

OBSERVATIONS ON A LETTER FROM MAŞAT-HÖYÜK

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Letter HKM 52

Some of the information contained in the letters of Maşat¹, the ancient city of Tapikka², concerning Hittite administration in the provinces of the kingdom, is included in letter Mşt 75/57 (HKM 52), a document which has already been analyzed by S. Alp in an interesting article³. I add here some further observations, which I wish to dedicate to the memory of the illustrious scholar E. Bilgiç.

This document, whose provenance will be discussed shortly, comprises a principal letter sent by Hattusili, probably the noted scribe of the Hittite Middle Kingdom⁴, to Īimuili, *BĒL MADGALTİ*⁵ in Maşat, and a supplementary letter (or *postscriptum*) written by another well-known scribe, Tarḫunmiya, again to Īimuili.

1. See in particular the important monograph by S. Alp, *Hethitische Briefe aus Maşat-Höyük (=HBM)*, Ankara 1991; for copies of the documents from the excavations at Maşat, see S. Alp, *Hethitische Keilschrifttafeln aus Maşat-Höyük (=HKM)*, Ankara 1991. For bibliographical abbreviations in the present article I have followed J. Friedrich-A. Kammenhuber, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*² (=HW²), Heidelberg 1975 ff., and *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (=CHD)*, Chicago 1980 ff.
2. See S. Alp, HBM 42 f.
3. *Gedenkschrift v. Schuler* 107-113; see also the interesting article by G. Beckman in *Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Hittitologia (=Atti II C. I.H.)*, Pavia 1995, 26, and also S. De Martino-F. Imparati, in *Atti II C. I. H.* 112.
4. See S. Alp, HBM 58 f.; J. Klinger, *ZA* 85 (1995) 88 ff.
5. Provincial governor: literally "lord of the watchplace". On Īimuili see S. Alp, HBM 59-62; R. Beal, *THeth.* 20 (1992), pages cited in the *Index of Personal Names*, 567, s.v. Īimuili *BĒL MADGALTİ*; J. Klinger, art. cit. 85 f. 91.

From the formulary adopted in the letters we may assume that *Ḥattušili* was a functionary of the same rank as *Ḥimuili*, since the former addresses the latter with the term “brother”. *Tarḥunmiya*, on the other hand, must have been of inferior rank to *Ḥimuili*, since the former addresses the latter as “lord”, both in the heading as well as in the course of the letter, and refers to himself as “son”⁶. *Tarḥunmiya*’s subordinate position is also inferred by the tone of the supplementary letter here under examination.

Ḥattušili, and in the *postscriptum* *Tarḥunmiya*, address *Ḥimuili* once again about a matter they have already written repeatedly, namely, damages brought to bear on the “house” of *Tarḥunmiya*, located in the administrative district of *Ḥimuili*, by “men of the district” and “men of the town” and the imposition of the duties *šahhan* and *luzzi* by “men of the town” (see below). The fact that the matter in question has protracted for some time is confirmed by references to it in other letters from *Mašat*⁷, and by the use in this specific document of various verbs in the iterative⁸.

The scribal circle⁹ which *Tarḥunmiya* belonged to must have been under the control of *Ḥattušili*; this is clear from the interest which the latter shows in the problems of *Tarḥunmiya*, as well as from the already mentioned difference in rank between the two men.

From the letters concerning the affairs of *Tarḥunmiya* we can reasonably assume that at the time the letters were written he resided, or at least carried out his profession, in the city of *Tapikka* (this depends on the meaning attributed in the letters to the expression “house of *Tarḥunmiya*”; see below), occasionally moving to other localities as requirements dictated¹⁰.

6. Obv. 19, Lower Edge 21, Rev 25, 29, 38, 40; on *Tarḥunmiya* see S. Alp, HBM 95 f.

7. HKM 27 and 60; on this see S. de Martino - F. Imparati, art. cit. 111 f.; to these letters should probably be added also HKM 80: see below.

8. Obv. 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, Rev. 27, 33.

9. Which probably also exercised administrative functions.

10. Note that *Tarḥunmiya*, who is mentioned several times in the *Mašat* documents, is not yet attested to in the documentation of *Ḥattuša*, contrary to what happens for other personages.

The provenance of the letter

We are unclear as to where Ḫattušili and Tarḫunmiya were at the time the letter was written, although it was certainly in a place where there was a Palace.

