

HITTITE LESBOS?

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Two texts from Hattusa refer to *la-az-pa*, which is identified as a place name by the determinatives URU and KUR (*KUB* 5.6 ii 57, 60 and *KUB* 19.5 + *KBo* 19.79, ed. Houwink ten Cate 1983–84: 38–40; Texts 1 and 2 below). The first is an oracle text from the reign of Mursili II (1321–1295 BC), while the second deals with the misadventures of Manapa-Tarhunta, king of a state called the “Seha River Land,” and vassal of the next Hittite king, Muwatalli II (1295–1271 BC).

In Text 1, the Hittite king consults the Deity of Lazpa (DINGIR-LUM^{URU}*la-az-pa-ia*), which an Anatolian would have understood as addressing a statuette or other representation of the god physically present in Hattusa, and more likely to have been acquired by conquest than diplomacy. Text 2 describes the capture and removal from Lazpa of persons called by the Akkadian word *šāripūtu* (LÚ.MEŠ^{ŠA-RI-PU-TI}), some of whom belonged to the (Hittite) king and some to “the god.” Both passages suggest that Lazpa was well integrated into the Hittite sphere of influence, and probably part of the empire ruled from Hattusa. According to text 1, the sacrifices used for its deity resemble those employed for the household deities of the king, while the *šāripūtu*-men of text 2, known also from a Hittite context in Ugarit (Nougayrol 1968), as specialized workers, possibly dyers responsible for ceremonial apparel,¹ who are owned by the king and/or attached to a temple, appear entirely Anatolian in culture.

Most Hittite scholars accept the equation of Lazpa with the island that the Greeks later called Lesbos. Classicists have described “Lazpa” as an Anatolian spelling of Greek *Lesbos* (Huxley 1961, 12–13), but the Anatolian form is attested four centuries before the Greek, and conforms to the familiar correspondence of second-millennium Luwian /a/ to first-millennium Greek /e/ found, for example, in *Apasa/Ephesos* and *Parha/Perge*. Whatever its origin, the name *Lazpa* occurs around 1300 BC in a Luwian form. For the use of Luwian in the region, note the possible example of Troy/Wilusa (Starke 1997, 456–59; Watkins 1998, 204; Hawkins and Easton 1996, 111–13), and Stephanos of Byzantium’s observation that the Aeolic town of *Elaia* (“Olive-oil”), near the mouth of the Kaikos, had the alternative name *Dainis* which corresponds to the Luwian adjective *tāini*, “oily” (*DLL* 89; Starke 1990, 241, n. 827a; 1997, 475, n. 101).

Lazpa incorporates the highly productive Anatolian place-name suffix *-pa/ba*,² and finds an exact phonetic match in *Gazpa*, a variant spelling of *Kazapa*, a city on the northern border with Kaska territory.³ In contrast, words ending in *-βα*, *-βη*, and *-βο*, including place names, are not very common in Greek;⁴ besides the Boeotian *Thebai* and *Thisbe*, we should note, significantly, *Arisba/Arisbe*, the name of cities in Lesbos and the Troad (Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.151; Homer, *Il.* 2.836).

In line 16 of Text 2, we learn that the *šāripūtu*-men were taken “over sea” (A.AB.BA *p[ar-ra]-an-ta*),⁵ suggesting that Lazpa, like Lesbos, was an island.⁶ Manapa-Tarhunta, king of the “Seha River Land,” a state located between Mira (whose capital was *Apasa/Ephesos*) and Wilusa/Troy, claimed it. Manapa-Tarhunta also controlled a realm called *Apawiya*, presumably the district that the Greeks called *Abaeitis* (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.8.11, 13.4.4), located at the headwaters of the river Makestos, northeast of the Kaikos River. Thus, Anatolian

Seha was located in the same region as Greek Kaikos, and Manapa-Tarhunta's realm corresponded to the region that Greeks in the first millennium called *Aeolis*, which extended from the Hermos to Cape Lekton, and whose cities acknowledged Lesbos as their *metropolis* (Strabo, *Geog.* 13.1.8, 13.2.1). All of this strongly supports the identification of Lazpa with Lesbos.

