

MARI: AN ADDITIONAL NOTE ON “RAŞAPPU AND HATALLU”

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As noticed by M. Liverani in his article “Raşappu and Hatallu”¹, the sequence URU.né-med^d15 — URU.ap-ku — URU.ma-re-e² — KUR.ra-ša-pi attested in the Saba’a stele of Nergal-ereš (803 B.C.) presents (a) two place names located on the slopes of the Jebel Sinjar, while (b) Marê “cannot be Mari = Tell Hariri”³, as already Forrer had surmised⁴. Since Liverani tends to locate Raşappu “in the southern and eastern slopes of the Jebel Sinjar”⁵, he would hypothetically seek Marê in this same general region, viz. “south of the Jebel Sinjar, perhaps west of Nimid-Ishtar and therefore in the general location of modern Beled Sinjar”⁶.

Now, a new piece of information with possible bearing on the matter comes to us from the recent published inscriptions of Aššur-ketti-lešir found at Tell Bderi on the Lower Habur, ca. 15 kms below the confluence of the Jaghjagh⁷. In these texts, Aššur-ketti-lešir, who states to be a contemporary (and was in fact a vassal) of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.), describes himself as “king of the land of Māri” (KUR.A/mā-ri/ma-ri)⁸. He includes the newly-founded town of Dur-Aššur-ketti-lešir “on the river-

¹) Cf. SAAB VI/1 (1992), pp. 35-40. I am grateful to the author for allowing me to read his study in manuscript form, and kindly agreeing to the publication of my note just after his article. I also wish to thank my student, D. Morandi, who kindly discussed a number of points with me, in the course of writing his doctoral dissertation *Il fiume e la steppa. La struttura insediativa del basso Habur in epoca neo-assira* (Padova 1993).

²) This toponym seems to be missing in Parpola, NAT.

³) Liverani, p. 38.

⁴) “Das nun folgende Marê hat nichts mit den Euphratland Marî des zweiten und dritten Jahrtausends v. Chr. zu tun” (*Provinzeinteilung*, p. 14).

⁵) Liverani, p. 38.

⁶) *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷) S.M. Maul, *Die Inschriften von Tall Bderi*, Berlin 1992.

⁸) *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 30, for the different writings.

bank of the Habur” (*ina ah Habur*)—corresponding to Tell Bderi itself—and the larger town of Ṭābētu, said to be located downriver, among the lands under his rulership⁹. Now, an identification for Ṭābētu has been long ago suggested for Tell Ṭābān on the left, eastern bank of the Habur¹⁰.

In this light, it is reasonable to suggest that the URU.*ma-re-e* of the stele of Nergal-ereš may have referred to a territory roughly corresponding to the “land of Māri” approx. 3 centuries earlier. Rather than a site toward the south-west of the hilly complex, as assumed by Liverani, we should consider a location at a distance of approx. 25-30 kilometers west of it. The Rašappa province would therefore have found its western border on the Lower Habur, in the northern sector of the latter. Or, to put in other words, the order of the toponyms in the Nergal-ereš sequence (in which—as surmised by Liverani—first the relevant town sites are listed, then their encompassing province¹¹) would be logical in proceeding from the easternmost (Nemed-Issar) to the westernmost one (Marê)¹².

At this point, two more touches may be added to the picture, albeit as no more than tentative suggestions. On one hand, as already pointed out briefly by S.M. Maul, a passage in the “Broken Obelisk” attributed to Aššur-bel-kala (1073-1056 B.C.) describes the struggle of the Assyrian king against the Arameans, and reads “he fought with them at the city Magrisu (URU.*ma-ag-ri-si*) of the land [I]ari”¹³. Now, the town of Magrisu should not have been far from modern Hasseke, and was certainly in the general area of the present-day confluence of the Jaghjagh into the Habur¹⁴; and we know from the later itinerary of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884 B.C.) that it was one day’s march away from Ṭābētu in a northward direction¹⁵. Given this general vicinity to the sites of the Tell Bderi inscriptions, it may be asked whether one should not interpret the

⁹) *Ibid.*, p. 20, for the transcription of the largest inscription from Tell Bderi.

