

Some observations on the tablet collection from Maşat Höyük

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The corpus of documents from Maşat Höyük consists of 117 tablets and fragments of tablets¹. All tablets but one came to light during the excavations between 1973 and 1981. Of these, 115 pieces stem from or have been attributed to Level III that has been dated generally to the early 14th century². Only one tablet (HKM 116) was assigned to the later Level I, dated to the 13th century. The one fragment not found in the course of the excavations was a surface find in 1943 from unknown context and was separately published as ABoT 65 and edited by Hans Güterbock in 1944 (see fn. 1)³. On prosopographic and paleographic grounds it should be added to the Level III corpus.

The earlier, that is, Middle Hittite Level III group of 116 documents is largely made up of correspondence (98 pieces⁴) with 17 administrative texts and one small oracle tablet. A more exact date for the collection has proved very elusive. All scholars (Beal, Gurney, Houwink ten Cate, de Martino, Klinger) that have expressed an opinion on the issue agree that references in the collection to historical events known from the Ḫattuša records are scarce and too imprecise or vague to be of much use⁵. Most scholars date the tablets to the early 14th century, the period

¹ The main edition of these texts is that of S. Alp, HKM (hand copies of all 116 pieces of the 1973-1981 excavations) and HBM (transliteration, translation, commentary and glossary of the letters HKM 1-96); for HKM 116 see the edition of H.G. Güterbock, *JKF* 10 (1986) = Mem.Alkım) 205-214. For the earlier found fragment published as ABoT 65 see Güterbock, Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi II/3 (1944), pp. 389-405. The administrative records HKM 98-114 were edited by G. del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 89-138; for the one oracle fragment see Th. van den Hout in *Kulturgeschichte. Altorientalische Studien für Volkert Haas*, Th. Richter et al. edd. Saarbrücken 2001, p. 425f.

² See immediately below.

³ See above note 1; for this letter as forming part of the Level III corpus see already Alp, *Bulleten XLIV/173* (1980), p. 57f., later HBM p. 112.

⁴ I follow Alp, HKM p. xi, in assuming that HKM 97 is a fragment of a letter. With ABoT 5 added this brings the total of letters to 98. Note that for HKM 86a and b “Schicht III?” is given as indication of the findspot (HKM p. xvi, see also the remark HBM p. 109). Although its attribution to that level is not certain, ductus and sign forms do not seem to differ substantially from the Level III tablets.

⁵ See first of all Alp, HBM pp. 109-112; further see St. de Martino, *SMEA* 29 (1992), pp. 41f., J. Klinger, *ZA* 85 (1995), pp. 74-108 (esp. pp. 79-86 and 103, also later id., *AoF* 25 (1998), p. 111), Ph. Houwink ten Cate in *dubsar anta-men. Studien zur Altorientalistik. Festschrift für Willem H.Ph. Römer*, M. Dietrich/O. Loretz edd. Münster 1998, pp. 159-162, O.R. Gurney in *Hittite Studies in Honor of Harry A. Hoffner Jr.*, G. Beckman et al. edd. Winona Lake 2003, pp. 122f., and most recently again St. de Martino, *AoF* 32 (2005), pp. 313-318.

of Tudḫaliya III, when the Hittite kingdom found itself at an all-time low in power and prestige and when the onslaught of the Gašgaeans would have proved fatal had it not been for Šuppiluliuma I. Under his guidance, first as a general for his ailing father and later as Great King himself the kingdom became an empire with unprecedented power and prestige. Level III at Maşat came to some sort of violent end and although it is difficult to determine what caused it exactly, it is usually attributed to those same Gašgaeans who in the letters figure as a constant threat to the area in general. It is probably to this event that we owe the tablets: they were buried in the rubble and were covered over by the next stratum of Hittite inhabitation (see below §4). Its excavator Tahsin Özgüç has suggested that Level III may have been evacuated by its population, perhaps leaving behind written materials only: “tablets and bullae with impressions of hieroglyphic signs are much more numerous in building Level III than are sherds”⁶.