While those who look at these texts from an Anatolian perspective have concluded that Lazpa or Lesbos was under Hittite control around 1300, classical scholars, although interested in Hittite texts as evidence of the "reality" of the Trojan War or as comparanda for Greek mythology, do not, as Calvert Watkins has said, "seem to be trampling each other in their haste to get at [them]" for other purposes (1998, 201). There certainly has been little discussion of the implications of these two documents for the history of Lesbos, either by classicists⁷ or by local historians.⁸

What evidence might there be for a Hittite or Luwian Lesbos beyond the two Hittite texts under consideration? The material evidence is inconclusive. In the Early Bronze Age, Lesbian ceramic traditions find their closest affinities in (northwest) Anatolia, in a northeast Aegean culture with close parallels at Troy and on Lemnos (Axiotis 2001). In the Late Bronze Age, there is more emphasis on the increased presence of "Mycenean" or mainland material, but the evidence on Lesbos is very incomplete. Only Thermi, a site north of Mytilene, has systematically been published (Lamb 1936); results from the Bronze Age sites at Kourtir on the Gulf of Kalloni (Spencer 1995a, 20, site 91) and Chalakies/Perama on the Gulf of Yera (Spencer 1995a, 13, site 54, and informal reports of recent excavations) are not yet in the public realm. Nonetheless, the consensus position is that Lesbos belongs to a "northern" interface of the Aegean and Anatolian world, less Aegean-influenced than the "southern" region centered on Rhodes and Miletos/Millawanda (Mountjoy 1998).

Lesbos' ties to any of the mainland Greek kingdoms are difficult to demonstrate. There do not seem to be any women from Lesbos, along with the Chians and Milesians, identified among the foreign workers on tablets from Pylos. Scafa proposed that *a-ri-qa* (PY Jn 832.14) might be interpreted as *Arisba*, but assigned it to the town in the Troad (1999, 271–77); the vowel of the third syllable excludes the possibility that *Mu-ti-ri* (PY Ep 212.6, Eb 858.1) could have anything to do with *Mytilena*.

In terms of material culture, what is striking about Lesbos is the continued production of a local tradition of pottery, Lesbian Grey "bucchero" ware, right through the end of the Bronze Age and into the Archaic Greek period, as though there had been no major population shift of Greeks into the island (Spencer 1995b, 301–6). The Aeolian Greeks are supposed to have arrived four generations after the fall of Troy, but it is hard to find evidence of their presence so early; there are, significantly, no local traditions of an expelled or conquered allophone population. When we do have usable Greek cultural material from the island, in the poetry of Sappho and Alcaeus, the Lesbians have especially close ties with Sardis. All of this suggests a mixed Achaean/Anatolian population in the Late Bronze Age finally assimilated to Greek only in the Archaic period.

There may be some support for a period of Anatolian influence on Lesbos in the toponymy. It is very tempting to see in *laz-pa* the presence of the Hittite root *lazzi-* ("auspicious, desirable"); Pliny the Elder (Text 5: HN 5.139) lists a number of alternative names for Lesbos including *Himerte* (ἱμερτή), "desirable," and *Lasia* (Λασία), which is usually understood to mean "shaggy" and refer to the island's tree cover, but also represents a fairly accurate phonetic treatment of the Hittite adjective. We should, however, be cautious; very few Anatolian place names have clear Indo-European etymologies. If the name was Anatolian, it ought to be Luwian in form; the *lazzi-* stem is not attested in Cuneiform Luwian, but should be closer to the hieroglyphic *lata* (HED 5, 73).⁹

On the other hand, the city name *Mytilene* (in local dialect *mu-ti-le-na*) does appear to have an Anatolian etymology, based on the noun *muwa*, "might," if not the royal and divine name Muwatalli. For the treatment of *muwa* in Greek as *my-*, compare Anatolian Tu-wa-na/ Greek Tyana; the syncope of *mu-wa-ti* to *mu-ti*

is observed in a Luwian text KBo 7.68 ii 13 (Melchert 1993, 152). *-il* is a recognizably Anatolian way of forming a personal name ("he who has power"), while the ending *-ena* suggests the common Greek place name adjective suffix *-ηνος*, as in Λαμψακηνός "from Lampsacus" and Παλαιστήνη. If *Mytilena* means something like "the land associated with the powerful one," we may find a dim echo of this meaning in Pliny the Elder (text 5), who called Mytilene *per MD annos potens*, "powerful for 1500 years."

