Sequence chart of the Battle of Kadesh

1 Bedouin spies bring false information

Two Bedouin spies come to Ramesses, claiming that the Bedouins are preparing to abandon their alliance with the Hittites in order to join the Egyptian forces. When Ramesses asks where the army of the Hittites is located the spies say: ‘They are in the land of Kaleb [that is, Aleppo 190 kilometres north of Kadesh] to the north of Tunip. For [the Hittite chief] was too fearful of Pharaoh to come southward when he heard that Pharaoh had come northward.’\(^\text{16}\)

2 Muwatallis sets a trap at Kadesh

‘Now the two Shosu who said these words to his majesty, said them falsely, for … the foe from Khatti [the Hittites] had come with his infantry and his chariotry and … [his] allies to fight against the army of his majesty, he standing equipped and ready behind Kadesh the Old, and his majesty did not know that they were there.’\(^\text{17}\)

5 Hittites attack

‘Crossing the ford to the south of Kadesh they charged into his majesty’s army as it marched unaware … Thereupon the forces of the foe from Khatti surrounded the followers of his majesty who were by his side.’\(^\text{18}\)

6 Ramesses saves the day

‘Taking up weapons and donning his armour … [Ramesses] mounted “Victory-in-Thebes”, his great horse, and started out quickly alone by himself … His majesty charged into the force from Khatti and the many countries with him … His majesty slew the entire force of the foe from Khatti … His majesty slaughtered them in their places; they sprawled before his horses; and his majesty was alone, none other with him.’\(^\text{19}\)

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3 Egyptians advance to Kadesh

When the two Shosu ... had been [released], his majesty proceeded northward and reached the northwest of Kadesh. The camp of his majesty's army was pitched there, and his majesty took his seat on a throne of fine gold to the north of Kadesh on the west side of the Orontes.  

4 Captured Hittite spies reveal ambush plans

Egyptian scouts had captured two Hittite scouts who, when beaten, revealed the trap that Muwatallis had prepared for the Egyptians. They tell Ramesses: 'Look, the vile Chief of Khatti has come together with the many countries who are with him, ... as allies ... They are equipped with their infantry and their chariotsry, and with their weapons of war. They are more numerous than the sands of the shores. Look, they stand equipped and ready to fight behind Kadesh the Old.'

7 Reinforcements to the rescue

The arrival of the reinforcements of pharaoh, from the land of Amurru. They found that the force of the vanquished Chief of Khatti had surrounded the camp of His majesty on its western side. His majesty had been camping alone, no army with him, awaiting the arrival of his officers and his army ... Then the reinforcements cut off the foe belonging to the vanquished Chief of Khatti, while [the foe] were entering onto the camp, and pharaoh's officers slew them; they left not a single survivor among them.

8 Stalemate at Kadesh

The next day's fighting gave no clear victory to either side. According to the Egyptian accounts, the Hittites then sued for peace: 'Then the vile Chief of Khatti ... sent his envoy with a letter ... As for the land of Egypt and the land of Khatti, they are your servants, under your feet ... Peace is better than fighting. Give us breath!' Immediately after the armistice, Ramesses returned to Egypt with his army and the Hittites withdrew inside the walls of Kadesh.

20 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. II, p. 60
21 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. II, p. 61
22 Callender, The Eye of Horus, p. 256
23 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. II, p. 71