Indeed, in this letter, in Obv. 6-8 and 17-18, Ḫattušili notifies Ḫimuili that the question of the damages being inflicted upon Tarḫunmiya may or may not be taken to the Palace (É.GAL)¹¹; in the supplementary letter, Rev. 42-Upper Edge 46, Tarḫunmiya assures Ḫimuili that he will carry out at the Palace the matter concerning the horses and chariots about which the latter has written to him (see below).

This Palace was in all probability one of those important seats with administrative functions under the authority of the central government, situated in various parts of the kingdom, where the king could also reside in the course of his journeys¹².

The term É.GAL often recurs in the letters of Maşat¹³, where it appears to have had the function of a centre responsible for the collection and distribution of goods (HKM 24¹⁴) and for the organization of armaments (HKM 52¹⁵ and 63¹⁶). It also functioned as a higher authority whose task it was, for example, to investigate matters concerning the agricultural life of various districts (HKM

11. In 11. 17-18 Ḫattušili ends his letter with the threat that if damage continues to be inflicted on the scribe (=Tarḫunmiya), he (Ḫattušili) will refer the matter in the Palace.
12. See S.Alp, HBM 309 on the meaning of É.GAL in the Maşat letters; the question of the location of these É.GAL^{mes} in the various situations considered in the letters has not however been dealt with.
13. See in fact the passages indicated by S. Alp, loc. cit, and also in the Index p. 424 s.v.
14. Letter written by the king to Pišeni, where the Palace is mentioned in Obv. 14 and Rev. 49, in connection with the distribution of wheat and straw (?) in an emergency situation.
15. See here above, on the case of the horses and chariots about which Ḫimuili wrote to Tarḫunmiya.
16. Letter from Piyatarḫu to Ḫimuili: in Obv. 15 f. the sender informs the recipient that chariots have been assigned (?) (see S. Alp, HBM. 241 n. 304 and 338) by the Palace (=to the recipient).

54¹⁷) and as an establishment that was notified of important events and circumstances, evidently in the hope that decisive intervention could be obtained from it (HKM 52¹⁸, 74¹⁹ and possibly 77²⁰), and also presumably, with the aim of receiving its favours (HKM 10²¹ and possibly 63²²). From such Palaces orders were also sent out (HKM 75²³, 88²⁴ and 94²⁵; the initial part of these three letters is fragmentary).

17. Letter from Kaššu to Ħimuili, where the Palace (Rev. 23) appears to be responsible for investigating a matter concerning the oxen of Kašipura and the fields ploughed by them.
18. Obv. 7 f. and 17f., where Ħattušili notifies Ħimuili of the twofold possibility of either informing or not informing the Palace of the Tarḥunmiya case, on the basis of Ħimuili's attitude towards it.
19. Letter from the "priest" of Kizzuwatna to Kaššu, in which, in Obv. 8-11, the possibility is expressed that the sender notifies the Palace of a matter which has arisen in connection with Kaššu's refusal to return some of his subjects to the sender. From the tone of the letter this "priest" appears to have held a government position in Kizzuwatna; this is not surprising, since the office of "priest" in Kizzuwatna appears to have been particularly important and not involved religious functions only: see F. Imparati, *Florilegium Anatolicum* 174 n. 40; see also pp. 171 ff. in connection with Kantuzzili, possibly the son of Tuthaliya I/II and Nikalmati, appointed priest of Teššub and Ħepat in Kizzuwatna (p. 172 n. 21, cf. also n. 22); this person is probably to be identified as the "priest" who sent letter HKM 74: see J. Klinger, *ZA* 85 (1995) 93-99, who also claims that Kantuzzili may have been the son of Arnuwanda I and Ašmunikal; cf. also S. Alp, *HBM* 111 f. and 342.
20. The heading is missing and the context is very unclear. The Palace is mentioned in Obv. 7 and 12; in l. 12 f. it seems that reference is made to writing something to the/in the Palace.
21. Letter from the king to Gaššu; in the *postscriptum* sent by Ħattušili to Ħimuili, in Rev. 47-52, the sender announces that he will take it upon himself to talk at the Palace about a matter concerning Ħimuili's "sons-in-law". On this see S. Alp, *HBM* 309.
22. Letter from Piyatarḥu to Ħimuili (cf. above n. 16): in Rev. 12-14 the sender almost seems to justify himself for not having announced Ħimuili's brother in the Palace; evidence for the existence of a matter concerning Ħimuili's brother is found in letter HKM 2 Lower Edge 10 ff., see S. Alp, *HBM* 62.
23. In Obv. 5'-7' it is said that the overseer of the NIMGIR.ÉRIN^{mes} brought the word (=the order) of the Palace; on this functionary see F. Pecchioli Daddi, *OA* 14 (1975) 118 ff.; S. Alp, *HBM* 70 ff.; R. Beal, *THeth.* 20, 1992, 484 ff.
24. In Lower Edge 10'-11' it is said that the word (=the order) of the Palace has been written to someone, not clearly identifiable.
25. In Rev. 8'-9' there could be mention, according to what is proposed, albeit tentatively, by S. Alp, *HBM* 297 with n. 503, of the ratification of something by the Palace.

