to Egypt indicates that the men must have come from one of its vassal kingdoms. Amurru is therefore the one possible candidate for a country whose messengers could have been detained on their way by the king of Ugarit and extradited to Egypt, and whose extradition could have pushed the king of Hatti to utter such violent threats. In this light, I restore 'Hatti' as the assumed destination of the Amurrite delegation.

9. O. Schroeder, *Die Tontafeln von El-Amarna in akkadischer Sprache* (VS 11), Leipzig 1915, Pl. 17.

Line 17: The last broken sign may tentatively be read GI[Š] (i.e. a determinative for "ship").

Lines 23, 27: In place of [*an-nu-tu*] it is possible to restore [KUR *Amurri*].

Line 25: The restoration was suggested by Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit*, 1989, 200.

Line 26: Mitanni is the other possible destination for the extradition, as well as Egypt.

Line 28: The restoration [*a-na-ki-ir-ka*] is self-evident in view of Ammishtamru's fears, as expressed in line 31.

Line 29: Another instance in which the king of Ugarit expresses his subordination to the Pharaoh appears in letter EA 46:22-26. I suggest restoring the broken passage thus: "O Sun, my lord: J[ust as] (*k[i-ma]*) [formerly] my ancestors [sent things] and the Sun (was) th[eir] lord (*be-li-š[u-nu]*). [so] I am a servant of the Su[n, my lord, and] to the Sun, my lor[d I will send things]." For the *kima ... kinanna ...* pattern, see CAD K 380b. For the restoration of *unūtê* ("things"), in lines 23 and 26, see line 12; for the restoration of the verb *šūbulu* ("to send") at the end of these lines, see line 13.

Assuming that the suggested restorations are acceptable, the following scenario may be proposed: The ruler of Amurru sent messengers to Ḫatti, and they were detained by Ammishtamru I of Ugarit. He started organising their extradition to Egypt. News of their detention reached the king of Ḫatti, who then sent two urgent messages to Ammishtamru, warning that he would attack him if the messengers were extradited either to Mitanni or to Egypt. As a result of these warnings, Ammishtamru became afraid and sent a full report to the Pharaoh, seeking his help against a possible Hittite assault.

II

What is the date of Ammishtamru's letter, and in what circumstances was it written? As noted in the introduction, some scholars dated it immediately after the Hittite campaign against Mittani, mentioned in letter EA 75. Since the date and historical background of EA 75 are disputed by scholars, I will analyse them in some detail.

First to the text of lines 35-42. Of the various attempts to clarify this difficult passage,¹⁰ Moran's translation makes the best sense.¹¹ My translation will follow that of Moran, with some minor changes.

May the king be informed that the king of Ḫatti has seized all the countries (KUR.KUR) (that are) the 'dwelling (KUŠ = *āšibāt*) of life' (TI.TI = *balātu*) of the king of Mitta<ni>. Behold, the king of Nah<ri>ma [loses¹²] the land of the Great Kings (LUGAL.LUGAL), [whereas] 'Abdi-Ashirta, [the servant] and dog, is tak[ing] the land of the king[.]

For the writing of *balātu* by the logogram TI in Rib-Hadda's early letters, see EA 74:15 and 89:14 (sic!). The exceptional writing of *balātu* by TI.TI does not differ from the exceptional writing of *šarrāni* by LUGAL.LUGAL. The noun *balātu* has the double connotation of "life" and "nourishment".¹²

The restoration "[loses]" in line 39 is *ad sensum*. Did the scribe intentionally play on the similarity of sounds of the verbs *halāqu* and *leqû*? Be that as it may, the reference to the defeat of the king of

10. For a survey, see I. Singer, "Aziru's Apostasy and the Historical Setting of the General's Letter", in S. Isre'el and I. Singer, *The General's Letter from Ugarit. A Linguistic and Historical Reevaluation of RS 20.23 (Ugaritica V, No. 20)*, Tel Aviv 1990, 124-125.

11. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 145-146.

12. For a detailed discussion, see M. Liverani, "Political Lexicon and Political Ideologies in the Amarna Letters", *Berytus* 31 (1983) 51-53; idem, *Prestige and Interest. International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C.*, Padova 1990, 230-239.

Mitanni was deliberately chosen by Rib-Hadda in order to emphasize the misdeeds of his arch-enemy, 'Abdi-Ashirta of Amurru.

What is the date of the Hittite victory over Mitanni? Some scholars erroneously dated it to the early years of Akhenaten.¹³ However, already in the late 60s, Moran isolated a group of letters, all dated to the time of Aziru, in which Rib-Hadda recalls the campaign conducted by the Pharaoh's father (i.e., Amenophis III) against 'Abdi-Ashirta, and urged the young king to treat Aziru as his father treated 'Abdi-Ashirta (EA 108:28-33; 117:21-28; 121:41-44; 131:30-34; 132:12-18; 138:28-34; 362:16-20; note also 116:61-62).¹⁴ This point was noted in my Ph.D. dissertation as the safest anchor point for dating Rib-Hadda's letters (and, by inference, many other Amarna letters).¹⁵ The earliest of these letters is EA 108, in which appears the following passage (lines 25-33):

Who are they, the dogs, that they should res[ist] the archers of the king, the Sun? I wrote to your father (*ana abika*) and he he[eded] my words, and he sent archers. Was not 'Abdi-Ashirta taken to h[im]?

Letter EA 108 was written after the appointment of Yanhamu as commissioner of Şumur, when the sons of 'Abdi-Ashirta started blockading this Egyptian garrison city. Also noteworthy are lines 8-10: "Moreover, is it pleasing in the sight of the king, who is like Baal/Haddu and Shamash in the sky, that...". Evidently, news of the religious reform had not yet arrived, and Rib-Hadda innocently mentions the classical pair of the storm god and the sun god. In his later letters, however, only the sun god is mentioned.¹⁶

Letter EA 104, on the other hand, was still dispatched to Amenophis III. This is indicated by lines 24-29:

Previously (*pānāmi*), they would take cities of your mayors, and you did nothing. Now they have driven out your commissioner and taken his cities for themselves.

Rib-Hadda complains about the Egyptian impotence that enabled Pu-Ba'lu, the son of 'Abdi-Ashirta, to conquer the Egyptian garrison city of Ullasa, and drove many coastal towns to cooperate with the sons of 'Abdi-Ashirta (lines 6-13, 30, 40-43). The words "previously, they would take ... and you did nothing" were necessarily directed to Amenophis III, and do not apply to his young heir, Akhenaten. It was only after the death of Amenophis III (1353 B.C.) that Rib-Hadda made him an example of leadership, urging Akhenaten to do the same and launch a campaign against Amurru.

Letter EA 106 was probably sent to Akhenaten, as suggested by the king's annoyance at the influx of Rib-Hadda's letters (lines 13-16, 30-32). This is a distinctive mark of Akhenaten's messages to

13. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma*, 26-27, 41; H. Klengel, "Aziru von Amurru und seine Rolle in der Geschichte der Amarnazeit", *MIO* 10 (1964) 71 n. 79; idem, *Geschichte Syriens*, 1969, 39, 186-187, 256; Astour, "Ugarit and the Great Powers", 1981, 19-20; G. Wilhelm and J. Boese, "Absolute Chronologie und die Geschichte des 15. und 14. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.", in P. Åstrom (ed.), *High, Middle or Low* (Acts of an International Colloquium on Absolute Chronology Held at the University of Gothenburg 20th-22nd August 1987), Gothenburg 1987, 85-86; T.R. Bryce, "Some Observations on the Chronology of Šuppiluliuma's Reign", *AnSt* 39 (1989) 22-23; I. Singer, "A Concise History of Amurru", in S. Isre'el, *Amurru Akkadian: A Linguistic Study*, vol. II (HSS 41), Atlanta, GE 1991, 148.

