HAMATH, NIYA AND TUNIP IN THE 3rd MILLENNIUM B.C. ACCORDING TO THE EBLA DOCUMENTS

by Alfonso Archi

1) Hamath

Before the discovery of the tablets of Ebla, the name of modern Ḥamā was attested in the cuneiform sources only beginning with the 1st millennium B.C. In the Neo-Assyrian documents it appears as A-ma-at/ma-at- or Ḫa-(am-)ma-(at-)ta/e/i/u, determined by URU “city” or, more often, by KUR “land”.

The major archives of the 2nd millennium B.C. (Mari, Ugarit, Hattusa) had different geo-political perspectives, and do not mention Ḥamā, while the tablets from Qatna are still unpublished. During that time, Ḥamā was first included in the powerful kingdom of Qatna, and later (last century of 2nd millennium), in the kingdom of Tunip (Tell Ascharne).

The lists of the places conquered by the Egyptians under Thutmosis III (1479-1425) give the name ‘mt, which, it has been suggested, indicates Ḥamath. The imposing tell at Ḥamā testifies, with its remains, however, to the great antiquity of this centre, and the pottery classification published by the Danish expedition, which worked there from 1931 to 1938, has provided a certain term of comparison for dating of the other settlements of the region, at least from the 24th century B.C. on. The archaeological levels Ḥamā J 8-5 correspond to Ebla IV A, the period of the Royal Palace and its archives.

The tablets of Ebla (ca 2380-2340 B.C.), mostly administrative in character, register hundreds of geographical names of the region dominated directly by that city, and many others of the area east of the Euphrates. Ebla helps us recovering about one millennium of history for Syria, and shows that several centres already existed at that time, although most of the minor ones changed later their name. These tablets also prove that the place-name of Ḥamā already existed at that time.

Two names have to be considered: ‘A-ma and ‘A-ma-at/du. Both are attested several dozens time. Many geographical names of the region of Ebla (about thirty in number) may or present the ending -a/i/u)(um): A-la-ga/ A-la-ag-du; A-la-ma / A-la-ma-ad; A-mi-sa / A-mi-sa-du, and so on. This does not mean, however, that the two forms apply to the same place. On the contrary, the two forms, as a rule, refer to two different places.

3 ARES II: 130-132. ARES II is the abbreviation for Archi, Piacentini, Pomponio 1993.
4 These geographical names are listed in ARES II: 21-22.
5 I am able to suggest only the identity between ḫr-ku and ḫr-ku-ul/ut, and the possible one between Ba-ḫu-mu and Ba-ḫu-na-tum: the first is connected with Urš’aum and the second with

Neither can 'Å·ma\(^k\) and 'Å·ma/má-\(at\)/du\(^k\) be two variants of the name of the same town. The first name, Hama, applies to an important political and administrative centre in the north of the Eblaite kingdom. Its territory included, in fact, several fortified centres, bàd\(^k\). The second one, Hamatu, was instead one of the three major centres where the god Hadabal, written \(d^4'A_2(\text{NI})-da-ba\lll{b\lll{al}}'(\text{KUL})\), had his cult (the other two were Larugadu/Arugadu and Luban). While Kura was the main god of the pantheon of Ebla, and the Weather-god Hadda that of Halab, the cult of Hadabal was spread in all the region around Ebla.

The god Hadabal is, on the contrary, never connected with 'Å·ma\(^k\). Moreover, the personal names related to the two centres are different\(^6\). This evidence compels us to consider Hama and Hamatu as two different places. Both centres were governed by an “overseer”, ugula\(^7\).