Unfortunately, the texts mentioned here do not supply enough information for us to know for certain, for the cases being considered in them whether or not different Palaces were involved²⁶ and to postulate their precise location. Obviously the recipient of each letter knew perfectly well which Palace was being referred to in them. This might explain why in these documents the term É.GAL is not accompanied by any geographical indication, with the exception of one Palace (situated) in Ḫanḫ[ana] (see HKM 81 Lower Edge 19- Rev. 20: cf. n. 26). This geographical indication and the fact that in letter HKM 33²⁷ Rev. 25'-27', in an extremely fragmentary context, reference is made to the defence of "all the Palaces" (1.25': É.GAL ḫuman[teš]²⁸) would seem to suggest that different Palaces were involved in the various letters; this, however, does not help in locating them.

Moreover, the fact that two of these letters (HKM 10 and 24), which dealt with two separate issues, were sent by the king is not, in my opinion, sufficient evidence to suggest that the Palace referred to in them was in Ḫattuša. We should remember, indeed, that from letter HKM 20 it emerges that the king, the sender of it, was at the time in Šapinuwa (present-day Ortaköy²⁹), it being specified that the city was reachable in two days, evidently from Tapikka³⁰.

26. Only in HKM 81- sent by Tarḫunmiya to two persons whom he calls his lord and lady and also father and mother, therefore of a superior status to his own- in Lower Edge 19-Rev. 20 is there mention of the Palace of Ḫanḫ[ana], unfortunately, however, in a highly fragmentary context.

27. The heading and a large part of the tablet have not survived.

28. And also of the defense of something else, nothing of whose designation has remained in the letter other than an indication of the plural.

29. On the identification of Ortaköy as the Hittite Šapinuwa see A. Süel, *Belleten* LIX/225 (1995) 271-283.

30. In this letter the king orders its recipients, Gaššu and Pipappa, to hastily mobilize the troops of Išḫupitta and (Lower Edge 10-12) take them "rapidly in two days before My Sun". Compare, instead, letter HKM 15, where the king writes to Gaššu and to Zilapiya, telling them to lead, together with troops, warriors on chariots, which they have at their disposal, rapidly in three days before My Sun, something which may indicate that at the time the king must have been in a place that was not Šapinuwa.

At this point, it would seem plausible also to hypothesize that in most of the above-mentioned cases reference is made to the same Palace, situated in an administrative district not far from that of Tapikka, but of greater prominence. The administration of Tapikka would presumably have consulted this Palace on issues of greater importance; there would therefore have been no need for geographical specifications to indicated it. Occasionally the king would stay in this Palace for a period of time, for various reasons (military, religious, administrative), and see to various affairs involving neighbouring districts, to whose governors he must at times have sent letters. For their own part, these governors would take advantage of the fact that the king was in their area to inform him of various matters and consult him with a view to resolving various issues.

It is interesting in this context to remember that from letter HKM 60, another of the letters where there is mention of the “house” of Tarḥunmiya (see n. 7)³¹, we learn that, as S. Alp has observed³², Tarḥunmiya was in Šapinuwa at the time of its writing³³. I believe that this is confirmed, among other things, also by the fact that the sender of the letter, Sarpa, a high dignitary who at the time occupied a political position of considerable importance in Šapinuwa³⁴, alluding to certain damages suffered by Tarḥunmiya, referred to what the latter had “said” to him (*memišta*, Obv. 11 and 21[]), rather than what had been “written” to him, as occurs instead in other cases.