With few exceptions⁷ the records were found concentrated in the area of Rooms 8 and 9 and the *Pfeilerhalle* or colonnade running north-east along the west side of Rooms 8 and 9, all located in the east wing of the Level III building complex⁸. According to Özgüç the building remains as found are those of basement rooms and it seems likely that the tablets were originally stored on a higher level⁹. Since there is no detectable distribution of records over the rooms (both letters and bookkeeping) and since they spilled over into the colonnade as well, the collapse of the structure probably accounts for the dispersion of the fragments. What can be said, is that Room 8 contained by far the most records (51), followed by the colonnade (27) and Room 9 (23). It is also interesting to note at this point that the pieces reportedly found in the *Pfeilerhalle* and in places other than Rooms 8 or 9 show a significantly higher number of broken tablets. As we will see later on (§3.2), even isolated fragments found as far as Rooms 26 and 35 may have secondarily ended up there as a result of the destruction of Level III or (the building) activities of later strata. There is not sufficient reason to consider them as found *in situ* supposing more places of primary tablet storage. All this suggests that a higher-level room closest to Room 8 contained all the Level III records and was (part of) the actual administrative center of the settlement¹⁰.

⁶ T. Özgüç, *Maşat Höyük Kazıları ve Çevresindeki Araştırmaları*. Ankara 1978, p. 58; cf. similarly id., *Maşat Höyük II. Boğazköy'ün Kuzeydoğusunda Bir Hitit Merkezi*. Ankara 1982, p. 75.

⁷ These are HKM 20, 108, 112 (Room 35), 37, 89 (Room 26), 82 (L/14), 90 (Room 2 of Level II!: see below n. 10), 91 (Room 13), 98, 115 (Room 13/16). For HKM 86(a+b) no findspot is indicated and uncertainty is indicated whether it belongs to Level III. For the listing of findspots see HKM pp. xiv-xvii with a map on p. xix.

⁸ In numbering the rooms I will adopt the numbers used in the map in HKM p. xix; this numbering is that of Özgüç, *Maşat Höyük II*, Plan 1 but differs from that in Özgüç, *Maşat Höyük*, Plan 2. For a general and brief description see also O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East 1500-300 B.C.* Bethesda Md. 1998, pp. 57-59.

⁹ Thus Özgüç, *Maşat Höyük* 57, cf. also Alp, HBM p. 109.

¹⁰ Özgüç, *Maşat Höyük II* 81, mentions “a small fragment of a tablet” found along with the Šuppiluliuma I sealing and a Tabarna seal in the Level II so-called Altar Building C (Room 1) that according to Özgüç

Several scholars have expressed opinions on the period covered by the collection. Sedat Alp in his edition of the texts assumed the length of a generation: “ca. 25-30 oder höchstens 50 Jahren” on account of the fact that most of the people attested in the letters were contemporaries¹¹. Observing no shifts in offices and officials Jörg Klinger thought this would be too long but did not give an estimate himself¹². Philo Houwink ten Cate opted for a somewhat shorter time span of c. 15-20 years covering parts of both Arnuwanda I’s and Tudḫaliya III’s reigns¹³. Gary Beckman, likewise observing that there do not seem to be major personnel changes in the most important offices proposed a shorter period of about a decade¹⁴ and, similarly, according to Trevor Bryce “[t]he archive probably covers a maximum period of ten years”¹⁵. In this little study I will refrain from trying to embed the corpus in Hittite history and join the majority of those who date the collection to the later reign of Tudḫaliya III. Instead, I want to focus on the collection as a whole, as an archive reflecting the administration that received and produced the records¹⁶. To that end I will look at the officials who produced and received the records, that is, the writers and addressees besides the king, the topics dealt with, and the general characteristics of the corpus. In this way I would like to propose a further narrowing down of the time span covered by the collection. Finally, a combination of dendrochronological and archaeological evidence may allow a more precise date.

2. The administrative records

The 17 administrative records contain lists of persons¹⁷, mostly laborers (following the analysis of Giuseppe del Monte¹⁸) but also high ranking Gašganean hostages¹⁹, inventories of metals and textiles²⁰, produce and foodstuffs²¹. All were an integral part of the Level III archive, the majority having been found in Room 8 and others being distributed over all the same places

was built immediately following the destruction of Level III. Following Klinger, *ZA* 85 (1995), p. 79 n. 16, this may have been HKM 90.

¹¹ HBM 112, but also already *Bulleten* XLIV/173 (1980) 57.

¹² *ZA* 85 (1995), p. 82.

¹³ *Studien Römer*, 159f., 161.

¹⁴ *StMed.* 9, p. 23.

¹⁵ *Life and Society in the Hittite World*. Oxford 2002, p. 17.