Hama (‘Å·ma\(^k\)) had a relevant strategic function. One document ascribes to Hama ten “overseers of fortresses”, ugula-bàd\(^k\), ([1]); another one fourteen overseers ([2]), what means that ten / fourteen fortified centres came directly under Hama\(^8\). This is not usual in the documentation from Ebla, and clearly means that Hama controlled an important border of the Eblaite kingdom. Although other documents ascribe to Hama simply “settlements, towns”, Sumerian uru-uru, ([4], [5]), this does not place their defensive function in question. A similar case is that of Luatum, a town to be placed east of the Euphrates, near the Syrian-Turkish border, south of Irrite and Hārran. Luatum had 52 fortresses, and protected the boundary of the Eblaite kingdom in the region of the river Balih\(^9\).

The name of eight fortresses of Ḥama is known: Alaḥadu ([6]; Ar'amig ([5]; probably Ar-'a-mi-ig/gû\(^k\) = Ar-'a-ne/ni-ig\(^k\)); Guriš [5], [8], [9]; Ḥalu [10]; Šariga [5]; Ušīgu (Ū-šī/šē-gû\(^k\)) [11]; Zaga [5]. Perhaps also Gasa [7], an agricultural village of Ebla, was close to the region of Hama. The oversees of these towns were, for Ušīgu: Saḫa’a and Ida-malik (both for the period of vizier Ibrīum)\(^10\); for Zaga: Danelu (period of vizier Ibrīum)\(^11\).

Here are the relevant passages:

[1] MEE II 32 obv. VI 13-15: 10+10 garments ugula-bàd\(^k\)-ugula-bàd\(^k\) 'Å·ma\(^k\)
[2] ARET III 236 rev. VIII: 14+14 garments ugula-ugula 'Å·ma\(^k\)
[3] TM.75.G.5098 VI 1-2: ] bàd\(^k\)-bàd\(^k\) ‘Å·ma\(^k\)

Agagališ, both of two places being north, north-west of Ebla; see ARES II, pp. 172-173. ‘Å-da-ni\(^k\) and ‘Å-da-ni-du\(^k\) are also two writing of the same town, see ARES II, pp. 124-128.

\(^6\) A single datum could be produced in favour of the identification of the two towns. ARET VII 93 obv. I 1-11 1 has: 8 ma-na baβzar:ku ugula-bàd\(^k\)-bàd\(^k\) ‘Å·ma-timki}=na-sum “8 minas silver the oversees of the fortified places of Hamatum (in the genitive ending) have given”. Mistakes of scribes are not unusual (the orthographic writings distinguished between Hama and Hamatu); otherside, we have to admit that Hamatu also had fortresses in its territory.

\(^7\) On a previous discussion on Hama and Hamatu, see Bonechi 1993: 36.

\(^8\) According to TM.75.G.1405 obv. II 3-4. Ḥa-la was the ugula of Hama when Arrukum was vizier.

\(^9\) On a previous discussion on Hama and Hamatu, see Bonechi 1993: 36.

\(^10\) According to TM.75.G.1873 rev. VIII 3-5 mentions twenty elders for Hama: “20 garments for the elders (ābbā-ābbā) of Hama.” This is an unusual high number, which can only be meant for the region controlled by that town.

\(^11\) ARES II: 477-478.
Hamat, Niya and Tunip in the 3rd millennium B.C. according to the Ebla documents

[10] ARET III 533 III: ḫa-lu bādki ḫa 'Â-ma

According to ARET III 131 I, a man from Guriš, one of the fortresses of Hama, was present in Kakmium, a kingdom which delivered most of the wine which Ebla received from abroad¹². One should locate Kakmium north of Ebla, perhaps in the hills north of Kilis, but south, however, of Antep, in whose region (perhaps in Antep itself) was Uršu’um of the Ebla documents and Uršūm of the Mari tablets of the 2nd millennium.

TM.75.G.2361 registers the deliveries (mu-DU) to the palace of Ebla from the vizier Ibrium, other officials, and several centres of the kingdom. It lists in rev. II 6-III 12 A-bar-sal₁₄, and then three towns: Zaga, Ar’anig ... Ušigu, which we know belonged to Hama. Abarsal was an important kingdom east of the Euphrates which was defeated, probably by king Irkab-Damu, or by his predecessor Igriš-Ḫalab, and in any case before Arrukum was vizier¹³.