Now, given that we know that Šapinuwa was a more important district than that of Tapikka³⁵, whose administration appears in

31. Presumably subsequent to the letter under examination: see S. de Martino-F. Imparati, art. cit. 112.

32. HBM 97 (cf. also p. 92 *sub* Sarpa); see also S. de Martino-F. Imparati, art. cit. 112 n. 65.

33. This does not mean that Tarḥunmiya resided there (see above), but simply that he was in Šapinuwa at that time.

34. According to S. Alp, HBM 92, the position of Sarpa was superior to that of the ¹⁴EN MADKALTI of Tapikka.

35. See S. Alp, HBM 36 f.; this also seems to emerge from some still unpublished letters from the excavations presently being carried out at Ortaköy, according to

certain respects to have been under the jurisdiction, or at least within the sphere of influence, of Šapinuwa, to me it seems possible that in our letter HKM 52 (and perhaps also in others where the term É.GAL appears) reference is made to the Palace situated in this centre. The existence of a Palace here has been known about for some time, and is confirmed by excavations presently being carried out there.

In fact, from many Hittite texts from the archives of Ḫattuša we learn of the great importance which Šapinuwa had during the course of Hittite history, as a religious centre, as a political and administrative seat, and as a military base. We know that some Hittite rulers resided there on various occasions. Moreover, there are several references to the Palace of Šapinuwa in these documents, from which we get a sense of its prominence, and members of the staff (LÚ^{meš}) of this Palace are also mentioned³⁶. The importance of the Palace is also clear from the imposing structure of the building that has come to light in the course of the excavations of Ortaköy³⁷.

The hypothesis of identifying the Palace of Šapinuwa as the Palace mentioned in letter HKM 52 and also in other letters from Maşat would be consistent with the close ties which this centre seems to have had with Ḫattuša and with the royal family in the Hittite Middle Kingdom³⁸, ties which continued to exist in later periods.

a communication by A. and M. Süel in the course of a lecture and a seminar held at the Department of History of the University of Florence on 30-31 March 1995; see also A. Süel's article, cit. in n. 29.

36. See RGTC 6, 347 f. and 6/2, 139 f.; see also V. Haas, *Die Serien itkahi und itkalzi des AZU-Priesters*, ChS I/1, Roma 1984, 10 f., who points out the influence of Šapinuwa in transmitting Hurrian religious elements in Ḫattuša from the time of the Middle Kingdom, and AoF 12 (1985) 275 f.; see also M. Forlanini, RIL 125 (1992) 289 with n. 49.
37. See A. Süel, XIV. Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı II, 25-29 Mayıs 1992, Ankara, 495 ff. and Resim 1.
38. See V. Haas, AoF 12, 275, who has seen a connection between the Hurrian-Hittite dynasty set up in Ḫatti by Tuḫaliya I/II and the city of Šapinuwa; see also S. De Martino, EÖTHEN 4, Florence 1991, 20.

In any case, whatever the location of the Palace mentioned in letter HKM 52, it seems clear from the context that Ḫattušili had a certain influence in this centre. The phrase in Obv. 17 f., particularly, almost sounds like a threat directed at Ḫimuili in the event that the latter fails to protect the “house” of Tarḫunmiya: “(Obv. 15-18) Now (you=Ḫimuili) keep your eye on (this); they must not continue to oppress him (=Tarḫunmiya); if not, I will come (and) say this/report this in the Palace”.

Moreover, the use in this letter too³⁹, in Obv. 8 and 18, of the verb *mema-* (rather than *ḫatrai-*) seems to support the hypothesis that Ḫattušili was actually in the locality where this Palace was situated and that he had the opportunity to talk directly to influential people about matters which concerned him, like this one regarding the “house” of Tarḫunmiya.

As has already been pointed out, in connection with the passage in Rev. 42-Upper Edge 46, Tarḫunmiya also had relations with this Palace, evidently because of his profession as a scribe, although he had less influence than Ḫattušili.

The “house” of Tarḫunmiya

The damages inflicted on Tarḫunmiya and his “house” is also mentioned in other letters from Maṣat, the context of which has enabled us to hypothesize a sequence of the events described in them⁴⁰.

