

## THEBAN FQ SERIES AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MESSENGER'S STATIONS

by ALEXANDER UCHITEL

In contrast to the other Mycenaean palatial sights, the Theban Linear B archives were found in the citadel of Cadmea piecemeal over four decades, in 1964 (Ug series), 1974 (Of series), 1984 (Wu series), and 1995 (tablets from Odods Pelopidou). The three earlier groups of texts constitute complete sets of documents all dealing with the wool industry. Probably some specialised section of the main palatial archive similar to the Pylian 'bureau 99' was discovered, but the major part of the original documentation remained unearthen. As could be predicted, large group of Linear B tablets was found in 1995 on Odos Pelopidou. The editors classified as Fq series more than a half of the Linear B tablets found in 1995 on the Odos Pelopidou at Thebes (125 out of 236)<sup>1</sup>. These are ration lists recording distribution of barley (HORDEUM) and flour (FARINA) to a large group of recipients, appearing in a partly fixed order. Taking into account that some of these recipients reappear in lists of men classified as Av series (8 texts), and as recipients of olives and wine in two other series of ration lists, classified as Ft (16 texts) and Gp (55 texts), the Theban Fq series can be regarded as the core of a homogeneous archive dealing with one and the same group of personnel. All this means that the new Theban texts constitute yet another specialised section, but the central palatial archives escaped again the excavators. The overall interpretation of this 'specialised section' is hotly disputed, and the present paper offers a contribution to this discussion based on a comparative study.

Three surviving headings do not help much to reveal the true nature of this group, being all temporal clauses, most probably used for dating of the food distribution. They read: (Fq 254+255) *de-go-no* HORD T1 V2 Z2 *o-te a-pi-e-qe ke-ro-ta pa-ta* (δευινῶ ... ὅτε ἀμφι(σ)έπε γέροντας πάντα) – “to the feast-maker: 0.1.2.2 measures of barley, when he honoured all the elders”<sup>2</sup>; (Fq 126) *o-te tu-wo-te-to* (ὅτε θύος θέτο) – “when the incense was set”<sup>3</sup>; (Fq 130) *o-te o-je-ke-te-to* (ὅτε θέτο) – “when ... was set”<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> V. L. Aravantinos, L. Godart, A. Sacconi, *Thèbes. Fouilles de la Cadmée*, vol. 1, *Les tablettes en Linéaire B de la Odos Pelopidou (édition et commentaire)*, Pisa 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *de-go-no* is interpreted by the editors as “feast-maker” on the basis of *po-ro-de-go-no* – “deputy of *de-go-no*” attested on KN F 51. *A-pi-e-pe* is either the aorist or the imperfect of ἀμφίεπω. See: *ibid.*, pp. 224-226. Editors' overall translation of this sentence is different, however, since they interpret *ke-ro-ta pa-ta* as a subject. For similar interpretations see Chadwick, “Three Temporal Clauses”, *Minos* 31-32 (1996-1997 [1998]), pp. 296-301, and Ruijgh, *Mnemosyne* 57 (2004), pp. 31 sgg.

<sup>3</sup> For this interpretation see V. L. Aravantinos, L. Godart, A. Sacconi, *Thèbes. Fouilles de la Cadmée* ..., vol. 1, pp.185-188.

<sup>4</sup> For the interpretation of *o-je-ke* proposed by the editors see *ibid.*, pp.195-196.

However, even before the full publication of the archives, two of the editors announced that they positively identified the Fq tablets as cultic documents<sup>5</sup>. This identification is based mainly on the interpretation of word *ma-ka*, which appears as the first recipient in all lists, as the Doric exclamation  $\mu\acute{\alpha}\text{-}\Gamma\acute{\alpha}$  – “mother Earth”, put into the mouth of the chorus of Danaids by Aeschylus (*Suppliants* 890). The cultic context was supplied by the Knossos tablet F 51 where Zeus (*di-we* in the dative) appears as recipient of barley alongside the word, which can be read as *ma-ge* or *ma-ka*. The reading *ma-ka* is preferred by the authors in a rather circular argument on the basis of comparison with the Theban texts. Once the cultic nature of the series was presumed in such a way, the most simple Mycenaean Greek words acquired a cultic connotation: *ko-wa*, a well known Mycenaean word for girl<sup>6</sup>, became goddess Kore, *ka-ra-wi-ja*, a Greek  $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\iota\alpha$ <sup>7</sup> – “old woman”, became goddess Graia, and so on<sup>8</sup>.

