

THE LIQUIDATION OF AN ASSYRIAN ROYAL ESTATE

Frederick Mario Fales, Udine

As is well known, Neo-Assyrian epistolary texts were in the main discovered - within palaces and other public buildings - as lots of "incoming" correspondence, with the ruler as the (almost exclusive) addressee; while "outgoing" messages authored by the Sargonid kings themselves are few and far in between, and presumably represent chance survivals of copies or preliminary drafts drawn up by the palace Chancery.¹ Of the 160 or so letters by the hand of the Assyrian kings - from Tiglathpileser III to Assurbanipal² - very few have, in point of fact, to do with administrative matters *strictu sensu*. A welcome exception is represented by the document CT 53, 930+, which bears an order to a subordinate regarding the liquidation of an estate belonging to the king and its assets.

The text was originally published as two separate entries (CT 53, nos. 930 and 967), and subsequently joined by the team of the *State Archives of Assyria* project, directed by Prof. Simo Parpola;³ I am indeed grateful to the project and its director for having kindly sent me, upon request, part of the transliteration of the joined text, which I reproduce with minor alterations, together with my translation and comments.

CT 53, 930+967:

Obverse

1. [a-bat LUGAL a-na 1.x-]I²-i
2. [DI-mu a-a-ši Š]A²-{ka²}
3. [lu DÜG-ka an-nu-ri]g [1.PAB-bu-u]
4. [ina UGU-hi-k]a il-]a-ka
5. [ár-hiš KA]SKAL ina GİR.ii-MEŠ-šú [()]

¹ On this subject, Cf. now Fales 2001, 116-133, 315-318.

² The count follows Watanabe 1985; but the number might need some reduction, in view of possible joins between fragments, as in the case treated here.

³ In the original publication, the faces of the fragment CT 53, 930 were copied in inverse order. The sequence of the fragments on the joined text may now be reconstructed as follows: *Obverse 1-8* = CT 53, 930, Rev. 1-8. *Obverse 9-Lower Edge 27, and Rev. 1-16* = CT 53, 967; *Reverse 17-Upper Edge 25* = CT 53, 930, Obv. 1'-Edge 10'.

6. [šu-kun] ku-zi-pi-pi-ia ku-zi-pi
 7. [ša x x] DUMU-MEŠ-ia ŠIG-MEŠ
 8. [x x x] ŠE.GIŠ.Ì-MEŠ GEŠTIN *mít-hu*[*t*] [[*ru*]]
 9. [x x x x] {*ni*}-MEŠ AN[ŠE.KUR-MEŠ]
 10. [ANŠE.ku-*d*]in-MEŠ ANŠE.gam-mal-MEŠ
 11. [TA ŠÀ(-b)] 20 MA.NA KUG.UD [[x]]
 12. [a-š]² *si-i at*[[x]] *tas-ha*
 13. ŠE.ZÍZ-MEŠ ŠE.PAD-MEŠ ŠE.GIG-MEŠ
 14. GIŠ.KIN.GEŠTIN-MEŠ *ki-i* KI.LAM
 15. *mu-nu a-na* LÚ.TUR-šú
 16. *dí-ni e-gír-tú is-ša* [[*ša*]]
 17. *mu-ru-uq*: UDU.NITA-MEŠ *a-šur*:
 18. NUMUN² ERIN BAD-MEŠ *kur-ru* [[x x]]x
 19. *ad-ri ša* LÚ.NU.GIŠ.SAR-MEŠ
 20. *a-mur ina* ŠÀ-bi GIŠ.LE.U₅.UM
 21. *šu-*ṭur* ina* ŠU.ii 1.IM.4-*i*
 22. *še-bi-la* 1.PAB-bu-u
 23. LÚ.ENGAR-MEŠ LÚ.SIPA-MEŠ
 24. [L]Ú.NU.GIŠ.SAR-MEŠ
- Lower Edge
25. *is-si-šú lu-bi-la-ni*
 26. NÍG.ŠID-MEŠ-šú-nu *lu-up-pi-šu*
 27. ŠE.PAD-MEŠ *ša ina pu-u-hi*

