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The Hittite Word *talla-*

Franca Pecchioli Daddi

In the term *talla(i)*⁻¹, which occurs quite frequently in Hittite texts, J. Friedrich² recognized two different words: a noun used to describe a container of refined oils or perfumes (“Gefäß für Feinöl”) and another term present, in his opinion, in the votive text KUB 15.3 I 20 and in the descriptions of cult statues (Bildbeschr. 2 IV 12, 3 II 14), for which the scholar had not come forth with any interpretative proposals. This distinction, again echoed by J. Tischler³ and C. Melchert⁴, does not seem necessary either from the point of view of form (it is a noun with a stem in *-a/i-*⁵ attested in both common and neuter gender in Hittite and also Luwian) or, as we shall see, from its meaning. Cf. the following tables for attestations:

1) Hittite⁶

Sg.	Nom. c.	<i>ta-al-la-aš</i>	KUB 38.1 IV 12
	Acc. c.	𐎶 <i>tal-la-an</i>	KUB 15.3 I 20 (2)
	N-A. n.	𐎶 ^{DIB} <i>ta-al-la</i>	KUB 38.3 II 14' ⁷
		^{DUG} <i>tal-la-i</i>	KUB 41.11 rev. 15'
		^{GIS} <i>tal-la-i</i>	KUB 29.4 III 32, 40, IV 23
		^{DUG} <i>tal-la-a-i</i>	KBo 7.44 III 8'; KUB 32.137 II 10

1 The term is reported in the dictionaries of J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch. Kurzgefaßte kritische Sammlung der Deutungen hethitischer Wörter*, Heidelberg 1952–54, p. 206 (= HW); id., 1. *Ergänzungsheft*, Heidelberg 1957, p. 19; H. Kronasser, *Etymologie der hethitischen Sprache*, Wiesbaden 1962–1966, p. 207, p. 220 (= EHS); J. Tischler, *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*, Innsbruck 1977ss., vol. III/8, p. 56 (= HEG).

2 HW, p. 206.

3 HEG III/8, p. 56.

4 *Cuneiform Luwian Lexicon*, Chapel Hill 1993, p. 203: “Also obscure is *tallaš* at XXXVIII 1 iv 12”.

5 For this convention, cf. H. A. Hoffner – C. Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, Winona Lake 2008, p. 87 (= *Grammar*).

6 The form *ta-al-la-an-na* of KUB 26.43 obv. 25 = 50 obv. 28 does not seem to enter among the possible attestations of this term.

7 Or a neuter plural if the open wedge that precedes the term must be interpreted as a numeral (10) and not a gloss sign; the latter being a preferable interpretation, in my opinion, for the comparison with KUB 15.3.

		^{GIS} <i>tal-la-a-i</i>	KBo 15.29 III 30'
		<i>tal-la-a-i</i>	KUB 12.1 IV 28'; KUB 32.76, 19; KUB 42.42 IV 9'
		<i>t]</i> <i>al-la-a-i</i>	KBo 35.206, 15'
Gen.		^{GIS} <i>tal-la-ya-aš</i>	KUB 29.4 IV 25
D.-L.		^{GIS} <i>tal-la-i</i>	KUB 12.23+ III 6'; KUB 29.4 III 24, 31
	Abl.	<i>tal-la-a-i-az</i>	KUB 15.34 I 31
		<i>tal-la-a-ya-a[z</i>	KUB 15.33+ I 31
Pl.	Nom. c.	<i>ta-al-li-eš</i>	KUB 39.7+ IV 21
	Acc. c.	<i>ta-al-lu-uš</i>	KBo 39.290 obv. 9'
		<i>tal-lu-uš</i>	IBoT 3.1 rev. 78', 81'
		<i>tal-li-uš</i>	KBo 18.120 obv. 4', left edge 4; IBoT 3.1 rev. 79'
Incomplete attestations			
		<i>ta-al-l[a-</i>	KUB 54.48, 11'
		^{DUG} <i>tal-la[-</i>	KUB 20.35 III 8'
		^{GIS} <i>tal-l[a-</i>	KUB 42.62, 5'
		<i>tal-la[-</i>	Privat 73 I 7

2) Luwian⁸

Sg.	D.-L.	[GI] ^š <i>tal-la-i</i>	KUB 35.101 obv. 10'
Pl.	Nom. anim. ⁹	<i>t]</i> <i>al-la-an-zi</i>	KUB 35.110, 2'
	Acc. anim. ¹⁰	^{GIS} <i>ta-la-a-an-za</i>	KBo 7.68(+)69 II 3'

Objects designated with this term are part of the temple furnishings: In fact, a silver *tallaš* is placed in front of the cult image of the goddess Iyaya from the city of Tiura (KUB 38.1¹¹ IV 12) and a <¹² DIB¹³ *talla* completes the image of a male divinity in the village of Zanzišna (KUB 38.3¹⁴ II 14').