These two documents compell us to place Hama in the north, north-east, in the region between Kilis and Karkamiš. The other “fortresses”, bādki, known from the Ebla documents, were also located mostly in the north, north-east area, which seems, therefore, to have been the most greatly threatened border. As well as the case of Luatum (see above), the Treaty with Abarsal (= Tell Chuera?), ARET XII 5, mentions the following towns with their fortresses (GN ū bādki,bādki): Kab-lu₈-ulki, Za-ˈā-rë, ḫa-zí-lu₉, Gú-da-da-númki, Ti-in-nu₉k, Gîr-ra-da-a₉ki.¹⁴

Michael Astour has proposed identifying Hama of the Ebla documents with Amā-eki of the Alalakh documentation (Inscription of Idrimi), which he places in the region of Aʿzāz¹⁵.

Modern Hamā was Hamatu (‘Â-ma/ma/at/duki). This was, together with Lu-la₁₂-ga-du₉ki and Lu-ba-an₁₄, one of the major cultic centres of the god Hadabal (as it was already said above). Years ago I have suggested that the origin of this god could go back to a pre-Semitic substrate¹⁶.

¹² A. Archi, 1993: 28-33; ARES II: 326.
¹³ ARES II: 87-91.
¹⁴ Cfr. also Archi, 1989b: 16-17.
¹⁵ Astour 1988: 141 with note 23. He thought, further, that “the textual occurrences of Amatu do not fit too well its supposed identity with Hama”.
¹⁶ Cfr Archi 1992: 7. The name Aṯ-da-bal, has been considered Semitic by Xella 1998: 887-895, who explains it as ʾyawda’-ba’l, “the Lord knows”; its structure should be that of a theophoric name, as
An itinerary of a cultic journey of this god (preserved by two tablets which are duplicates, TM.75.G.2377 and TM.75.G.2379), starts with Luban, a centre in the Antioch plain (‘Amq) or close to it, then reaches the palace of Ebla (the SA.ZA₉), and touches an other thirty-seven small centres¹⁷. This journey, which fell in the 12th month of the year (MAxGÁNAtenu-úgur), apparently concerned only the southern and western regions, and shows that the cult of this god was deeply rooted in the core of Ebla territory. A confraternity of roughly twelve people belonging to the most important families (which counted among its members also some of the vizier's sons) had to escort the god on his journey¹⁸.

Hadabal received offerings also at Ebla, mostly as Hadabal of Luban, although there was also an Hadabal of the palace (of Ebla): ʰHa-da-bal SA.ZA₉. This proves that the sanctuary of Luban was considered, at least at Ebla, to be the major one of Hadabal. The second hypostasis of this god was Hadabal of (L)arugatu¹⁹. Hadabal of Hamatu appears instead only rarely in the offering lists of the sheep sacrificed to the gods in the city of Ebla. According to the documents which cover the last twenty-two months of life of Ebla, this god received an offering by the king only three times (twice in connection with the major god of the city of Ebla: “on the occasion of the offering for Kura”, in ud nidba ʰKu-ra)²⁰, and another time by Ir'aq-dam, the heir to the throne²¹. Some other sheep were given, although rarely, to people who had to travel to the sanctuary in Hamatu.

This evidence does not mean, however, that the cult of Hadabal of Hamatu was of secondary importance. The documents register, year after year, dozens of gifts, mostly objects in silver and gold, offered to him in his sanctuary in Hamatu by members of the royal families. His consort, known only by her epithet, “the Lady”, ba'al tum, (ʰBAD.MĪ), is sometimes associated with him (ARET XII 490 III 4-6; ʰBAD.MĪ ʰA-da-bal' A-ma-du₉, where the offerer is Dusigu, the mother of the last king, Išar-damu). At the service of this god was a “purifier priest, servant”, pašešu²², and several priestesses, dam-dingir: TM.75.G.2252 rev. VII 3-4: dam-dingir-dam-dingir 'A-ma-du₉ “(wool for) the priestesses (in) Hamatu”. One of these priestesses, Tadub-damu, was a king's daughter who came from the residence which the royal family had in Ḥuzan, ARET I 1 (78): “(garments which) Tadub-damu, the priestess, daughter of the king (in) Ḥuzan, has received in Hamatu”; TM.75.G.2339 rev. V 2-7: dumu-mi en Ḥu-za-anᵇ dam-dingir in 'A-ma-du₉ “the king's daughter of Ḥuzan (who is) priestess in Hamatu”.