The act of “damaging” is expressed by the verb *dammešḫai-*⁴¹, which is often used in these letters in connection with damage to agriculture inflicted by enemies. We also find instances in which

39. Cf. what we observed above for letter HKM 60 Obv. 11 and 21[.

40. On this see S. de Martino-F. Imparati, art. cit. 112; see also n. 7 of the present article.

41. See J. Tischler, H.E.G. II, 7, 79 f.: “schädigen, bedrängen, Gewalt üben; strafen”; for attestations of this verb in the letters of Maṣat see S. Alp, HBM passages cited in the Index 404 s.v.

this verb refers to damage of another kind, as, for example, in the above-mentioned letter HKM 60, in which Sarpa in Obv. 14 speaks of damage brought to bear on Tarḥunmiya by two persons; further on in the same letter, Rev. 22-26, it is specified that one of these persons has in fact broken Tarḥunmiya's chariot, which therefore has to be repaired well for him.

The verb in question, with the meaning "to inflict damage" or "to oppress", is also found in letter HKM 80 Obv. 6'. The first part of this letter has not survived, so we know neither the name of the sender nor the name of its recipient. We can deduce however that the sender must have been of lower rank since in Obv. 5' the former addresses himself to the latter using the title "(my) lord". I wonder whether the sender of this letter was not Tarḥunmiya and the recipient Himuili, since in Obv. 5'-6' it is written: (My) lord, keep an eye on my house. And they must not damage/oppress it!". Moreover, the sender of the *postscriptum* of this letter was Ḥattušili, who as we have seen was linked to Tarḥunmiya.

Note that the verb *dammešḫai-* also appears in other documents together with the terms *sahhan* and *luzzi*, and has the meaning of "to oppress" someone with these duties⁴². In letter HKM 52 Rev. 37 the expression *sahḫani luzzi=ya/luzziya tittanu-* is used in an analogous way, i.e. "subjecting (someone) to *sahhan* and *luzzi* (and) *luzzi*."

As has already been pointed out elsewhere⁴³ with regard to this letter, while in the *postscriptum* Tarḥunmiya refers explicitly to his "house" (Rev. 26, 30), in the "principal" letter written by Ḥattušili the latter talks of the "house of the scribe" (Obv. 11), without further specification. Given that Tarḥunmiya is in fact a scribe, it is reasonable to assume that in both cases reference is being made to the same "house, upon which it is said, in these passages and also in other letters, that damage is being inflicted.

42. See CHD 3, 1, 91 s.v. *luzzi*.

43. See S. de Martino-F. Imparati, loc. cit.

The statement at 1.10 f., that “there within your (=Himuili’s) district (*maniyahhiya a[nd]a*) (there is) only⁴⁴ one scribe’s house”, may suggest that the place in question was not specifically Tarhunmiya’s dwelling or patrimonial and/or family complex, but possibly an administrative centre where he worked; however, this does not exclude that when he was in Tapikka he also resided there. Note, by way of comparison, the administrative centre described as the “house of the scribes on wood” (É^{14.mcs}DUB.SAR.GIŠ) in KUB XXV 31+1142/z Obv. 10⁴⁵.

A public institution⁴⁶ would also be suggested by Tarhunmiya’s request to place a man UKU.UŠ (Rev. 30-31) in front of the “house”, this presumably meaning a watchman/gendarme⁴⁷. It seems to me that the interpretation of this “house” as a public place is further supported by Hattušili’s threat to take the matter up in the Palace and the weighty intervention of Šarpa, the high dignitary of Šapinuwa, in favour of Tarhunmiya’s “house”, an intervention which constitutes the reason for the “principal” letter HKM 60. In Lower Edge 18-Rev. 20 Šarpa even announces that, when he goes before the king, he will bring with him two persons who are guilty in relation to Tarhunmiya. The request for royal intervention in the matter shows the gravity and importance of the issue and is more in keeping with a situation that in some way affected also the interests of the central administration, rather than with a private affair.

Competences of the “men of the district” and the “men of the town”

What seems to me to be of considerable interest in the present letter is that the initiative for the imposition on Tarhunmiya of the

44. See S. Alp, HBM 215.

45. See most recently G. F. del Monte, *Orientalis Antiqui Miscellanea* 2 (1995) 118 with n. 84.

46. Despite the fact that Tarhunmiya’s worried, almost anguished tone might lead one to postulate a situation of a personal nature: see the *postscriptum* of HKM 52 Rev. 25-26, where Tarhunmiya invokes Himuili thus: “O lord, may lord, keep your eye towards my «house»”.