¹⁶ For a definition of archive see my article in *SMEA* 47 (2005), pp. 277-289.

¹⁷ HKM 98?, 99, 100, 101, 103.

¹⁸ Cf. *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 89-103.

¹⁹ For this interpretation see J. Siegelová in *Anatolica Antica. Studi in Memoria di Fiorella Imparati*. St. de Martino/F. Pecchioli Daddi edd. Firenze 2002, pp. 735-737; ed. del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 103-111.

²⁰ HKM 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, ed. del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 112-121.

²¹ HKM 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, ed. del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 122-133, 134. The function of HKM 112 (ed. del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 133f.) is unclear.

where letters came to light²². Onomastics, moreover, in one instance allow linking to the letters: ̒imuili, the governor (^LUEN MADKALTI) is mentioned along with Pippapa, Uzzu and two otherwise unknown individuals in HKM 111:16-17 (on this text see below). The presence of ̒imuili makes it likely that also Pippapa and Uzzu are the same individuals known from the correspondence.

Three inventories of metal objects (HKM 105, 106, 107) can be taken together while sharing the same names of officials in charge: Illū, Muiri, Nunnu, and Šuplakiya. Unfortunately, these names do not turn up in any of the letters but these records do contribute to the unity and thus simultaneity of the Mašat corpus.

Another aspect some of these records share with the letters is their short-term relevance. HKM 109, for instance, lists for the town of Gašaša for year one (l. 10: ŠA 1 MU) what has been sowed (pret., ll. 1-4) and a projection of what harvest it will yield (pres., ll. 5-8) plus additional planned sowing of various types of beans (pres., ll. 9-10). This is then followed by what they plan to sow in the subsequent years two (pres., l. 11: INA 2 MU) and three (l. 16: ŠA 3 MU)²³. Similarly, HKM 111 contains first a listing of cereals and the individuals who “have” (pres. ̒arzi) them and what seems to be a concluding remark that “in the coming year” (l. 7: INA MU.IM.MA) they “will each take” (pres. taškanta) (that) seed for sowing (tukzi)²⁴. After a double paragraph line follows an account of what several officials (among them ̒imuili, Pippapa and Uzzu, see above) had sowed “in this year” (l. 9: ŠA ANNI MU). Two more paragraphs state in the present tense what several individuals “are sowing” (that is, right now while this report was written)²⁵. The tablet concludes with an amount of grain given to two individuals.

Both documents thus describe the present year’s situation only, with HKM 109 looking two years ahead. Nowhere is there a listing or ledger of sowing : harvesting ratios, like in HKM 109, over the past years nor any records that otherwise refer back to the past. The bookkeeping records thus seem to point at a very brief time span for this part of the Mašat corpus. Of course, it is possible that bookkeeping records were recycled sooner than letters but the correspondence in general seems to fit a short time period as well.

²² The only exception is the so-called “Bothros über der Mauer zwischen den Räumen 13 und 16” (cf. HKM p. xiv for excavation nos. 74/63 (= HKM 98) and 74/64 (= HKM 115); this “Bothros” must be the “Iron Age pits” with “disturbed debris” described by Özgüç, Mašat Höyük 57) where the uncertain HKM 98 (list of persons?) was found together with the one oracle tablet HKM 115.

²³ For this interpretation see del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 128f.

²⁴ For the meaning of *tuk(kan)zi*- cf. Melchert, *Ktèma* 24 (1999), pp. 17-23 (p. 18 w. n. 9 for this passage).

²⁵ The imperf. *šuniškanzi* (ll. 23 and 27) here is in my opinion used as “progressive/descriptive” (cf. H. Hoffner/H.C. Melchert, *Studi Imparati* p. 379). In the preceding lines, likewise with multiple subjects, the pret. *šunit* (ll. 14 and 18) without the *-ške*- extension was used which makes an explanation of *šuniškanzi* as distributive “they will each sow” unlikely.

3.1 *The letters: writers and addressees*

Of the total of 97 letters 78 preserve at least one name of a writer or addressee. With few exceptions all personal names attested as writers and addressees, both of main letters and of postscripta, turn out to be interrelated in the sense that they form part of a network (see Table 1): Uzzu, for instance, the most often attested scribe, stationed in Mašat itself, occurs in letters written by or addressed to thirteen individuals among whom Kaššu, the UGULA NIMGIR.ÉRIN.MEŠ, who is the most frequently attested official. Kaššu shares with Uzzu nine of these persons, while he appears with an additional eight writers or addressees. Another eighteen writers and addressees who did not themselves write to or received letters from Uzzu and/or Kaššu, can be linked to the first group of 20 individuals. Finally, of these eighteen, ten co-occur with persons that appear with both Uzzu *and* Kaššu. All this results in an intricate network of 40 such individuals. Together they are directly responsible for 73 letters found at Mašat.