14. W.L. Moran, "The Death of 'Abdi-Aširta", *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969) 98; see recently, Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 1992, xxxv-xxxvi n. 127.

15. N. Na'aman, *The Political Disposition and Historical Development of Eretz Israel according to the Amarna Letters* (Ph.D. Dissertation), Tel Aviv University 1975, 207 (Hebrew); English summary, p. xv.

16. See N. Na'aman, "On Gods and Scribal Traditions in the Amarna Letters", *UF* 22 (1990) 250-252; J.M. Galán, "EA 164 and the God Amun", *JNES* 51 (1992) 289-291. For a late reference to Akhenaten's accession, see EA 116:63-64.

Rib-Hadda (note e.g., EA 117:8-9; 124:35-37), unlike his predecessor, Amenophis III, who showed no annoyance at the flood of letters.¹⁷

In lines 16-18 of EA 106, Rib-Hadda wrote as follows: "Look, in my case, there has been a war against me for five years. Accordingly I keep writing to my lord." The reference to five years of hostility may be compared to similar statements in two of Rib-Hadda's earlier letters:

- (a) "Since he has attacked me three times this year, and for two years I have been repeatedly robbed of my grain, we have no grain to eat." (EA 85:8-11).
- (b) "For three years I have been constantly p[lundered] of our grain." (EA 86:38-39).

Letters EA 85-86 were written immediately after the arrival of the troops of Mitanni in Amurru (EA 85:51-55; 86:8-12; see below), shortly before the dispatch of an Egyptian task-force to Amurru, to put an end to 'Abdi-Ashirta's reign. It goes without saying that Rib-Hadda's references to time spans should not be taken literally.¹⁸ Yet the difference of two years between the events mentioned in EA 85-86 and those mentioned in EA 106 fits all the known data quite well. This is indicated by an analysis of Rib-Hadda's letters written in the period between these letters.

The following episodes occurred between the Egyptian campaign against Amurru (which, as noted above, took place shortly after the dispatch of letters EA 85-86), and the beginning of Akhenaten's reign (i.e., the writing of letter EA 106):

- (a) The return of the archers to Egypt (EA 105:17-21).
- (b) The establishment of 'Abdi-Ashirta's sons in Amurru and the resumption of their offensive (EA 103:8-13; 104:10-13).
- (c) The capture of the garrison city of Ullasa by Pu-Ba'lu, son of 'Abdi-Ashirta (EA 104).

We may conclude that the reign of 'Abdi-Ashirta ended about 1355 B.C.¹⁹ Amenophis III lived one or two years more, and when he died was succeeded by his son Akhenaten (1353 B.C.). Letter EA 75 was doubtless written at the last years of Amenophis III, as correctly suggested by Campbell in his work on the chronology of the Amarna letters.²⁰

Letter EA 75, together with EA 17, should be dated to an early stage of the struggle between Hatti and Mitanni. Following the loss of some of his territories ("the king of Hatti has seized all the countries ... of the king of Mitta<ni>"), the king of Mitanni conducted campaigns to Syria, in an effort to curb rebellions and to re-establish his power and prestige in the kingdoms under his rule, reaching southward as far as the land of Amurru (EA 85:51-55; 86:10-12; 90:19-22; 95:27-31; 101:6-10). Evidently, neither Hatti nor Mitanni won a decisive victory at that time. Hatti remained a remote power that did not make a great impression on the Egyptian vassals in Canaan. This is indicated by two letters of Rib-Hadda, in which he draws a negative comparison between the deeds of 'Abdi-Ashirta and those of the kings of two great northern powers, Mitanni and Babylonia (EA 76:14-16; 104:17-24), while ignoring the king of Hatti.