⁸ See C. Melchert, *ibid.*

⁹ C. Melchert, *ibid.*, underlines that this “apparent anim. Nom. pl. form ... is incomplete and thus uncertain.”

¹⁰ Cf. J. Tischler, *ibid.*; C. Melchert, *ibid.*: N.-A.Sg.

¹¹ HG Nr. 2, CTH 501.

¹² The value of the open wedge here is uncertain: a gloss sign or number 10? In my viewpoint, it is preferable to think of the gloss sign, in that it is also documented by another table (KUB 15.3 I 20), while no more than two *talla-* are attested elsewhere.

¹³ For DIB in this context with the meaning of “container”, cf. E. Neu – Ch. Rüster, *Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon*, Wiesbaden 1989, p. 97 (= HZL).

¹⁴ HG Nr. 3, CTH 502.

Furthermore, *talla-* are listed together with other precious objects¹⁵ in inventories that record the contents of a chest (KUB 42.42+ IV⁷ 9¹⁶ [CTH 241.16]: 1^{EN} *tallai Iṣ-ṣ]I*; KUB 42.62, 5¹⁷ [CTH 250]: 1 ^{GIŠ}*tall[ai]*) and in the inventory of cult objects of Manninni (KUB 12.1+ IV 28' [CTH 504.1]¹⁸: 2 *tallai* GUŠKIN).

A ^{DUG}*tallai* is also among the items that make up a typical Hittite dowry (*iwaru*),¹⁹ according to what is indicated in the purification from bestiality ritual contained in the Sammeltafel KUB 41.11 (CTH 456.5)²⁰, published by H. A. Hoffner, *Orient and Occident. Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973, pp. 86–88.

Magic rituals and festivals document the use of such objects during some ceremonies. In a ritual for the foundation of a temple, KUB 32.137+ II 10 [CTH 415]²¹, a ^{DUG}*tallai* is used as a container for refined oil Ì.DÙG.GA, which is poured to consecrate the place of the ritual (*ibid.* 10–12).

The use as a container of Ì.DÙG.GA is also documented for the ^{GIŠ}*tallai* mentioned in the ceremonies on the fifth day of the evocation ritual CTH 481²², “when someone erects the Deity of the Night separately” (text A. KUB 29.4 IV 42–43), where this object, together with fabrics and various foods, is listed among the materials²³ necessary for the evocation (A III 39–41). A particular function is attributed to this object when, at the end of the ritual *tuḫalzi* in the old building (A III 23–24), the woollen symbol *ulīhi* is placed in the ^{GIŠ}*tallai* containing a little refined oil; the ^{GIŠ}*tallai* is then closed and deposited in the new building in a place that is different to that of the divinity (A III 24–33). After the evocation ceremony, it is opened and the refined oil taken from the old building is mixed with water; the walls of the new building are then purified with this liquid (A IV 22–27).

The situation is similar in the description of the evocation ritual for the gods of the cedar CTH 483²⁴, in the passage KUB 15.34 I 30–32: In this case too

15 In KUB 42.42 IV 5'ff. we find laminae of iron and bronze and containers of gold and silver; in KUB 42.62, 2'ff. items of blue clothing.

16 See S. Košak, *Hittite inventory texts (CTH 241–250)*, Heidelberg 1982, p. 58; J. Siegelová, *Hethitische Verwaltungspraxis im Lichte der Wirtschafts- und Inventardokumente*, Prag 1986, p. 469.

17 See S. Košak, *ibid.*, p. 186; J. Siegelová, *ibid.*, p. 531.

18 See S. Košak, *Linguistica* 18 (1978) pp. 99–123; J. Siegelová, *ibid.*, pp. 441–452 (450–451 the passage in question).

19 For this list see also V. Haas, *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica. Ein Beitrag zur Heilkunde im Alten Orient*, Berlin/New York 2003, pp. 441–442 (= *Materia*).

20 The term is present in rev. 15'.

21 G. Kellerman, *Recherches sur les rituels de fondation hittites*, Diss. Paris 1980, pp. 158–191 (for the passage in question, see pp. 166 and 174).