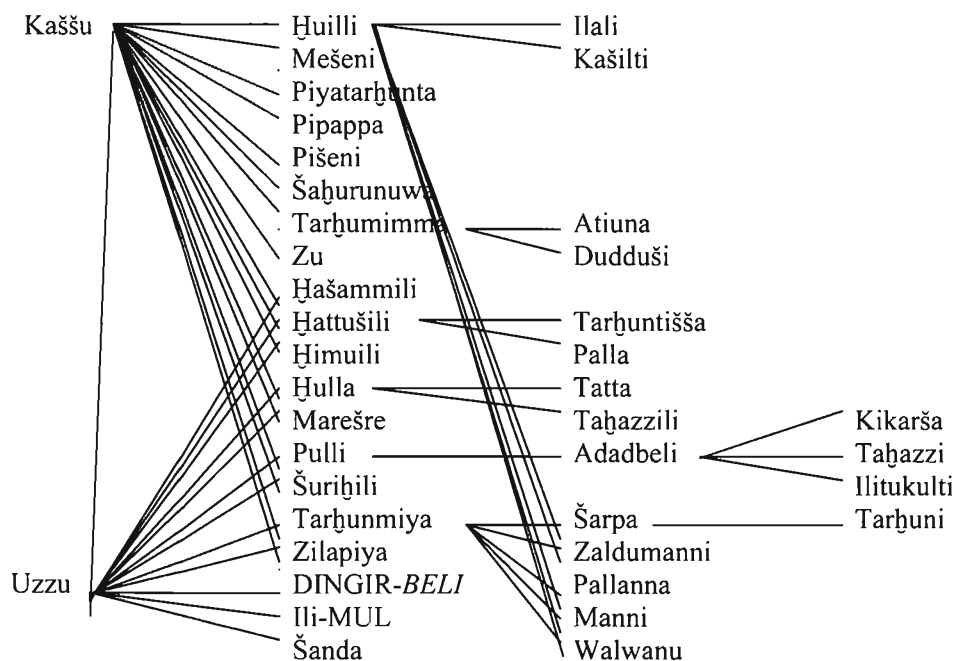


Table 1

There are only five addressees or writers that occur isolated, that is, that are not attested as part of this network:

	HKM
Šarla- ^d LAMMA	47
Mariya and Ḥapiri	48
Gašturaḥšeli	51
KAL.GA	78

Archaeologically, these last four texts formed an integral part of the collection since they were found with the majority of records in Room 8 (HKM 48, 51 and 78), and in the so-called *Pfeilerhalle* (HKM 47). Šarla-^dLAMMA is the author of the long letter containing the results of several oracle inquiries and was probably, as Alp assumes²⁶, an augur. This is the only letter dealing with oracles and so it is no surprise that Šarla-^dLAMMA is not further attested²⁷. Mariya and Ḥapiri appear together in the letter discussed in more detail by Harry Hoffner²⁸. This document, too, deals with an otherwise unique subject, the catching of animals, and the two men who describe themselves as ARAD.MEŠ, were likewise probably specialists falling outside the usual scope of civil and military officials. The letter in which Gašturaḥšeli occurs differs from the usual model in that it does not address the addressee in the usual way²⁹. Moreover, it is very short and there is no obvious link with the other letters in the Mašat corpus. The letter with KAL.GA is highly fragmentary and does not offer any clues to link it to others. None of these letters contain any personal names that might have linked them to others in the corpus.

The fact that HKM 47, 48, and 51, are all addressed to the king may have prompted Houwink ten Cate to suggest that all six letters to the king (HKM 46-51) may actually represent “a considerably older phase of the correspondence” dating back to the days of Arnuwanda I when he was campaigning in the area³⁰. On the other hand, HKM 46 and 49 do have clear links in the persons of Adadbeli (HKM 46) who is known as addressee of Pulli, Tarḥunmiya (both HKM 65) and Ḥulla (HKM 66, part of a dossier involving Ḥimuili, see §2.2), and Tarḥumimma (HKM 49) who together with Pišeni wrote to Kaššu (HKM 69, very fragmentarily preserved). Although it is certainly conceivable that sometimes records were kept longer than usual for

²⁶ HBM 92.