Following Shuppiluliuma's victories over Mitanni in Rib-Hadda's late years, the political situation was entirely changed, and Hatti won a place of honour in the great powers' 'club'. This newly-acquired prestigious position is indicated in two letters (EA 116:70-71; 129:74-79), in which the deeds of the sons of 'Abdi-Ashirta are again compared with those of the kings of the great powers, including Hatti.

17. The different reactions of Amenophis III and Akhenaten to Rib-Hadda's letters is a clear indication of their personal involvement (or, at least, of Akhenaten's involvement) in the vassal correspondence.

18. The words of EA 85:8-10 show a clear literary pattern, a play on graduating numerals of three and two.

19. The dates attributed by Singer ("A Concise History of Amurru", 1991, 141, 149) for the death of 'Abdi-Ashirta and his sons' ascension must be raised by ten years.

20. E.F. Campbell, *The Chronology of the Amarna Letters*, Baltimore 1964, 77-89, 134.

It remains unclear whether letter EA 75 refers to events in the reign of Shuppiluliuma, or to the time of his predecessor, when he was commander of the troops under his father. Since the Hittite victory mentioned in EA 75 had no lasting results, and was reversed shortly afterwards by the campaigns of the king of Mitanni, it is unlikely that the messengers of Amurru were sent to Hatti on that occasion. Houwink ten Cate was correct in dating letter EA 45 later than EA 17 (and later than EA 75 as well).²¹ The episode discussed in EA 45 is best dated some time after the death of 'Abdi-Ashirta. For its historical background, we must look into the reign of Aziru of Amurru.

The treaty concluded between Aziru and Niqmaddu II of Ugarit includes the following passage (lines 5-19):²²

The claims of Aziru against Ugarit, those formerly of Niqmepa against Ammishtamru, those of Ba'aluya against Niqmaddu, against 'Abdi-Hebat (and) against Siannu, will not be in force from the day the oath is sworn. Of all claims, just as the Sun is pure, so Aziru is clean concerning Niqmaddu and 'Abdi-Hebat, concerning Ugarit and concerning Siannu. Moreover, 5,000 (shekels) of silver are paid to Aziru and he is as clean as the Sun.

Ba'aluya was probably Aziru's son, who, with his brother Beti'ili, conducted the affairs of Amurru when Aziru was held in Egypt (EA 170). That Beti'ili was Aziru's son is evident from EA 161:20, where Aziru mentions that "my brothers and Beti'ili were at his service."²³ It seems to me that the two brothers were originally mentioned, together with their father, in letter EA 165:5-9:

What m[ore should I seek]? I seek [the sweet and] gracious face of the king, my lord. [I am your servant] forever and [Beti'ili] and Ba'aluya are [yo]ur [servants].²⁴

To judge from EA 170, Ba'aluya was the senior of the two brothers, so he must have sent letter EA 169 (note the reference to "your father" in lines 19, 32).²⁵

In letter EA 170, the two brothers report to Aziru of the military campaign of the Hittite general Lupakku, and that another general, Zitana, with 90,000 infantrymen, is about to arrive to Nuhašše. If the report of the arrival of Zitana is verified, "I (i.e., Ba'aluya) will send Beti'ili to him." Amurru's delegation to the Hittite general would be headed by a senior personage, Beti'ili, the son of Aziru.

In this light we may interpret the above-cited passage from the treaty of Aziru and Niqmaddu. The claim of Aziru against Niqmaddu of Ugarit and 'Abdi-Hebat of Siannu in reference to Ba'aluya, probably refers to an episode in which Aziru's son was either killed in battle or detained in Siannu and later extradited by Niqmaddu to Egypt. The marriage of Niqmaddu to an Egyptian princess may be a reward for his loyalty to Egypt. I believe that the episode of Ammishtamru I and Niqmepa is the one mentioned in letter EA 45. Niqmepa must have been Aziru's brother who headed a delegation to Hatti, and following

21. Houwink Ten Cate, *BiOr* 20 (1963) 271-273.

22. J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, vol. IV, (Mission de Ras Shamra IX), Paris 1956, 284-286.

23. S. Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian. A Linguistic Study*, vol. I (HSS 40), Atlanta, GE 1991, 18.