Reverse

1. *ta-dí-na-ni pu-ru-us*
2. *šup-ra a-na-ku ina* ŠU.ii LÚ.EN-pi-qít-tú-ia
3. *lu-ba-²i-a* TA IGI UN-MEŠ-ia
4. *i-sa-ap²-[p]-qa* *at²-ta qa-la-ka*

(remainder [Rev. 5-25] deals with other matters, and is partially fragmentary;⁴ notice the mention of Harran in l. 19 = CT 53, 930, 3).

⁴ The transliteration of this part is as follows: Reverse 5. *a-na mi-nim-ma* 1. *la-²qe²-pu* / 6. *e-pu-uš mu-uk* LÚ *kab-su* / 7. *rad-dí-u šu-ú* TÜR-MEŠ / 8. *an la² ma-ki-u-tu* x[x] / 9. *at-ta ina* ŠÀ *dā²-te-ka tas-sa-[ka]* *ā² ša ad* / 10. *man-nu-ma* *lu² la² i² sa²-ma* [x]-a / 11. *lu² la² ip-par-ri-hi* ina U[GU²]-ka / 12. *la e-mar* ina URU.ŠE-MEŠ-ti UDU/*lu²* / 13. [x x x L]Ú.ENGAR-[M]EŠ *a-mur* / 14. [x x x x]x [x] *ša KUR BE PA-ú-ni* / 15. [x x x LÚ.SIP]A-MEŠ ŠÀ-bu *ša-āš-kin* / 16. [x x *dul*]-a-ku-nu *ep-ša a-na-ku* / 17. [x x x x L]UGAL *a-mah-har* / 18. [x x x x]ni *su tú ma i²* URU.KASKAL / 19. [x x x k]a DINGIR-MEŠ-ia *a-pal-lāh re-eš É-ia* / 20. [x x x x]-pi *ina UGU-hi MÍ-MEŠ* / 21. [ša x x]-ni [ā]š-pu-rak-kan-ni-ni / 22. [x x x x] *ā² x² ta-ta-ma-a-ra* / 23. [x x x x x x]-ra *ina É* / 24. [x x x x x x]-bi *ma-a* / Upper Edge 25. [x x x x x x] *al-ka-ni*.

¹“Message of the king to*š*. I am well. May your heart be glad. Now, Ahabû will come to you. ⁵Quickly, favor him. Collect my clothing and that... of my sons, (as well as) the wool, the..., the olive oil and the wine. I have (already) ... and taken out the... of horses, ¹⁰mules, camels, for (š) 20 minas of silver. The emmer, the barley, the wheat, the grapes - ¹⁵value them according to the market price, and sell (them) to his son. (Any) debt-note: take it up and smash it. Count the sheep; deduct the... lambs(š)²⁰Inspect the threshing-floors of the gardeners, and write them down on a wooden writing-board; send it to me care of Amurrî. Ahabû should take the farmers, the shepherds, and the gardeners ²⁵with him. Their accounts should be settled; (but) ^{Rev.1}leave out the barley that was given (to them) as a loan. Write me. I hold you responsible before my official. He is empowered vis-à-vis my people. Why are you silent?”

Notes.

Obv. 5-6: KA]SKAL *ina* GÌR.ii-MEŠ-šú [šu-kun]. This expression (lit. “to place/lay a road at the feet of PN”) is idiomatic, and is usually understood as indicating a motion of aid, help, encouragement, especially when the adjective *ṭābu* accompanies *harrānu*. Thus, e.g., Parpola 1983, 103 (“to prepare a fine career for someone”), Reiner, ANET Supplement 94 (“to smooth someone’s way in every respect”) and the present author (1983, 248, “to favor someone greatly”), with Neumann 1997, 290 (“jemanden vollständig befriedigen”), 1997a; *contra*, Deller 1986, 24, with a more pronounced nuance, “jemanden aus der Klemme helfen”. In the present case, similarly to KAV 112, 14-15 -where the expression is followed by the parallel and explicative *la tuparrakšunu*, “do not obstruct them”- the meaning should be clearly sought in the sphere of an outright favor and support that the recipient of the letter is required to provide to Ahabû - possibly a local man, since “his son” is also on the premises (Obv. 15-16).