22 For the edition of the text, see now J. Miller, *Studies in the Origins, Development and Interpretation of the Kizzuwatna Rituals*, Wiesbaden 2004, pp. 288–297.

23 A *tallai* Ì.DÙG.GA (l. 19') is also present in the list of materials needed to perform the ritual for the goddess Hepat KUB 32.76, 16'ff. (CTH 706.II.5).

24 For the edition, see V. Haas–G. Wilhelm, *Hurritische und luwische Riten aus Kizzuwatna*,

the *talla* contains the refined oil, which the officiant (here the ^{LÚ}AZU) uses to smear the magical pathway, and the red wool, which is tied to the cedar tree.

In a fragmentary context, a silver *tallai* (l. 15') is mentioned in the ritual for the Stormgod KBo 35.206 (CTH 500)²⁵; note the presence of ^{GIS}ERIN in l. 14'.

As for the festive ceremonies, a *talla* is found mentioned in IBoT 3.1²⁶ rev. 78', 79', 81', where, during the ceremony of drinking the gods "Day (favourable)" (rev. 77') and Malia (rev. 79'), the head of the palace workers presents two *talla*, places them near the king and queen, and then the GAL LÚ.É hands them to the GAL DUMU.É.GAL, GAL *MEŠEDI* and GAL.GEŠTIN (rev. 77'–82'). The sequence is unclear²⁷ in rev. 77'–78' (GAL DUMU.É.GAL 2 *talluš* KUŠ SA₅ ÚR-*ši dai*).

Other occurrences are given in KUB 54.48, 11' (CTH 628), where, in a fragmentary context, a *tall[a]* is placed on the seat ^{GIS}ŠÚ.A, and in the festive ritual for Tešub KUB 20.35 III 8' = KBo 7.44 III 8' (CTH 706.1.A and B), according to which the priest presents the divinity Teyapanti with 1 NINDA.SIG 1^{DUG} *tallai* Ì.DÙG.GA 1 *ḫalwani* KAŠ.GEŠTIN (III 8'–9').

Apart from that, it is worth mentioning ^{NINDA}*talluš* and *talleš* in the rite that unfolds during the night between the 13th and 14th day²⁸ of the royal funeral, after concluding the ritual regarding the feet of the defunct (text A IV 1: *maḫḫan-ma* GÌR^{MES}-*aš karaptari*). On this occasion, during the rite of the *lelḫunda(i)*²⁹ (A IV 15–21 = D obv. 7'–12'), ^{NINDA}*ḫarašpauwanduš*³⁰ ^{NINDA}*talluš* are made and presented to the statue of the defunct: (A IV 17 = D obv. 9'); the ^{NINDA}*ḫarašpauwanduš* are placed on the piles stacked by the fireplace and the officiant exclaims: "Let them be *talleš* for you!". A. Kassian et al.³¹, referring to J. Tischler³², consider *talla-* in this context as a hapax adjective, synonymous with *miu-*, "mild" or similar³³, distinct from the noun *talla-*, and interpret the link ^{NINDA}*ḫarašpauwanduš* ^{NINDA}*talluš* as a hendiadys ("h. loaf[es

Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1974, pp. 180ff.; recently, J. V. G. Trabazo, *Textos religiosos hititas*, Madrid 2002, pp. 571–593.

25 See V. Haas et al., *Corpus der hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler*, I/9, Rom 1998, pp. 137–138, text Nr. 63.

26 CTH 609.1.A. For the edition see V. Haas–M. Wäfler, UF 8, 1976, pp. 88–95.

27 Cf. for this V. Haas, *Materia*, p. 506.

28 Mentioned respectively in the texts D. KBo 39.290 obv. 9' and A. KUB 39.7+ IV 21: see now A. Kassian–A. Korolëv–A. Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual* šalliš waštaiš, Münster 2002, pp. 473–546 (text A), 597–606 (text D). For text A, see H. Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale*, Berlin 1958, pp. 38–47.

29 For this type of offering, present only in the text in question, cf. CHD, L–N, p. 60.

30 See, recent, J. Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*, Berlin/New York/Amsterdam 1984ff., vol. H, pp. 200–201.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 544–545.

32 HEG, III/8, p. 58, s. v. *talli-* "willkommen, angenehm".

33 This interpretation is taken up again also by A. Kloekhorst, *Etymological Dictionary of the Hittite Inherited Lexicon*, Leiden 2008, pp. 818–819 s. v. *talli-* (adj.) "pleasant(?)"; note that in this volume the term *talla-* is not included.