²⁷ It would be interesting to know the context of the record(s) in which his namesake Šarla-^dLAMMA in Ortaköy is attested. On PN in Ortaköy that also occur in Mašat see A. Süel, *Belleten* CLIX/225 (1995), pp. 271-283 (passim but esp. 282; Turkish) = XII. TTK 1994 [1999], pp. 117-128 (English), and Houwink ten Cate, *Studien Römer*, pp. 177f.

²⁸ In *Studies in Honor of Jaan Puhvel*, D. Disterheft et al. edd. Washington D.C. 1997, pp. 5-21.

²⁹ The reverse is HKM 35 that mentions only the addressee but no sender. These may be cases of inexperienced writers, cf. D. Charpin, CRAIBL 2004, p. 502, for a Neo-Assyrian parallel.

³⁰ *Studien Römer*, p. 161.

specific reasons, for instance, because they were addressed to the king himself when he had stopped over in Maşat³¹, the special subjects of HKM 47 and 48 in my opinion sufficiently explain their isolation within the corpus while the other letters to the king seem well embedded. I will therefore assume they date to the same general period as the other records.

Of another 19 letters without preserved addressees or writers, whether of the main letter or a postscriptum, six can be added to the above 73 because of persons mentioned in them from the group of addressees or writers³² or because of a specific topic³³. The person of the king is left out of consideration here since he is in all but two cases anonymous. The two cases in question are the letters HKM 4 and 14 that carry the seal of a Tudḫaliya, usually identified with Tudḫaliya III, the father of Šuppiluliuma I³⁴.

The resulting close-knit network of 40 writers and addressees implies a high degree of simultaneity and suggests therefore a relatively brief period during which the collection came into being. When we take into account the topics of the correspondence, this impression becomes even stronger.

3.2 *The letters: Topics*

Within the correspondence certain groupings can be made on the basis of topics dealt with. Some matters discussed or mentioned in the letters are referred to in such general terms (e.g. “the matter of the enemies” or “the matter of the troops”) that it is difficult or even impossible to prove that they refer to the same situation. Others, however, are so specific as to allow grouping them in bundles dealing with distinct events in the local history of the area around Maşat³⁵.

A good example is what can be called the Tarḫunmiya Affair: Tarḫunmiya appears as a scribe working for Ḫattušili, Ḫimuili, Ḫulla, Pulli, Šarpa, and the GAL^{LÜ.MES} IŠ. He was not stationed in Maşat but did have property there. A confrontation on tax issues over this property is at the heart of the affair³⁶.

³¹ I see no reason to assume with Alp, HBM 4, that the letters addressed to the king (HKM 46-51) were never sent and might be the very last ones of the collection because the abandonment of the site prevented their being sent off.

³² HKM 43 (Zilapiya), 45 (id.), 85 (Ḫuilli), 88 (Šaḫrunuwa), 91 (Pipappa).

³³ HKM 37 (wine harvest in Gašaša, see below §3).

³⁴ See Alp, HBM Abb. 2 and plates 1 and 2. Sealing letters was a highly unusual phenomenon in the Hittite world: cf. A. Hagenbuchner, THeth. 15, pp. 33f. No (Hittite) examples seem to be known from Ḫattuša itself and the three documents from Ḫattuša found at Ugarit are royal decisions (edicts, verdicts) rather than letters as already indicated by Hagenbuchner. Neither in content, form or find spot are HKM 4 and 14 different in any respect from other letters in the Maşat corpus. Could it be that the king in these cases wrote the letters himself?

³⁵ For a less optimistic view see St. de Martino, *AoF* 32 (2005), pp. 313f.

³⁶ Interpretations of the exact problem differ: compare Alp, *Or.* 59 (1990), pp. 107-113, and HBM pp. 96-98, 333f., and F. Imparati, *Archivum Anatolicum* 3 (1997), pp. 199-214, who assume that scribes were

Another group concerns a famine near Mašat involving towns or settlements like Kašepura which is most often mentioned³⁷. The sequence of events can be reconstructed roughly as follows: locust swarms have destroyed much of the crops in the Kaška territory, forcing Gašgaeans to raid fields surrounding Hittite towns. They harvest the grain, attack royal storerooms, kill cattle and abduct people. In order to relief the plight of the population the Hittite king then orders to take grain from royal storerooms in Marešta that was originally intended for sowing.