Obv.8. From this point onward, and in various occasions (marked by double square brackets), the text presents erasures and/or reduplications of signs at the end of lines.⁵ Exchanges of shapes⁶ and

⁵ Notice also, in the section not treated here, Rev. 21-22: *i-na UGU-hi MÍ-MEŠ am-ma-te* / [ša x x]x-ni [ā]š-pu-rak-kan-ni [[ni]].

⁶ E.g. *a-na mi-nim-ma* (LA) in Rev. 5.

omissions of signs⁷ are also attested. All these features might indicate the nature of the document as a first draft of a royal message, which was subsequently sent out.

Obv. 9. The first item in this line should either be (a) a further type of animal or (b) a form of economic activity/movement (or even a type of text recording the latter), concerning the animals named next, and constituting the subject of *attasha* in l. 12. On the latter count, I tentatively suggest either *pirrā]ni* or *tuppā]ni* as possibilities

Obv. 12. The SAA transliteration shows different values for some of the signs of this line. I understand two verbs in the perfect, 1st pers. sg., to be present here: while *attasha* (**nasāhu*), though marred by an erasure, is clear at the end, the previous verb, *]-x-si-i*, lends itself to various possible integrations (I have tried out **šasū* in the translation).

Obv. 14. In GIŠ.KIN.GEŠTIN-MEŠ, the plural sign is fitted in slightly above the previous and following signs.

Obv. 16. *di-ni*. No generous royal donation should here be viewed: since the quantities of the different forms of produce are to be valued at the current (and probably local) *mahīru*, this imperative form must be taken as an abridgment of the fuller expression *ana kaspi nadānu*, “to sell”.

Obv. 18. This line seems to require additional collation: but it might on the other hand represent the result of a further scribal mix-up (cfr. above). In view of the order to “inspect the sheep” given in the preceding line, the first sign here might be understood as <UDU.>NIM, “spring lamb”, while the following alleged ERIN might be formed by a component SIG, “wool”, plus sign(s) difficult to interpret at present. I take the verb as *karū* D, for which a MA meaning “to deduct, subtract” is attested (cfr. Most recently CDA, 150a). The imperative form *kur-ru*, with regular metathesis of syllables, is present e.g. in SAA XIII, 161:9’ (see also Hämeen-Anttila 2000, 38).

Obv. 21. For the reading of the name 1.IM.4-*i* as Amurri, cf. PNA I/1, 108a-b.

Obv. 26. NÍG.ŠID-MEŠ-šú-nu *lu-up-pi-šu*. A similar use of the D-stem of **epāšu* with *nikkassē* is to be found e.g. in ABL 347: 10; there appears to be no significant variation of meaning on the better-attested parallel clause with the main stem.

Rev. 2-3. *a-na-ku ina ŠU.ii LÚ.EN-pi-qit-tú-ia / lu-ba-’i-a*. The expression *ina qāti/qātā bu’ū* (lit. “to search in the hand(s) of somebody”) is a further well-known idiomatic NA clause, with the meaning “to hold somebody responsible, to call somebody to account”

(cfr. CAD B, 364b-365a). It is construed with the subject -the nature of which may be of human, divine, or even symbolic, such as the *adē*, “loyalty oath” (cfr. Watanabe 1987, 20-21)- at the beginning, and the object indicated by a name of sorts, or a pronominal suffix appended to *qātu*. The present case is of some interest, because it is a rare (if not unique) occurrence of the clause in the 1st person singular, with the king indicating himself as the subject -thus implicitly proving that the idiom referred, at least in part, to a concrete circumstance of royal evaluation and judgment of the subordinate’s actions, through a royal “official” (unidentified as such).