In the Hittite texts, Lazpa is labeled as both KUR "land" and URU "city." This is normal in cuneiform documents and highly appropriate for the Mesopotamian city-states for whom the writing system developed; but it is quite inappropriate for Greek, first-millennium, Lesbos, which had neither a unified government nor a city called Lesbos. However, the earliest Greek references to Lesbos, in the Homeric poems (Text 3), do describe Lesbos in the same way as our Hittite texts, both as "well-built" (*euktimene*) like a city (Il. 9. 129), and as the realm or "seat" of a single king, called Makar (Il. 24.544). Although the island's Bronze Age sites are desperately under-investigated, we should be looking for an appropriate location for an Anatolian fortified palace; Thermi had defensive walls in the Late Bronze Age, but one might want to look at more citadel-like locations, in Mytilene, Methymna or Antissa.

Homer referred to Lesbos as the land of *Makar*. Although the narrative recorded by Diodorus Siculus (text 4) made Makar a Greek from the Peloponnese (5.81.4), it ascribed to him (5.82.3) a law code called "Lion." A king as an author of a written law code is entirely plausible in a Hittite context, but does not fit either what the Greeks ascribed to their Heroic-Age Kings, nor what we know from Linear B evidence about Bronze Age Mycenaean rulers. Furthermore, the name of the law code, "of the Lion," does not make much sense in Greek, despite Diodorus' comment about the "strength and courage of the beast;" but in an Anatolian context, it would clearly memorialize *Muwawalwi*, "Might of a Lion," the Luwian name of Manapa-Tarhunta's father, the founder of the Seha dynasty (Starke 2001).

Given these Anatolian associations for Makar, one would like to find Anatolian associations for the name. The word *makar*, an adjective of the third declension, with the meaning "blessed," has no recognized Indo-European etymology. By the time of Hesiod (*Op.* 171), it was applied to the heroized dead, believed to dwell in the "Islands of the Blessed;" both the concept and the term have been traced to Egyptian *m3-ḥrw* (Griffith 2001, 214, n. 2). After Homer, the adjective was reformed to first/second declension *makarios*, and the eponymous King became "Makareus" with a productive agent-suffix ("making *makar*"). The alternative name for the island, *Makaria*, was interpreted as both "Makar's land" and "Blessed Land."

Makara also occurs as a place-name for a settlement at the entrance to the Bay of Kalloni (Spencer 1995a, 28, site 131); there is a Bronze Age tomb at the site, but it was found empty, so there is no ceramic evidence to confirm the dating or suggest Achaean or Anatolian connections (Papadimitriou 2001, 146–48). The name, a neuter plural in the earlier third-declension form, appears ancient,¹⁰ but "happy things" or "heroized dead things" does not make much sense as a place name. Apart from religious and church names, most small places on the island whose name can be interpreted are named (either in Greek or Turkish) for concrete features that define them, such as trees or rocks.¹¹ It would be desirable therefore to find a meaning for *makar* that would be appropriate to a physical feature of the island as a whole and to *Ta Makara* in particular. If *makar* could be shown to be Anatolian in origin, it would enhance the case for a Hittite Lesbos.

There is indeed a very similar-looking place-name in Hittite, ^{URU}*ma-kar-ua-an-da* (KUB 31.44 i 7), which should mean "region of *makar*," "place rich in *makar*," formally corresponding to Greek *Makara* and *Makaria*. However, in both Hittite and Luwian, a form written in cuneiform as *makar* with one *-k-* would be pronounced *magar*, and Greek names for Anatolian places which have a single internal *-k-* in Greek have a geminate in their cuneiform spelling, as in Greek *Ikonion*/Hittite *Ikkuwanya* and Greek *Lykia*/Anatolian *Lukka*. The stem *makari*/*magari* occurs in only one text (KUB 34.89) and has no generally accepted meaning; it is associated with silver and copper, and seems to refer to a part of a chariot, such as a wheel (HED 6, 17). None of this has any obvious application to Lesbos, and *magari* and *makaruanda* must regretfully be discarded as possible

Anatolian equivalents of *Makaria*. There is an agental form *makkuya* “churner” (*KUB* 29.45 rev. 10–12, *HED* 6:20) which could be derived from an Anatolian stem in *makk-*, but there is no evidence of it having an extension in *-ar-* and its meaning does not shed much light on the Greek name.