Then there are several letters that speak of Ḫimuili and seed for sowing fields. At one point (HKM 54, 55) Kaššu directly accuses Ḫimuili of having taken the seeds that were destined for several towns among which Tapikka and Kašepura. Elsewhere (HKM 53) it is claimed that enemies have destroyed the seeds. It remains difficult to establish a story line using all letters. Although it is very well possible that this dossier is linked to the previous one, I see as yet no convincing way to do so.

Smaller dossiers consist of just two letters sharing a specific piece of information like that of the house of the scribe Uzzu in HKM 2 and 3.

Sometimes letters can be shown to belong together not so much because they form a coherent dossier but because they share certain details: letters A and B deal with the same affair X but B also contains an unrelated element that turns up in letter C that has nothing to do with the affair X. In both HKM 30 and 36, for instance, Marešre mentions in a postscriptum a female servant whom he demands to have sent back to him. HKM 36 also mentions 300 troops of the town of Išḫupitta that the unknown addressee has led up to Kašepura. This can be linked to HKM 31 where Ḫimuili says that he has led 100 “new” troops up to the same town. This in turn allows a further link with HKM 37 which shares with HKM 31 concerns over the wine harvest at Gašaša. The following table shows the groups that can be put together:

exempt from taxes and that Tarḫunmiya therefore never should have been asked to fulfill his alleged tax duties, versus Houwink ten Cate, *Studien Römer*, p. 173f., and van den Hout in *Zij Schreven Geschiedenis. Historische Documenten uit het Oude Nabije Oosten*, R.J. Demarée/K.R. Veenhof, edd. Leuven 2003, pp. 145-153, who suppose that Tarḫunmiya already performed his duties in Ḫattuša and was for that reason exempt in Mašat.

³⁷ A famine or hunger (*kašt-*) is also mentioned in KBo 18.54 rev. 5 which is now mostly dated as MH/MS (see St. de Martino, *AoF* 32 [2005], pp. 297f. with lit.). The Kaššu attested there (obv. 2) may very well be the same as his namesake in the Mašat-letters (see StBoT 38, pp. 229f.). It seems impossible, however, to positively link the “hunger” of KBo 18.54 to the famine seen in the Mašat-texts listed here.

<i>Dossier</i>	<i>HKM nos.</i>	<i>Writers and addressees</i>
Tarḫunmiya affair	HKM 12, 27, 52, 60, 80? ³⁸ , 81?	Ḫattušili, Ḫimuili, Ḫuilli, Šarpa, Uzzu, Zaldumanni
Famine in and around Kašepura ³⁹	HKM 8, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 45 ⁴⁰	Ḫašammili, Ḫulla, Kaššu, Pišeni, Pulli, Šanda, Tatta, Uzzu
Seed of Ḫimuili	HKM 53, 54, 55, 66, 68(?), 84 ⁴¹	Adadbeli, Ḫattušili, Ḫimuili, Ḫuilli, Ḫulla, Kaššu, Marešre, Pallanna, Uzzu, Zaldumanni
Wine harvest in Gašaša/Female servant of Marešre/Troops of Išḫupitta to Kašepura	HKM 30, 31, 36, 37	Ḫašammili, Ḫattušili, Ḫimuili, Marešre, Uzzu
House of Uzzu	IKM 2, 3	Kaššu, Šuiriḫili, Uzzu
Blind people in Šapinuwa	HKM 58, 59	Adadbeli, Ilitukulti, Kikarša, Šarpa, Taḫazzi, Tarḫuni

The core of officials involved in the above issues consists of Ḫattušili, Ḫimuili, Ḫuilli, Ḫulla, Kaššu, Marešre, and Uzzu. Of these, Ḫattušili and Marešre belong to the immediate king's circle: according to Beckman Ḫattušili may have been the chief scribe at the time⁴² while Marešre was a regular scribe⁴³. Both occur exclusively as writers, mostly of postscripta in king's letters or in letters with no main writer preserved⁴⁴. Twice does Ḫattušili function as the main writer himself⁴⁵, Marešre once⁴⁶. The others are mainly attested as addressees of main letters and/or postscripta. The chance that these officials worked together over a period of, say, ten years in the same positions, let alone for any period longer than that, in, moreover, such volatile times seems slim. Also, the affairs of the famine in and around Kašepura, the wine harvest in

³⁸ Cf. Alp, HBM 271 n. 363 for the attribution of this letter to Tarḫunmiya.