Rev. 4. *i-sa-ap²-[pā]-qa*. The verb is attested only in NA and very rare; the only other quoted occurrence in CAD S, 161a (ABL 868:Rev. 2) does not seem to contradict the N/LB lexical equivalences *sapaqu* = *danānu* given *ibid.*, thus suggesting a possible modification of meaning on its West Semitic (Egyptian Aramaic, Biblical Hebrew) counterpart **špq*, “to suffice”.

Comments. The letter has long been recognized as of royal origin (cfr. Parpola, CT 53, p. 14, regarding the main fragment, no. 967; Watanabe 1985, 148-149, regarding both fragments), but the identity of the king still appears uncertain to some extent. In the text-publication, the main fragment was attributed to the reigns of Sargon or Sennacherib; but in the more recent *Prosopography of the Neo-assyrian Empire* (PNA I/1, 58a, 108a), the letter is considered to belong to the reign of Esarhaddon. The latter identification is, in fact, quite plausible: the mention of the king’s “sons” (Obverse 7) is relatively frequent under this king.

But there is possibly more to this matter. The particularity of our text is, that it patently refers to the various procedures for the liquidation of a *latifundum* belonging to the king - i.e. forming part of his personal administrative endowment, to which the contemporaneous expression *bīt bēli* refers, in one of its multiple meanings⁸. Now, a further letter in which it is described how the agricultural possessions of the Royal Family had been placed in some jeopardy on the part of the local administrators of the province of Guzana is ABL 633+ (=CT 53, 46)⁹: and this text may be surely dated to the age of Esarhaddon. In view of the fact that our letter seems to refer to the city of Harran toward the end of the Reverse, it may well be asked whether some chronological

⁷ E.g. possibly *an <ma>-la ma-ki-u-tu* in Rev. 8.

⁸ Cf. Fales 2000; 2001, 213 and *passim*.

⁹ Cf. for the moment Fales, CLNA no. II. 12.

and contextual connection with the circumstances of the message concerning Guzana should be viewed -perhaps as two pieces of evidence relevant to a general loss of prestige and power of the Assyrian monarch in the north-western part of Mesopotamia, as preparation for the uprising which had its center in the city of the Moon-God in 670 B.C.¹⁰

True, our letter provides no real intimations of a crisis, whether political or administrative, at hand. However, a certain urgency on the part of the king in liquidating his assets may be gained from specific hints (the adverb *arhiš*, "quickly", to be restored in Obv. 5, accompanying the request that the incoming Ahabû may be supported upon his arrival; the abandonment of all outstanding credits of the royal estate in Obv. 16-17) and from the long chain of imperatives (*mithur*, *munu*, *išša*, *murūq*, *ašur*, *kurru*, *amur*, *šutur*, *šebila*, *purus*, *šupra*), relevant to a number of different administrative tasks, that forms the backbone of the royal order to the unidentified subordinate ...*l*.

For the rest, the interest of this letter lies essentially in the glimpse it allows us to cast on the "landscape" of a royal *latifundum*, both as regards its productive assets and its dependent personnel ("my people" as described in Rev. 3). The size of the king's estate is, unfortunately, not given; but we should not be far off the mark in assessing its size with an eye to the cadastral lists of land granted to the major officials of the empire in the late 7th century, which run into the hundreds, when not in the thousands, of hectares: cfr. e.g. SAA XII, 27.

The first item that the recipient is asked to recover are the woolen cloaks (*kuzippu*) prepared for the king and his sons: this piece of information may be set against the attestation of "weavers of multi-colored fabrics" (LÚ.UŠ.BAR-GÜN) alongside fully agricultural personnel in the cadastral schedule SAA XII, 27: 24. In the same breath, wool (obviously in a raw state) is mentioned, with olive oil and wine: the latter staples, taken together, suggest again to place the text in a Northwestern Mesopotamian locale, where both a residual

¹⁰ In PNA I/1, 58a, the man expected to deal in practice with the liquidation, Ahabû, is hypothetically identified with a village-manager from the region of Rašappa, known from another text. The suggested professional qualification is a concrete possibility, since - as seen above - the man was a resident of the area, together with his son. The suggested locale is, on the other hand, more doubtful, in view of the fact that the name is very frequent in NA, and due to the mention of Harran later on in the text (albeit probably with reference to other matters).