There are, however, two Greek mythical traditions that may connect Lesbos with the Hittites. One is a legend about Mytilene, the eponymous founder of Lesbos’ chief city. In one narrative, recounted by Diodorus (3.55, see text 4), she is an Amazon, sister of Myrina, and both came to the Aegean from central Anatolia. In modern times, representations of kilted Hittites were (mis)taken for Amazons (Gurney 1954, 199–200), and it is possible that first-millennium Greeks made the same mistake in interpreting reliefs in western Anatolia. Greek myths and fantasies about the Amazons have their own complex history far removed from what we know about Anatolian culture, but there is a case to be made that legends of the foundation of many cities on the Aegean coast of Anatolia may ultimately reflect a Hittite or Luwian stage in their history. Since Mytilene does appear to have a Luwian etymology, the tradition in this case may possibly have some connection with reality.

Finally, there is the myth of Pelops, founder of the Olympic games, who gave his name to the Peloponnese. Pelops is the figure in Greek myth most likely to have a Hittite connection. He is always identified as an Anatolian, either from Lydia or Phrygia; his father Tantalus and sister Niobe, are especially connected with Mt. Sipylus, near Magnesia; the figure of Niobe turned into stone (Pausanias 1.21.3) may in fact have been a Hittite rock-cut relief (Bean 1966, 93–95). Pelops won the hand of Hippodameia, the daughter of Oinomaos, in a chariot-race, through the treachery of Oinomaos’ charioteer, Myrsilos or Myrtilos. If anything in Mycenaean Greek culture can be traced to the Hittites, it is the military use of chariots (Lorimer 1950, 320–23), and Oinomaos’ charioteer bears the unmistakably Hittite name Mursili. In the canonical version of the myth, Myrsilos is a Peloponnesian, like Oinomaos; but there is an alternative version that connects him to Lesbos. In the Lesbian version of the Pelops/Myrsilos myth, noted in a scholion to Euripides’ *Orestes* 990, Oinomaos was King of Lesbos, and the whole narrative probably took place on Lesbos (Scherling 1933, 115). The other two bearers of the name Myrsilos in Greek history were both Lesbians; the first a tyrant of Mytilene in the seventh century named by Alkaios, and the second a third-century historian from Methymna (*FGH* 477).

All of these pieces – the Anatolian appearance of the name *Lazpa*, a possible Hittite etymology for *Mytilene*, the association of Makar’s law code with King *Muwa-walwi*, and possible connections of the Pelops/Myrsilis myth with Lesbos – do not add up to very much. But regardless of classical Greece’s ignorance of its Bronze Age predecessors in Anatolia, these pieces of evidence probably do provide reasonable support for the Hittite texts that suggest that Lesbos was under Hittite control in the Late Bronze Age.

APPENDIX: TEXTS

1. *KUB* 5.6 ii 57–60 (Sommer 1932, 282–91): With reference to the Deity of Ahhiyawa (DINGIR-LUM^{URU} *aḫ-ḫi-ia-ua-kán*) and the Deity of Lazpa (DINGIR-LUM^{URU} *la-az-pa-ia*) and the Deity of Persons (DINGIR-LUM^{NI} *TEⁿⁱ-ia*), which are identified as belonging to My Sun: Should we consult those also in the way we consult the Deities of the King’s Person, and carry out the three-day cult performance also for the Deities of Ahhiyawa and Lazpa as for those (i.e., the personal gods)? Or should the performances be carried out as in the pure distributions made on the *šaknuwant* dishes of My Sun, and as in the libations made by the rite of Hattusa? Should one ask about the sacrifice from the Deity through the oracle? In the same manner? Then can they be valid? Oracular answer: Valid.

2. *KUB* 19.5 + *KBo* 19.79 (Houwink ten Cate 1983–84, 38–40): To his majesty speak! Thus Manapa-Tarhunta, your servant. Behold, within the country everything is in order. Gassus arrived and brought along the Hittite troops. When they set out again to attack the country of Wilusa, I became ill. When Piyamaradu had humiliated me, he set Atpas against me. He attacked the country of Lazpa (^{KUR}*La-az-pa-an* GUL-*aḫ-ta*). All without exception joined in and whichever *šāripūtu*-men belonged to His Majesty ... [xxx]-*ahuh*as made those too join in. However the *šāripūtu*-men made a petition to Atpas, “We are tributaries and we came over the sea. Let us pay our tribute. Šigauna committed a crime, but we did nothing.” When they made their petition, Atpas did not transport them. He would have sent them home, but Piyamaradu

sent Šigauna and spoke to him When Atpas heard the word of Piyamaradu, he did not return them. But when Gassus arrived, Kupanta-Kurunta sent a message to Atpa: “The *šāripūtu*-men of His Majesty who are there, let them go home.” And he let the *šāripūtu*-men who belong to the God and those who belong to His Majesty ... go home.