47. Thus S. Alp, *op. cit.* 217 and Index 437; see instead R. Beal, *op. cit.* 43 n. 171, who finds this interpretation “too narrow”; on the role of the “troops” UKU.UŠ in Hittite military organization see most recently S. Rosi, *SMEA* 24 (1984) 109 ff. and R. Beal, *op. cit.* 37 ff.

obligations *saḥḥan* and *luzzi-* as well as the responsibility for certain damages inflicted on the scribe-is attributed to the “men of the town” (LÚ^{mes} URU^{tim}) and perhaps also to the “men of the district” (LÚ^{mes} KUR^{ti}): see below.

The letter we are studying has been compared by S. Alp⁴⁹ with another letter from Emar (present-day Meskene)⁵⁰, in which, among other things⁵¹, consideration is made of the case of the arbitrary imposition of *saḥḥan* and *luzzi* by a Hittite functionary, Alziyamuwa, who performed administrative functions in the area, on a diviner, who was “previously”⁵² exempt from them⁵³. The Hittite king intervenes personally to restore the previous situation.

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48. Rev. 32, see also Rev. 36 and 38, where the two expressions appear separately; from the context, however, it would not seem that in the specific case this distinction alluded to a difference in the competences of these two bodies, although this may have been possible in practice due both to their size -the men of the district were certainly more numerous than the men of the town- and, perhaps, to a more diversified composition; see also below.
49. See S. Alp, *Gs v. Schuler* 108 and 112, and HBM 334.
50. *Msk.* 73. 1097: see most recently A. Hagenbuchner, *THeth* 16 (1989) 40-44; see also F. Imparati, *JESHO* 25 (1983) 264-267 (note here that the numbering of the lines of the tablet is at times erroneous, since at the time I was able to use only a provisional transliteration, kindly supplied by E. Laroche), and G. Beckman, *art. cit.* 31.
51. In *Obv.* 6-10 the diviner accuses Alziyamuwa of arbitrarily wanting to confiscate his goods in order to give them to another person, a certain Palluwa, probably a Hittite functionary; the sovereign then intervenes (*Obv.* 17-18a) to prevent his dignitary from carrying out this abuse of power. On direct royal interventions of this nature, not only with the aim of exercising justice equably, but also to prevent state dignitaries or functionaries from carrying out abuses to their own advantage and so becoming too powerful and therefore dangerous for royal authority, see F. Imparati, *Stato Economia Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente antico*, Milano 1988, 225-239 *infra*. On the use in the Emar letter under examination of the formula *arha dā-* (*Obv.* 8) ... *pāi-* (*Obv.* 10), corresponding to the formula *NAŠU NADĀNU* in the acts of donations of lands and also in other types of document, to indicate the action of confiscating someone's goods in order to give them to someone else, see F. Imparati, *JESHO cit.* 261 n. 126.
52. On the use of *annaz* as synonymous with the older adverb *karu-* here, as in other cases, as opposed to *kinun(=ma)*: *Obv.* 11, 12; *Rev.* 19, 21, 23, 24), see *HW*² 81.
53. The granting of privileges to people who carried out an activity in the cultural sphere is also attested in other Hittite documents: see, for example, § 50 and cf. also § 51 of the Laws; see also what I observed in *JESHO cit.* 236 f. On p.

However, this last letter deals with an issue that is substantially different from the one described in the Maşat letter. In the letter from Meskene, in fact, the sovereign condemns in the Maşat letter. In the letter from Meskene, in fact, the sovereign condemns an abuse committed by one of his functionaries in the area and annuls the decisions taken by him (see n. 51).

In the Maşat letter, instead, the arbitrary imposition of duties was effected not by a dignitary under the authority of the central government, but by members of a local community, that is, by the “men of the town”, possibly with the connivance- or at least without the vigorous opposition- of the Palace dignitary *Ḫimuili*, who appears to have done little to deal with and resolve the matter in favour of the other employee of the central administration, *Tarḫunmiya*. This can be gleaned from the fact that various letters and solicitations about this matter are sent to *Ḫimuili*, requesting that he take it upon himself to resolve the case.