³⁹ Although it is possible, there is no compelling link with the hunger or food shortage mentioned in the administrative record HKM 113:10 (ed. del Monte, *OAM* 2 (1995), pp. 131-133).

⁴⁰ The mention of the ÉRIN.MEŠ KUR^{URU} Išḫupitta "troops of Išḫupitta" in HKM 18:19 makes it possible to link HKM 20 to this group as well (cf. 20:7). In further speculation one could add HKM 21 and 22 because of troops and the involvement of Pulli who also occurs in HKM 18 and 19; because of Gašgaeans and the verb *warš-* "to harvest" HKM 23 might be another candidate to add to this group.

⁴¹ HKM 84 does not mention seeds or Ḫimuili but is linked to HKM 66 because of "the son of Šaparta" (HKM 66:22 and 84 rev. 2).

⁴² ICH 2, 25, see also Alp, HBM p. 58f.

⁴³ Cf. Alp, HBM p. 78f.

⁴⁴ For this reason it is likely that the latter were written by the king as well. For Ḫattušili see HKM 10, 27 (both with main letter from the king), 28, and 80 (main writer not preserved); for Marešre see HKM 22, 31 (both with main letter from the king), 33 (main writer not preserved), 53 (main writer Ḫattušili), 73 (main writer GAL DUB.SAR).

⁴⁵ HKM 52 and 53 (with a postscriptum from Marešre).

⁴⁶ HKM 82 (no addressee preserved).

Gašaša, and the seed of Ĥimuili are seasonal matters that must have been dealt with within weeks and months, they are not problems that stretch over a decade. Although it is difficult to prove that these affairs all happened simultaneously or within a time span of, say, one or two years⁴⁷, it seems definitely unlikely to suppose they happened in succession.

Before turning to the administrative records, a few words may be said on the findspots of the records in these dossiers: again (see already above §1), no obvious distribution can be detected. Every dossier that consists of more than two tablets was found dispersed over two or three locations (Rooms 8, 9, and *Pfeilerhalle*) including the far away Room 26 for HKM 37⁴⁸. This reinforces the suggestion that all records were once kept together somewhere in the east wing of the building complex, probably on a higher floor over (the basement) Rooms 8 and 9.

4. General considerations

The topics dealt with in the letters are of a very short-term nature: they usually contain simple orders that should be followed up on immediately and are often combined with statements that prior information has been received and was often acted on without delay. The letters show clear signs of urgency in the high frequency of words like *kāša/kāšma* “just now”, *kinun* “now”, *lilīwahḥ-* “to hasten, hurry”⁴⁹. Sometimes this is reinforced by threats if a request or command is not followed up on⁵⁰ and by the general sense of nervousness vis-à-vis the Gašgaeans⁵¹. What we don’t have, are documents of a legal kind like we know them from Ĥattuša (laws, depositions, title deeds) or anything that would have relevance that would last beyond one or two years. The bookkeeping records confirm this: as far as a time span is indicated, they do not seem to deal with matters further back than the present year.

Traffic of messengers between writers and addressees could be fast. Messengers could travel faster than implementations of requests mentioned in the letters they carried, like in the case of certain troops that were asked for by Kaššu in HKM 2. The king sends him a message saying that he has sent them out already and that he can expect them: the announcement thus travels faster than the troops that were sent at the same time the letter was dispatched (HKM 2:6-9 *n-ašta kāšma ANŠE.KUR.RA.ĤI.A karú parā nehḥun n-an-za-kan menahḥanda au* “Just

⁴⁷ See above the remark on a possible link between the affair around Ĥimuili and the food shortage involving Kašepura, and the reference to food shortage in the Tarḥunmiya dossier (HKM 80, cf. Houwink ten Cate, *Studien Römer* 162).

⁴⁸ Note that, if HKM 20 is added to the “famine” dossier (see above n. 40), this would add Room 35 to the findspots for this group that is otherwise dispersed over Rooms 8 and 9.

⁴⁹ There are only two letters that have forms of *nuntarnu-* “to hurry, hasten” for which see the glossary in HBM p. 391.

⁵⁰ See, for example, HKM 14 (blinding), 16 (id.), 35 (death).