In Îtor-Mer and Jakrub-il, two gods of Mari. Also Fronzaroli 1997: 288, offers a Semitic interpretation of the name: /hadda-ba'ɑl/ “Hadda the Lord”. The writings for /ba'ɑl/ and /hadda/ are, however, the “Akkadogram” BAD/BE (fem. ba-al-tum) and ʰA-da, respectively, in all the passages where these two terms are clearly needed. The short writing tradition of Ebla makes not probable that an archaic writing could become the standard writing of a term in particular contexts.

¹⁷ Archi 1979. Of these localities Da-ri-ibᵇ and A-du-biᵉ b⁹ consisted of two hamlets (GN-II), obv. I 6, II 6 and IV 4-5; there were also a “large” and a “small” Du-u₉-bi³ b⁹, obv. III 4-IV 1. On Luban, see ARES II, p. 228.
¹⁸ On the šeš-II:ib confraternity, see Archi 2002.
¹⁹ This town has to be identified with Ugaritic lrgd, see Fales 1984; Lambert 1984.
²¹ TM.75.G.1945 obv. II 26-III 5.
²² The names of four of these pa₄-šeš are quoted in Archi 1996: 41.
Although situated about 90 km as the crow flies south of Ebla, Hamatu belonged to the territory administered directly by Ebla and its economic system. A document concerning amounts of barley given as nourishment to several villages quotes, among the other places, also Hamatu (TM.75.G.10209 obv. V 12-13: 183 gubar = 3660 sila, that is, perhaps about 15 quintals)\(^{23}\). According to TM.75.G.1439+ rev. V 13-VI 1, Irrina, an official with important functions in the agricultural sector, owned some land in Hamatu. Employed at Hamatu there was also a gang of workers, gurus-maḥ, ARET IV 17 (120)–(121). The jar impressions found at Hama provide additional proof that this town belonged to the economic system of Ebla\(^{24}\).

During the first years documented by the archives (before Arrukum became vizier) the town was under the control of a “lord”, lugal, whose name was Ibišum, MEE VII 46 obv. VIII 9-IX 2. Later, in the fourth year of the mandate of the vizier Ibrium, the “overseer” ugula, of Hamatu was Ibi-gardu (TM.75.G.2464 rev. II 11-13). Notice that the title lugal, “lord”, and the name of function ugula, “overseer”, can be interchangeable\(^{25}\).

2) Niya

The identification of Ne-a-ū\(^{ki}\) (TM.75.G.2233 obv. XII 2: Ne-a-u\(^{ki}\)) of the Eblaite documents with Niya of the Egyptian and cuneiform sources of the second millennium has been suggested by M. Astour\(^{26}\). The writings of this geographical name are in Amarna: KUR Ni-i, \(\text{unuNi-i}^{ki}\); Alalakh: \(\text{unuNi-ḥilḥe}\), KUR Ni-ḥ\(^{ki}\); Hatti: \(\text{URUNi-ja}\), \(\text{URU}Ni-i\), \(\text{URU}Ne-e\)^{27}. The territory of Niya, in the Orontes valley, bordered the kingdom of Ugarit, and the town occupied perhaps the site of Qal‘at el Mudrīq, close to Apamea\(^{28}\).