Mediterranean climatic influence (required for the olive oil) and a hilly environment (functional for the wine) are available.¹¹

Next come the animals on which dues have already been drawn(?): horses, mules, and dromedaries. For the latter, we may again turn to SAA XII, 27 (Obv. 21-22) which mentions a number of "camel-drivers" (LÚ.UŠ-*gam-ma*-MEŠ) attached to the estate of the chief eunuch Nabû-šarru-ušur. The three main forms of cereal produce - emmer (*kibtu*), barley (*kurummutu*), and wheat (*kunāšu*) - followed by wine are then mentioned, with the ensuing order that the relevant quantities be calculated according to the current exchange-rate (*mahiru*),¹² and thereupon sold to Ahabû's son.

The planned operation is relentless, as may be seen, in the liquidation of all the estate's assets - particularly in those areas which could bring "hard cash" to the royal Treasury; but things do not stop here. The estate had, in time, acted as creditor of barley (-seed) - as also implied later on in the text - but perhaps also of other commodities, from silver to animals,¹³ for the benefit of small-scale neighboring farmers. The king states next that he wants to hear no more of outstanding sums owed: the relevant letters of credit (such is one of the main specialized meanings of the NA term *egirtu*)¹⁴ are, according to well-established custom, to be taken up and smashed outright.¹⁵

After the obscure passage of Obv. 18 - possibly relevant to the previously issued order of taking an exact count of the ovids of the estate (l. 17) - we come to issues regarding the economic treatment of the dependent personnel. The recipient of the letter is first of all asked to "inspect" the quantity of threshing-floors "of the gardeners", and thereupon to record the information on a *le'u*, a board of wood covered with wax, on which messages and data (both in cuneiform and in Aramaic alphabetic script) were often written in this age.¹⁶ The information given here is interesting on three counts: in the first place, because the verb *amāru* appears here to have the same technical meaning as in the Harran Census (SAA XI, nos. 201-220), where it refers to the

¹¹ Cf. Malul 1996, for the spatial diffusion of the olive plant in the Ancient Near East; and Milano 1994 for the geographical and cultural "borders" between wine and beer.

¹² On the notion of *mahiru* and its implications, cf. Fales 1996, 20-26.

¹³ Cf. Radner 1997 for the commodities which could be given out on loan in NA contracts.

¹⁴ Cf. Fales 2001, 208-211, 334-335, with previous bibl. and discussion.

¹⁵ Cf. Postgate 1976, 32-33; Radner 1997, 74-78, on this practice.

¹⁶ As is well known, one of these writing-boards in bone was recovered in a well at Nimrud (Cf. Parpola 1983a, 2, with previous bibl.).

de visu appraisal of property that lay behind the making out of the Census itself (cfr. e.g. SAA XI 201, II 30: "57 goats, inspected"). Secondly, the expression "threshing-floors of the gardeners" obviously refers to private property of the dependent personnel, albeit lying within the royal estate; this again recalls the Harran Census, where a few assets were recorded as *ša ramanišu(nu)*, "of their own", with reference to the tied rural personnel, thus constituting exceptions to the remainder of the property which went back to a number of middle-to-high level local officials (cfr. SAA XI, 167a, s.v. *ramanu*). And finally, the royal order to record such data on a wooden writing-board upholds previous evidence on this presumably important, but fatally lost, contemporary medium of writing and communication, to which many more cadastral (and generally administrative) records could have been committed.