It is probable, indeed, that in our letter also, as elsewhere in Hittite documents, the expressions “men of the district” and “men of the town” designated members of the community of free men in the various administrative centres who were not incorporated within the structure of the state bureaucracy. In fact, *Ḫattušili*'s statement in *Obv. 1* that *others* are responsible for causing damage to *Tarḫunmiya* seems to me to indicate that the persons in question did not belong to the central administration.

265 f. of this article I pointed out that in reference to the earlier situation it was repeated twice that the diviner was not obliged to perform (*ešša-*) the *šahḫan* (*Obv. 10-12, Rev. 19-20*), whereas now he is subjected (*kattan dāi-*) to *šahḫan* and *luzzi* (*Obv. 12-14, Rev. 21-22*) and must fulfil (*ešša-*) *šahḫan* and *luzzi* (*Obv. 15-16*); see also A. Hagenbuchner, *op. cit.* 43. The precise distinction between the two situations, repeated in the text twice without variations, would suggest that in the present period not only were duties imposed arbitrarily on the diviner, but also that these duties had been increased; see however JESHO *cit.* 245, in connection with *KBo IV 10+Obv. 40', 42', 44', 45'* (whose author today, after the discovery of the “bronze tablet”, I believe was *Tuḫaliya IV*), where it does not seem that an analogous alternation -albeit in a different context- had any particular significance; cf. the corresponding passage in the

Thus, if we are to accept this interpretation, we must wonder in the name of what right or authority these members of the local communities imposed duties like the *saḥḥan* and *luzzi* on Tarḥunmiya, who was a royal functionary. Indeed, if we accept the equation of the expression “house of the scribe” with the expression “house of Tarḥunmiya”, and the hypothesis that this “house” was an administrative centre subject to the authority of the central government, the action of the local community would also have been directed against this authority.

An important question emerges, therefore, and that is whether the local community might in some instances have had the competence to impose duties, particularly on an employee of the royal administration, or whether, in the case in question, it had done so unlawfully. Clearly an answer to this question would shed new light both on the competences of the local community in the sphere of Hittite provincial administration and on the relations of this element with the central government.

It is interesting, in this context, to recall that in two acts, one issued by Ḫattušili III and the other by Tuḫaliya IV, in the passages in which these rulers grant certain goods exemption from specific duties, mention is also made of exemption from *ELKU*, an obligation due as much to two high dignitaries employed by the central government, the *BĒL MADGALTI* and the *EN KUR*ⁿ, as to the highest local authority, the *MAŠKIM URU*^{ki}⁵⁴.

“bronze tablet”, Bo 86/299 II 59-70, where *saḥḥan* (and) *luzzi* are always mentioned joined asyndetically. It should be noted that in the Meskene letter, in Obv. 15, we find a special accusative form, *luzzin*, in place of the usual form *luzzi* as a neutral accusative: this was probably an error on the part of the scribe, perhaps resulting from the attraction of the nearby form *saḥḥan*?

54. KBo VI 28+Rev. 24, KUB XXVI 43 Obv. 19-20, Rev. 12, 13-14 and in its duplicate: see F. Imparati, RHA 32 (1974) 55 ff. On the above-indicated interpretation of the expression *MAŠKIM URU*^{ki} “town/village inspector”, see E. v. Schuler, Fs Friedrich 489; F. Imparati, RHA cit. 65 ff., JESHO 25 (1983) 247 ff.; G. Beckman, Atti del II C. I. H., 25; on the two royal dignitaries mentioned together, see F. Imparati, RHA cit. 56-65; R. Beal, op. cit. 426 ff., 437 ff.

Therefore, these passages inform us only of the fact that certain duties were due not only to royal functionaries, but also to a high exponent of the local community; it is not clear, however, whether or not the latter also had the authority to impose such duties. Anyway, it was always the royal power which granted exemption from what was due not only to its dignitaries, but also to the representative of the local community.