3. Iliad

9.128–130:

I will give seven Lesbian women, skillful at their tasks
whom I picked when he (Achilles) took well-built Lesbos,
women who surpassed the tribes of women in beauty.

24. 543–545:

Old man, we learned that you too once were prosperous.
All that Lesbos above, the seat of Makar, encloses
and Phrygia below, and the boundless Hellespont,
of these, old man, they say you excelled in wealth and sons.

4. Diodorus of Sicily

3.55.5–7: (The Amazon Myrina) conquered the races in the region of the Taurus and descended through Greater Phrygia to the sea; then she won over the land lying along the coast and fixed the bounds of her campaign at the River Kaikos. Selecting in the territory sites well suited for cities, she built a considerable number of them, and founded one which bore her own name; others she named after women who held the most important commands, such as Kyme, Pitana and Priene. She seized also some of the islands and Lesbos in particular, on which she founded the city of Mytilene, which was named after her sister who took part in the campaign.

5.81.2–7: The first people to seize [Lesbos] were Pelasgians. Xanthus crossed over to Lesbos, which was uninhabited and divided the land among the folk, and he named the island, which had formerly been called Issa, Pelasgia. And seven generations later ... Lesbos was also laid desolate by the deluge (of Deucalion) ... and after these events Makareus came to the island and recognizing the beauty of the land, he made his home in it. This Makareus was the son of Krinakos the son of Zeus, and was a native of Olenos in what is now called Achaia. The folk with him had been gathered from here and there, some being Ionians ... Makareus’ power increased because of the fertility of the island and his own fairness, and he won for himself the neighboring islands. And during this time, Lesbos, the son of Lapithes, the son of Aeolus, sailed with colonists to the island, and marrying Methymna, the daughter of Macareus, made his home there ... and named the island Lesbos after himself ... And there was born to Makareus, in addition to other daughters, Mytilene and Methymna, from whom the cities in the island got their names.

5.82.2–4: The islands supplied the inhabitants with wholesome air and ... were filled with greater and greater abundance, and have been called the Islands of the Blessed (*Makaron*) ... but some say that they were called Islands of the Blessed after Makareus. And the islands are in truth blessed. And Makareus, while King of Lesbos, issued a law which contributed much to the common good, and he called the law “Lion” giving it the name after the strength and courage of that beast.

5. Pliny, *Natural History* 5.39.139: The most famous island is Lesbos, 65 miles from Chios. It was formerly called Himerte, Lasia, Pelasgia, Aegira, Aethiope, Macaria. It had nine noteworthy towns ... Pyrrha, Arisbe, Antissa, Methymna, Agamede, Hiera, Eressos and Mytilene, powerful for 1500 years.

NOTES

- 1 They are not found in Pecchioli Daddi (1982), a study of Hittite crafts and professions. For the *šāripūtu*-men as dyers or colorers, see Starke (1990, 556, §325; Luwian *ašarnumman*, Hittite *išarnumai*- “blütig machen”). Itamar Singer argues convincingly in this volume that they were purple-dyers.
- 2 Jie lists ninety-nine examples (1994, 90–91). For names found only in Hieroglyphic texts, see Savaş (1998, 172–224).
- 3 ^{URU}*ga-az-pa-as*, *KUB* 19.10.I.21; *RGTC* 6.1: 204, *NH* 269.
- 4 Kretschmer and Locker (1963, 3, 75, 329). Note that all –βοϝ words listed by Kretschmer and Locker are oxytone, while Λέσβοϝ is paroxytone.
- 5 *HZL* 274, §364, A.AB.BA, “Meer;” *CHD* 4, 135, *parranda*, “across, over.”
- 6 *RGTC* 6, 27; Garstang and Gurney (1959, 97), Hawkins (1998, 23).
- 7 Even Spencer (1995b), a discussion of Lesbos’ Anatolian connections, mentions only briefly the Hittite texts that name *Lazpa* (274 and n. 24), and does not explore their content.

- 8 The standard history of Lesbos used in the island's schools (Tzimis et al. 2001) makes no reference to the Hittites.
- 9 Thanks to Craig Melchert for advice on both Luwian and Hittite phonetics.
- 10 For the preservation of ancient place names on Lesbos, see Mantzouranis (1951).
- 11 Lesbos has places named prosaically after pear trees (Ἀχλαδερή), a plain (Πεδή), a rock (Πέτρα), and small springs (Πηγαδάκια).

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