The second procedure envisaged by the king regarding the dependent personnel is to transfer all the units - farmers, shepherds, gardeners - to Ahabû himself, i.e. to tie them to the personal *bitu* of the friendly local person. It may be noted that this is the opposite process of what is usually described in letters of the time: the outright theft of dependent personnel from one farm - usually tied, in one way or another, to the king - to another, belonging to a local official. Cfr. e.g. CT 53, 46, Rev. 20-21: "He (=Tarašî, the scribe of Guzana) has (either) dispersed the servants of the Queen, of the Crown Prince, and of the estate of the Magnates as exempted men, (or) given them over to the estate of Aššur-zeru-iddina".

The last action concerning the dependent workers of the estate is to proceed to a settlement of their accounts. This was the normal function of a *rab nikkassî*, "chief of accounts", who could even have been attached on the farm on a permanent basis (thus e.g. we learn again from CT 53, 46, Rev. 13-15, that "while Aššur-zeru-iddina was (in Niniveh) with the sons of the king, the son of Tarašî (made) himself chief of accounts"). The details of the "accounts" themselves are unspecified: but it is easy to surmise, from what comes next, that the basic item involved was a calculation of the length of time which any dependent still had to serve as tied agricultural or pastoral worker, in relation to the monetary value of the debt which had caused his present condition. On the other hand, as seen above, the king had, in liquidating his estate, no further interest in claiming overdue short-range loans which the said worker could have asked for, in relation to the pursuit of his own, minute, agricultural activities (cfr. the "threshing-floors" above), and which were recorded as such on individual *egirtu*s; thus the recipient of the letter is asked to exclude from the record of each worker's overall indebtedness "the barley that was given (to them) as a loan (*ina pūhi*)". This passage is

particularly interesting in relation to the different translations which the noun *pūhu* finds in NA legal documents ("exchange; loan"); it is clear here, with J.N. Postgate,¹⁷ that a true loan (*Darlehen*), implying the exchange of a commodity for an *egirtu* recording the debt, is the main meaning of the clause *ina pūhi nadānu/našû*.

In sum, the letter CT 53, 930+967 provides an interesting - and relatively unique - possibility of casting a look on the various and interrelated factors that formed the economic and juridical backbone of a major estate in 7th century Assyria. In the hope that the above presentation and discussion will stimulate future research on "land and people in Assyria", I conclude dedicating my essay to the dear memory of Fiorella Imparati, who accomplished very much for the furthering of Ancient Near Eastern historical studies in Italy and abroad, and whom we all miss immensely.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- CDA Black, J.- George, A.- Postgate, N. (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, Wiesbaden 2000
- CLNA Fales, F.M., *Cento lettere neo-assire*, Venezia 1983
- Deller
1986 Deller, K., "Ein Assyrier tilgt Schulden", «Oriens Antiquus» 25 (1986), 21-27
- Fales
1983 Fales, F.M., "Studies on Neo-Assyrian Texts II: 'Deeds and Documents' from the British Museum", ZA 73 (1983), 232-254
1996 Fales, F.M., "Prices in Neo-Assyrian Sources", SAAB X (1996), 11-35,*1-*16

¹⁷ Postgate 1976, 37.

- 2000 Fales, F.M., "*bit bēlī*: an Assyrian Institutional Concept", in Rova, E. (Ed.), *Patavina Orientalia Selecta*, Padova 2000, 231-249
- 2001 Fales, F.M., *L'impero assiro. Storia e amministrazione*, Roma-Bari 2001
- Hämeen-Anttila
2000 Hämeen-Anttila, J., *A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar*, Helsinki 2000
- Malul
1996 Malul, M., "*ze/irtu (se/irdu)*: The Olive Tree and Its Products in Ancient Mesopotamia", in Eitam, D.- Heltzer, M. (Eds.), *Olive Oil in Antiquity*, Padova 1996, 91-100
- Milano
1994 Milano, L., "Vino e birra in Oriente. Confini geografici e confini culturali", in Milano, L. (Ed.), *Drinking in Ancient Societies*, Padova 1994, 421-440
- Neumann
1997a Neumann, H., "Gläubiger oder Schuldner? Anmerkungen zu einem neuassyrischen Privatbrief", in *Ana šadī Labnani lu allik (Fs. W. Rölli)*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997, 281-293
- 1997b Neumann, H., "Nochmals zu *harrāna/harrānu* (bzw. *hūlu*) *ana/ina šēpē ša PN šakānu*", NABU 1997, no. 30
- Parpola
1983 Parpola, S., *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*, II, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1983
- 1983a Parpola, S., "Assyrian library records", JNES 42 (1983), 1-29
- Postgate
1976 Postgate, J.N., *Fifty Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents*, Warminster 1976
- Radner
1997 Radner, K., *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden*, Helsinki 1997
- Watanabe
1985 Watanabe, K., "Die Briefe der neuassyrischen Könige", AcSum 7 (1985), 139-156
- 1987 Watanabe, K., *Die adē-Vereidigung anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons*, Berlin 1987