Now, from the letter of Maṣat that we are presently examining, Rev. 36-37, it appears that it was the “men of the town” who imposed the duties *saḥḥan* and *luzzi* on Tarḥunmiya, and not that they merely carried out the task of providing for the fulfillment of these obligations. From the context of this letter, when there is mention of the imposition of these duties, it seems to me that we can infer that there was a request for the intervention of the royal dignitary, put in charge of the administration of the district of Tapikka, against this action of the “men of the town” only because the scribe in question was not bound to fulfill such duties and not because the local community had carried out an action that did not lie within its competence. In fact Ḥattušili, in Obv. 13-14, asks Ḥimuili: “(Are there) *saḥḥan* and *luzzi* (obligations) for the scribes? Why does (he= Tarḥunmiya) continue to perform them there⁵⁵?”⁵⁶. And in Rev. 34-39 Tarḥunmiya writes to Ḥimuili: “Moreover for me there was no (obligations) *saḥḥan* and *luzzi*. Now the men of the town have subjected me to *saḥḥan* and to *luzzi* / (and) to *luzzi*. So, (my) lord, ask those aforementioned men of the district, [i]f I have (ever) performed *saḥḥan* and *luzzi*”⁵⁷.

55. In the administrative district of Tapikka.

56. See G. Beckman, art. cit. 26.

57. We could perhaps hypothesize that Tarḥunmiya, although a royal employee, also had usufruct of lands situated in Tapikka and belonging to the local communities which, for this reason, would have imposed these duties on him. We may recall, in this regard, that in §§ 40 and 41 of the collection of Hittite laws we find Palace employees and members of the local communities associated in the usufruct of lands, which were in fact subject to *saḥḥan*: see F. Imparati, JESHO 25, 229 ff. and 262. However, no reference is made in the Maṣat letters relative to the case of Tarḥunmiya (see n. 7) to duties linked to the usufruct of lands.

Note that in this passage the “men of the town” are mentioned separately from the “men of the district”, something that instead does not happen either in this letter or in the others cited in n. 7 when mention is made of the damages inflicted on Tarḫunmiya and his “house”. However there are no elements for attributing any particular significance to this distinction; besides, the enclitic particle *-pát*, attached in Rev. 38 to the expression “men of the district”, would suggest a connection with the expression “men of the town” previously mentioned in Rev. 36.

With regard to a deeper knowledge the competences of the local community, in the sphere of the provincial districts, and about its relations with the central government, it may be useful to remember that according to various texts from the archives of Ḫattuša the local community appears in some cases to have been charged by the sovereign with exercising a form of control over royal employees in the administration and government of the various state provinces, the idea being to prevent the latter from committing abuses to their own personal advantage⁵⁸.

It is interesting, in this context, to recall that in an edict issued by Tuthaliya I/II⁵⁹, where it is established who has or has not the right to open a royal granary⁶⁰, the “men of the town” are charged with the task of seizing whoever has opened the said granary against the royal will and taking the guilty person to the “king’s gate”, that is, the royal court, should they fail to do this, they themselves, the “men of the town”, are obliged to indemnify the damage caused by the opening of the granary. This is a

58. See F. Imparati, *Stato Economia Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente antico*, 232-234.

59. KBo XIII 9+KUB XL 62 (CTH 258). For the transliteration and translation of this text see E. v. Schuler, *Fs Friedrich* 446 ff. and also R. Westbrook-R. Woodard, *JAOS* 110 (1990) 641 ff.; in both cases, however, the text is attributed to Tuthaliya IV. See also the duplicate KBo XXVII 16.

60. III 3'-11'. Here it is said (11. 3'-8') that this task is the concern of those who administer the Palaces or a royal functionary delegated by them, and not an [AGRI]G? administrator (keeper of the royal storehouses), a doorkeepers or a farmer. On the role of the AGRIG in the Hittite texts see I. Singer, *AnSt* 34 (1984) 97 ff.

demonstration of the involvement of the local community by royal authority, which attributes to it both the function of guarantor in respecting the sovereign's will, and joint responsibility in the misdeed and corresponding punishment in the event that this will fails to be respected⁶¹.

And the letter HBM 52 here under examination appears to show that in certain circumstances the local community may have had the power to impose duties on someone, even, in this specific case, a royal functionary⁶².

Admitting that such a possibility existed, we have now another element, even if small, to delineate the competences of the local community in the provincial seats. We are therefore increasingly obliged, in this context, to acknowledge the extraordinary value of the documents that are preserved in the archives of these centres.

61. I wonder whether this joint responsibility was not due to the fact that the people who were prohibited from opening the king's granary -AGRIG administrator, doorkeepers and farmer- might themselves too form part of the local communities, or at least have some connection with them.

62. In the case in question, as has already been pointed out, the provincial governor, Himuili, royal functionary, does not appear to put himself out excessively to protect the employee who has suffered damages, namely the scribe Tarjunmiya.