<and> soft loaves”).³⁴ Instead, in my opinion, even in this context we can still see the noun *talla(i)-* used here in apposition and specification of the first term,^{NINDA} *harašpawwanduš*: actually, the *h.* loaves are *talla* made of bread (see further on).

From this rapid excursus, the results therefore show that the term *talla-* denoted an object (at times two objects³⁵) made of different materials (wood: KUB 42.42 IV 9’; KUB 42.62, 5’; KBo 7.68 II 3’; silver: KBo 35.206, 15’; KUB 38.1 IV 12; gold: KUB 12.1+ IV 28’; KUB 35.110, 2’; gold inlaid with lapis lazuli: KUB 15.3 I 20; bread dough: KBo 39.290 obv. 9’; red leather skin(?): IBoT 3.1 rev. 78’) and a clay or wooden container,³⁶ which was probably in the same shape and had to be small since the contents, when indicated, are Ì.DÙG.GA (refined oil or perfume).³⁷

From the testimonies examined so far, no useful elements emerge to let us understand what type of object the *talla(i)-* was. These elements are instead given in two votive texts, KUB 15.3 I 20 and Privat 73 (Touristik) obv. 7, which J. de Roos has published,³⁸ but not linked, and which I think might report the same situation. The two texts register vows of the queen—the first to the goddess NIN.GAL, the second to *IŠTAR* of Lawazantiya—who promises to donate a gold *talla* inlaid with lapis lazuli—a whole *talla*—to obtain for her husband the healing of a “burning (sensation) in his feet,” perhaps from gout or chilblains,³⁹ and then to communicate the news of his recovery to Egypt: KUB 15.3 I 17–21; Touristik obv. 4–8. The identity of structure between the passages in question and the mention in both of Egypt leads me to believe that the fragment Privat (which I have not seen) might contain a different text from the one reported by de Roos, which could be as follows:

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 517.

³⁵ KUB 12.1+ IV 28’; IBoT 3.1 rev. 78’.

³⁶ A generic container, DIB: KUB 38.3 II 14’; a clay container, DUG: KUB 20.35 = KBo 7.44 III 8’; KUB 32.137 II 10; KUB 41.11 rev. 15’; a wooden container, GIŠ: KUB 29.4 *passim*.

³⁷ KUB 15.34 I 31; KUB 20.35 = KBo 7.44 III 8’; KUB 29.4; KUB 32.76, 19’; KUB 32.137 II 10.

³⁸ *Hittitische geloften. Een teksteditie van Hettitische geloften met inleiding*, Diss. Amsterdam 1984, pp. 198–200, 337–339 (KUB 15.3); id., *Hittite Votive Texts*, Istanbul/Leiden 2007, pp. 105–108, 309–311 (= PIHANSt 109); id., in: *Tabularia Hethaeorum. Hethitologische Beiträge Silvin Košak zum 65. Geburtstag*. D. Groddek – M. Zorman (eds.), Dresden 2007, pp. 593–597.

³⁹ For this hypothesis and analysis of the text, see I. Gori, *Malattie e guarigione alla corte ittita*, Diss. Firenze 1997–1998, pp. 126–129.

- Obv. 4 [Ù-TUM MUNUS.LUGAL za-aš-*hi*-ya-wa]-mu ku-iš-ki me-m[i-iš-ki-iz-zi]
- 5 [A-NA ^DIŠTAR ^{URU}La-wa-za-an-t]i-ya-wa-za-kán kiš-a[n ma-al-di]
- 6 [ma-a-an-wa A-NA ^DUTU^{ŠI} e-ni IZI Š]A GÌR^{40MEŠ}-ŠU nu-un-tar-a[š SIG₅-ri]
- 7 [nu-wa A-NA ^DIŠTAR ^{URU}La-wa]-za-an-ti-ya 1 tal-la-[an GUŠKIN]
- 8 [i-ya-mi ... nu A-NA] KUR Mi-iz-ri INIM-an⁴¹ a-š[a-an-ta-an up-pi-an-zi]

Hence in exchange for the healing of Hattušili's malady of his lower limbs, which prevented the sovereign from going to Egypt, the queen promised a gold *talla* with lapis lazuli as a pledge to the deity, specifying that it was a whole *talla*.