⁵¹ Note the frequent call to be careful and attentive to enemy movements (*paḥš-*, *paḥšanu-*, *paḥšnuwant-*); see the glossary HBM p. 391f.

now I sent off the troops already. Be on the look out for them!”). Especially the dossier about the famine in and around Kašepura shows that there was an intensive exchange of letters over a brief period of time: according to HKM 25 Pišeni wrote the king from Kašepura about a crisis situation there. Gašgaeans had started harvesting the fields around the town. The king ordered Tatta and Ḫulla to go help Pišeni and harvest what they could. As an attachment he included the original letter of Pišeni. The decision of the king only makes sense within a period of days or even hours. Since the towns and settlements mentioned probably were located in the immediate vicinity of Maşat, messengers were able to move quickly. Further support for this are orders from the king to bring troops within two or three days.⁵² Also, when the king asks to be kept posted on the whereabouts and movements of enemy troops,⁵³ this again makes sense only if he could be apprised of such information in a very short time span. Finally there is the king’s warning to remain on high alert until he has performed an oracle investigation⁵⁴: this, too, is perfectly understandable in a context of short lines of communication. Otherwise the king would have done the investigation first and then written the letter⁵⁵.

Another point that has to be kept in mind is the status of Maşat in the administrative hierarchy. In terms of the three-tiered system (Gemeinde - Region(alpalast) - Zentrale (/Zentralgewalt)) as advocated by Jana Siegelová⁵⁶, Maşat functioned on the lowest tier with Šapinuwa as the regional authority.⁵⁷ No palace (É(.GAL) URU GN) is attested for Maşat and the bookkeeping records seem to confirm its modest economic status. Given this status and the very short-term relevance of the records, it does not seem likely that they would have been kept for more than a few years. Although, as said earlier, it is possible that letters were kept longer, the general character of the correspondence does not plead in my opinion for a significant discrepancy. The clay of older records that were no longer deemed relevant may soon have formed the material for letters that were sent back out.

All in all, I think we should consider the possibility that the corpus of records found at Maşat Höyük - or at least the majority of them - was the incoming mail and the locally produced administration of a very brief period, perhaps even as little as one or two years, left behind when the Level III settlement came to an end. As done earlier by Houwink ten Cate⁵⁸, this might help us pin down some more the range of years during which the corpus came into being. According to the latest dendrochronological calculations three pieces of wood from the Level II building complex at Maşat date to 1375 +4/-7⁵⁹. Since here is no bark on the wood, the building may

⁵² Cf. HKM 15:11 (INA UD.3.KAM), 20:10 (J[M]A UD.2 ΓKAMΓ).

⁵³ Cf. HKM 27:8-10; an example of such a letter to the king is HKM 46.

⁵⁴ Cf. HKM 21:8-13.

⁵⁵ I owe this observation to Birgit Christiansen.

⁵⁶ *AoF* 28 (2001), pp. 193-208.

⁵⁷ Cf. Siegelová, *AoF* 28 (2001), pp. 200-202.

⁵⁸ See Studien Römer 160, but with a different starting date and assuming a longer time span for the archive (see above §1).

⁵⁹ In *Der Anschnitt, Anatolian Metal III*, Beiheft 18, P. Kuniholm et al. edd. (2005), p. 46.

have been erected some years later⁶⁰. If we follow T. Özgüç's interpretation of the archaeological context that the Level II complex was built "right after the destruction of the palace"⁶¹ and assume that the Maşat corpus dates to the last, say, two years of the Level III inhabitation, this would lead to a date for the corpus in the early 1370's or right around 1375 (+4/-7) BC depending on how many rings were shaved off in the building process⁶².

⁶⁰ Thus Kuniholm in *Aspects of Art and Iconography. Studies in Honor of Nimet Özgüç*, M. Mellink et al. edd. Ankara 1993, p. 372, where the same samples were still dated to 1392 +/-37.

⁶¹ Maşat Höyük II, 80, similarly 81: "The building had been constructed in a great hurry after the conflagration of the palace".

⁶² For example, if we take 1375 as the date for the last preserved tree ring and suppose that two years of growth were taken off in the building process, this would lead to 1373 as the year of the construction of the Level II complex (or at least the year in which the timber for the construction was cut). Supposing that not more than two years elapsed between the destruction of Level III and the rebuilding, this would bring us right back to 1375 BC as the last year of the Maşat corpus.