24. For recent treatments of EA 165, see Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian*, vol. II, 1991, 40-43; Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 1992, 252-253. The facsimile published by Schroeder (VS 11, 1915, Pl. 89) indicates that the lines are longer than the two scholars assume. The text of lines 6-9 may be restored as follows: (6) *pa-ni* LUGAL EN-*i*[a DÜG.GA-ta ü] (7) *ba-nu-ta ü-ba-'*[i a-na-ku IR-ka] (8) *a-di da-ri-ti ü* [^M*be-ti*-DINGIR] (9) *ü* [^M*ba-a-lu-ia* LÚ^{MES}[IR-ka]. For the restoration of line 6 compare EA 164:6.

25. For different suggestions, see Klengel, "Aziru von Amurru", 1964, 75 n. 107; idem, *Geschichte Syriens*, 1969, 280-281; Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian*, vol. I, 1991, 18.

his detention was extradited to Egypt.²⁶ The treaty refers to two members of the family of Aziru who suffered from the intervention of the rulers of Ugarit and Siannu, hence the compensation of 5,000 shekels of silver that Aziru received in return for dropping his claims against the two kingdoms.

Dating letter EA 45 is important because it marks the earliest stage in Amurru's contacts with Hatti. I agree with Singer that the shift in Amurru's allegiance did not occur before Aziru's time.²⁷ The natural date for the letter is after Shuppiluliuma's decisive campaign against Mitanni, a campaign that is mentioned in several Amarna letters.²⁸ This campaign must have taken place not long after the accession of Akhenaten (1353-1337), as not many years passed between his accession (shortly after the writing of letter EA 104) and the first explicit mention of the Hittite offensive in Rib-Hadda's letter EA 126:51-52 ("<A>nd²⁹ the Hittite troops have indeed set fire to the countries"). Ammishtamru I must have died shortly afterwards, and was succeeded by Niqmaddu II. The latter's entanglement with Ba'aluya must be dated to the late years of Akhenaten, towards the end of the Amarna letters.

As for the chronology of Shuppiluliuma, much depends on our evaluation of letters EA 17 and 75. Scholars who attribute them to an early stage in the career of Shuppiluliuma should accordingly date his accession to the late years of Amenophis III. Conversely, those who attribute them to the reign of Shuppiluliuma's predecessor should date his accession to the early years of Akhenaten. It is clear that the date for Shuppiluliuma's accession (1344 or 1343 B.C.) attributed by Wilhelm and Boese³⁰ and by Bryce³¹ is too low. His offensive against Mitanni took place not many years after the accession of Akhenaten, so that his accession to the throne preceded it by, at least, some years. Thus, Shuppiluliuma must have ascended the throne either in the late years of Amenophis III, or in the early years of his heir Akhenaten.

26. Nougayrol, (*PRU IV*, 1956, 282) suggested that Niqmepa was an older brother of Aziru who ascended the throne of Amurru after the death of 'Abdi-Ashirta. He is perhaps included in the general denomination "the sons of 'Abdi-Ashirta". A similar opinion was expressed by Houwink ten Cate (*BiOr* 20 [1963] 273) and by Klengel, (*Geschichte Syriens*, 1969, 204-705). Astour (*Hittite History and Absolute Chronology*, 1989, 72), on the other hand, suggested that "it is more plausible to view Niqmepa not as the successor but the predecessor of Abdi-Ashirta in the earlier part of the fourteenth century."

27. Singer, "Aziru's Apostasy", 1990, 124-128.

28. See the references in Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 1992, 390, s.v. Hattai.

29. The sign in question (see Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 1992, 207 n. 8) is probably an *it* whose first part was omitted due to haplography.

30. Wilhelm and Boese, "Absolute Chronologie", 1987, 105-109.

31. Bryce, "Some Observations", 1989, 30.