Given the correspondence that normally exists between the object of grace required and the ex voto offered to the deity,⁴² it appears entirely reasonable to believe that in this case the gold *talla* was a reproduction of the sovereign's GÌR^{MEŠ}. When the votive tablets are sufficiently complete to allow verification, we will indeed see that the objects pledged to the divinity to obtain the healing of a malady are, as a rule, reproductions in precious materials of the part of the body that is infected or sick: for example in KBo 8.61, 5'-7' and in KUB 56.13 rev. 19'-22', the queen promises two silver eyes for the healing of an eye infection;⁴³ in KUB 15.9 rev. 6'-8', an ear and a gold earring for the healing of an ear infection; in 183/u obv. 6'-8', a silver ear and a gold ear for the healing of an ear infection; in KUB 31.69 rev. 6'-9', a silver year and a silver statue of the king so that he may recover from the illness of the year.⁴⁴ In this case, since it is specified that the *talla* is whole, the term could indicate an object that is in the shape of a lower limb, a sort of "boot leg", i. e. a complete foot with articulation plus the ankle and part of the leg.

talla- could therefore be the term to indicate the lower limb in Hittite and in Luwian; the stem in *-a/i*⁴⁵, the presence of the gloss sign⁴⁶ in KUB 38.3 II 14' and in KUB 15.3 I 20 and the fact that most of the occurrences concern texts from the Kizzuwatna region would seem to suggest a southern origin of

40 Not GÉME or GU as reported by de Roos, PIHANSt 109, p. 309 and n. 823. The three signs are very similar and a rapid reader may easily be confused.

41 Not GIM-an as de Roos, *ibid.* Even in this case it is a matter of signs being very similar.

42 Cf. for ex. KUB 15.1 II 5-10, 25-27, 28-36, 37-41, III 17'-21', 22'-26', 27'-31', IV 18'-22'.

Cf. also KUB 15.28+ IBoT 3.125 II 6'-10' and 1506/u left col. 4'-8'.

43 Cf. also KUB 15.8 obv. 4'-7'.

44 Cf. also 1333/u, 2'-5'.

45 Cf. H. Hoffner - C. Melchert, *Grammar*, pp. 86-87.

46 On the use of the so-called "Glossenkeil" by Hittite scribes, see C. Melchert, in: *Sprachkontakt und Sprachwandel: Akten der XI. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, 17.-23. September 2000, Halle an der Saale*, G. Meiser - O. Hackstein (eds.), Wiesbaden 2005, pp. 445-446.

the word. Indirect confirmation of this hypothesis may come from the phonetic value *ta₆* of the hieroglyphic sign L 82, CRUS.

If this interpretation of the term *talla-* is correct, we must also point out that the use of said object in the rituals had a more meaningful symbolic importance than what has been held up to now. This is true, particularly for the evocation rituals in which the use of the *talla-* could have magically favoured the movement of the divinity,⁴⁷ and for the ritual of royal funerals in which, on completion of the rites regarding the feet of the defunct, the bread dough in the shape of *talla* is transposed magically by means of fire and hence must be the *talla* (plural) of the defunct.

If the interpretation proposed is reasonable and *talla-* indicates, anatomically, the lower limb and, in figurative way, the objects of various materials made in the same shape that are often used as containers, then the hypothesis accepted so far⁴⁸—which sees this word as a Kulturwort derived from the Accadian *tallu(m)*, in turn derived from Sumerian, which would designate a container in the Mesopotamian area of about 10 litres (too big for a perfume vase!)—no longer appears convincing. In this case, I think, it is simply a matter of assonance and not a possible etymology.

Indeed, it is more plausible, from a semantic and linguistic point of view, to think of a possible connection with the Latin *tālus*,⁴⁹ from which the Italian “tallone” (heel), a term that designates the same part of the body as seen by the Hittite *talla-*, for which no satisfactory comparisons have yet been put forward.

In this case, it might have something to do with an Indo-European lexicon term which has left its testimony in Hittite and Latin.

47 On the reverse, in the ritual CTH 481, A III 32–33, the *talla-* which symbolically has favoured the passage of the deity from the old to the new temple, is placed here in a separate place from the deity, probably to prevent the latter from going away again.

48 See J. Tischler, HEG III/8, p. 56, with bibliographic references.

49 Cf. A. Ernout – A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine* 2, Paris 1959, p. 675; A. Walde, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, Heidelberg 1965, p. 645; M. de Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and other Italic Languages*, Leiden/Boston 2008, pp. 605–606.