Records of offerings which list in a sequence the sanctuary of Rashap of Tunip, and those of Idabal of Hamatu and Neau are in favour of the identification of Ne-a-ū\(^{ki}\) with Niya; TM.75.G.10074 rev. V 19-24 and TM.75.G.10088 rev. XXIII 25-XXIV 7: "Ra-sa-ap Du-ne-éb\(^{ki}\)... \(\text{d'A}_5\)-da-“bal” 'Ā-ma-du\(^{ki}\)... \(\text{d'A}_5\)-da-“bal” Ne-a-ū\(^{ki}\).

The location of Neau in the Orontes valley is supported also by the fact that people travelling to Ibal (in the region of Qatna) for a military expedition, touched Neau, MEE II 40 rev III 2-11. People from Arḥadu (perhaps Tell 'Arqa, in the 'Akkar plain which links Horns with the sea) came in contact with the Eblaite administration in Neau\(^{29}\).

The vizier Ibrium owned an estate in its territory. TM.75.G.10078 rev. V 8-11: ë Ib-ri-um lū N. “the residence of Ibrium in Neau”; TM.75.G.2496 obv. III 6-10: 2 šeš Ma-ū-du dam Ib-ri-um N. “two brothers of Ma’utu, the wife (whom) Ibrium (keeps in) N.”

\(^{23}\) Another similar passage is TM.75.G.1472 rev. III 6-7: 6 gū-bar še 'Ā-ma-du\(^{ki}\).
\(^{26}\) Astour 1992: 9 with note 31.
\(^{27}\) For the sources concerning Niya, see Klengel 1969: 60-65.
\(^{28}\) For the identification of the site, see Klengel 1965: 45 note 12; Astour 1969: 386-387 note 5, with previous bibliography. On the history of Niya, see Klengel 1991: 151-156.
\(^{29}\) ARES II: 397.
The god of Neau was Hadabal, as in Hamatu, and Ibrium used to bring offers (nig-ba) to him, TM.75.G.2359 rev. VII 14-17, TM.75.G.10144 rev. VII 3-7.

3) Tunip

The two passages mentioned for Niya, listing in a sequence the sanctuaries of Tunip, Hamatu and Neau, show that these three towns were located in the same region. It is therefore certain that the Eblaite Du-ne-êb[^30] (in ARET VII 10 [8]: Du-ni-êb[^30])[^30] is the Tunip of the sources of the second millennium, which H. Klengel has identified with Tell 'Asharneh[^31]. Rašap, and his consort Adamma, were the gods of this town. Several other documents register together offerings for Rašap of Tunip and for Hadabal of Ηamatu: TM.75.G.1830 rev. X 2-7; TM.75.G.2502 rev. XVIII 1-6; TM.75.G.2507 obv. VII 27-33.

Tunip belonged to the kingdom of Ebla, and several documents concerning the agricultural administration mention this town. ARET II 5 (36)-(38) concerns the purchasing of some sheep in Tunip; ARET VII 155 obv. V 6-7 registers an estate owned there by the nephews of the vizier Ibrium.

Messengers of Tunip reached Iba!, in the region of Qatna, as well as Dulu, north to Uršûm. ARET IV 17 (115), (119). According to ARET VIII 532 (48), a trader, lûkar, of Mari received wool for dressing 380 people, who seem to have been under his control. Salba, a small centre connected with Tunip in ARET III 861 I, could be identified with Şalaba, 10 km to the east-southeast of Apamea[^32].

Alfonso Archi
Via Montevideo 2/A
I - 00198 Roma

BIBLIOGRAPHY


[^30]: ARES II: 212-214.
[^31]: Klengel 1995, who disagrees with the suggestion of Astour 1977, that Tunip may have been a previous name of Hamā.
Archi A., 1993 *Five Tablets from the Southern Wing of Palace G - Ebla* (Syro-Mesopotamian Studies 5/2). Malibu.


Astour M.C., 1977 Tunip-Hamath and its Region, *Orientalia* N.S. 46, pp. 51-64


Klengel H. 1992 *Syria 3000 to 300 B.C.*, Berlin