TAPIKKA: UN'À MARCA DI FRONTIERA. NOTE SULLA STRUTTURA TERRITORIALE ED ECONOMICA

Massimo Forlanini, Milano

La scoperta di un archivio di tavolette cuneiformi hittite nel sito di Maşat Höyük (l'antica Tapikka) ha inaugurato una serie di sorprendenti ritrovamenti nelle rovine di alcuni centri provinciali hittiti; ad essa infatti è seguita quella del ben più ricco archivio (e biblioteca religiosa) di Ortaköy (l'antica Šapinuwa) e più recentemente di alcune tavolette a Kuşaklı (l'antica Šarišša),¹ mentre si spera che il rinvenimento di un frammento di tavoletta nel grande sito archeologico di Kayalıpınar possa preludere alla scoperta del principale centro del "Paese Alto", la città sacra di Šamuḫa.²

¹ Allo stato attuale della documentazione non ritengo che esistano fondati motivi per mettere in discussione le tre identificazioni, proposte rispettivamente da Sedat Alp, Aygül Süel e Gernot Wilhelm (cfr. Forlanini 1999, 308-400). Fra gli studiosi non è stata però ancora raggiunta l'unanimità, cfr. Houwink ten Cate (1998, 169, 172, 178), che sembra invece preferire una soluzione diversa, per la quale porrebbe a Ortaköy la città hittita di Zithara, dove furono portate le tavole del rituale *itkalzi* di Šapinuwa, e a Maşat la stessa Šapinuwa, mentre Tapikka dovrebbe esser cercata più a nord, verso il confine del territorio controllato dagli hittiti. Occorre però ricordare che, senza ridiscutere il complesso degli indizi già adottati, l'inventario KUB XLVIII 105+ (v. sotto alla nota 4) elenca, come località della provincia di Tapikka alcuni centri che ricorrono continuamente nei testi di Maşat e che non sembrano invece essersi trovati nelle immediate vicinanze di Šapinuwa. Una discussione sulle proposte avanzate in passato dai diversi studiosi costituirebbe una ripetizione di altri miei lavori, mi limito quindi in generale all'esame dei contributi più recenti, riferendomi a lavori precedenti solo se necessario per l'argomentazione; il lettore potrà sempre riferirsi a RGTC 6/1-2 per tutti i toponimi hittiti e allo studio di Alp 1991, 6-47, per quelli che compaiono nei testi di Maşat. Ricordo inoltre che la grafia usata per i toponimi è una resa meccanica in *scriptio continua* della traslitterazione delle più frequenti grafie cuneiformi; ciò spiega le oscillazioni nella qualità delle occlusive (dovute all'uso scribale e senza valore fonetico). La resa convenzionale (solo consonanti sorde non geminate) usata da del Monte è più corretta ma fa perdere alcune informazioni legate alla grafia, mentre un tentativo di trascrizione approssimativamente fonetica (Tabika, Sabinuva, ecc.) avrebbe un valore solo parziale per l'impossibilità di determinare il valore delle consonanti iniziali e non sarebbe condivisa da tutti gli studiosi.

² Per la prospezione regionale e per il sito di Kayalıpınar cfr. Ökse 1998, e una comunicazione della medesima studiosa ("Hethitisches Territorium am oberen