¹⁰) K. Nashef, RGTC 5, p. 267, with previous literature; as remarked by P. Ergenzinger - H. Kühne, *Ein regionales Bewässerungssystem am Habur*, in H. Kühne (Hrsg.), *Die rezente Umwelt von Tall Seh Hamad und Daten zur Umweltrekonstruktion der assyrischen Stadt Dur-katlimmu* (BATSH 1), Berlin 1991, p. 184, after the discovery of the inscriptions, “die Identifizierung von Ṭābētu mit den zehn Kilometer entfernten Tall Ṭābān ist damit kaum zu bezweifeln”. For canals in the area of Tell Ṭābān, cf. most recently F.M. Fales, *Canals in the Neo-Assyrian Rural Landscape: A View from the Habur and Middle Euphrates*, in print for BATSH 3, Berlin 1993.

¹¹) Liverani, p. 38.

¹²) I am indebted to D. Morandi for this specific point, which I had overlooked.

¹³) A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early 1st Millennium B.C.*, Toronto 1991, p. 102, 21.

¹⁴) Cf. most recently M. Liverani, *Studies on the Annals of Ashurnasirpal II. 2: Topographical Analysis*, Roma 1992, pp. 63-64, with previous bibliography.

¹⁵) Grayson, *cit.*, p. 177, 115: “Moving on from Ṭābētu [I pitched camp (and) spent the night] in the city Ma[garisu]. Moving on from [Mag]ar[isu] etc.”.

"Broken Obelisk" passage as reading "the city Magrisu of the land [M]āri (KUR.[*ma*]-*a-ri*)"¹⁶.

Finally, a passage from the "Assyrian Doomsday Book" might be also relevant to the matter at hand. One of the listings from this fragmentary register of land and people in northwestern Mesopotamia during the last part of the 8th century¹⁷ shows a total as follows: PAP URU.*ma-ag-ri-su* *ina* [*xx*]*x-re-e* / PAP 2 É.MEŠ šá LÚ.NAM URU.[*xx-n*]*a*? (CCENA, 2, II, 13'-14')¹⁸. In the light of what has been said above, it is undisputably tempting to integrate the second toponym of l. 13'—which should refer to the larger "district" encompassing the listed *ālu*—as [URU/KUR.*ma*]-*re-e*. Of course, the problem would then be that of ascertaining which provincial governorship was involved in the next line: since the last sign seems to be relatively clear as the upper part of UD or NA, the most likely candidates here are URU.[*Gu-za-n*]*a* or URU.[*Na-ṣib/ṣi-bi-n*]*a*¹⁹. Both these provinces, of course, might well have reached (resp. SE or straight S) to the confluence of the Jaghjagh and the Habur. According to one's personal approach, therefore, this datum might be viewed as speaking against the integration proposed above; or, on the other hand, it might be viewed as a piece of information to keep in mind for future use in the undoubtedly complicated reconstruction of Neo-Assyrian administrative geography, in its spatial, but also diachronical, parameters.

¹⁶ Cf. Maul, *cit.*, p. 54, fn. 218: "Die Nähe von Magrisu/Tall Hasaka zu den Orten, die unter Tiglathpilesar I. zu dem 'Land Māri' gezählt wurden, spricht für dies neue Lesung. Ein Land Iari hat es dann aber nie gegeben".

¹⁷ Cf. for the moment Fales, CCENA; S. Parpola, ZA 64 (1974), pp. 96-115; J.N. Postgate, JESHO 17 (1974), pp. 225-243.

¹⁸ CCENA, p. 25; and notice the collations to this passage by S. Parpola, ZA 64 (1974), 115, center left, which reach an identical result.

¹⁹ Discussion on this point in CCENA, p. 97.