This whole way of reasoning seems to me extremely unreliable. The securely identifiable Greek words should serve as a basis for overall interpretation of the series, not the other way around. Such words are indeed not in short supply in Fq texts, but neither attested divine names nor occupational designations otherwise attested as members of the cultic personnel are among them. Assembled together these securely identified words produce a unique combination of women<sup>9</sup>, poultry (geese<sup>10</sup>, birds<sup>11</sup>), dogs<sup>12</sup>, horsemen<sup>13</sup>, grooms<sup>14</sup>, carpenters<sup>15</sup>, and foreigners<sup>16</sup>. In addition to the Fq series, geese reappear as recipients of olives in Ft tablets<sup>17</sup>, and dogs, grooms, carpenters and foreigners receive wine in Gp tablets<sup>18</sup>. Unlike the highly speculative *ma-ka*, the interpretation of all of these words is quite certain, since they are found in variety of morphological forms (geese and dogs) or well attested in other Mycenaean archives (birds<sup>19</sup>, grooms<sup>20</sup>, and carpenters<sup>21</sup>), or are

<sup>5</sup> L. Godart, A. Sacconi, “Les dieux thébains dans les archives mycéniennes”, *CRAI* 1996, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Fq 126, 130, 169, 229, 239, 240, 241, 254+255, 257, 258, 275, 309. Attested in numerous lists of women with children at Knossos and Pylos.

<sup>7</sup> Fq 169, 207, 228. Attested as *ka-ra-u-ja* at Mycenae on Fu 711.

<sup>8</sup> For ‘Zeus Opores’ see Th. G. Palaima, “Reviewing the New Linear B Tablets from Thebes”, *Kadmos* 42, 2003, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> See above notes 6 and 7.

<sup>10</sup> *ka-si* (Fq 205) –  $\chi\alpha\acute{\sigma}\iota$  (dat. pl.).

<sup>11</sup> *o-ni-si* (Fq 123, 169, 342) –  $\delta\rho\nu\iota\alpha$  (dat. pl.).

<sup>12</sup> *ku-si* (Fq 130), *ku-ne* (Fq 229, 292), *ku-no* (Fq 205, 236), various forms of the Greek  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\omega\nu$  – “dog”.

<sup>13</sup> *e-pi-qi-i* (Fq 214, 229, 252) –  $\acute{\epsilon}\phi\iota\pi\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$  (dat. pl.).

<sup>14</sup> *i-qi-po-qi-i* (Fq 169, 198, 214, 247, 252, 254+255, 272, 276, 305, 367) –  $\iota\pi\pi\omicron\phi\omicron\rho\beta\omicron\iota\varsigma$  (dat. pl.).

<sup>15</sup> *te-ka-ta-si* (Fq 247) –  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\alpha\iota$  (dat. pl.).

<sup>16</sup> The most conspicuous among them is *ra-ke-da-mi-ni-jo* (Fq 229, 253, 254+255, 258, 275, 284, 325, 339, 382) – “Lacedaemonian”.

<sup>17</sup> Ft 141, 143, 219, 220+248, 234, 268 (*ka-si*); Ft 182 (*ka-ne*); Ft 217 (*ka-no*).

<sup>18</sup> Gp 150 (*ku-no*); Gp 199 (*i-qi-po-[qi-i]*); Gp 112, 114, 175 (*te-ka-ta-si*); Gp 227 (*ra-ke-da-mo-ni-jo-u-jo* – “Lacedaemonian’s son”).

<sup>19</sup> PY Ta 707 where it appears as *o-ni-ti-ja-pi* (instr. pl.).

<sup>20</sup> PY Fn 79 where it appears as *i-po-po-qi-i-ge*.

<sup>21</sup> KN Am 826 *te-ko-to-ne* –  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\omicron\nu\epsilon\varsigma$  (nom. pl.).

sufficiently complicated words to exclude any other interpretation (horsemen and Lacedaemonians). Therefore, any proper discussion on the true nature of this group of texts should, in my opinion, begin with the question of where else such an unusual combination of recipients of food rations can be found.

The only Linear B parallel to this combination is found, as editors correctly noticed<sup>22</sup>, in MY Fu 711. This fragmentary tablet records distribution of barley, flour, and *cyperus* (CYP+O) to a group of recipients consisting of several personal names, an old woman (*ka-ra-u-ja*), a dog (*ku-ne*), and an ox (*qo-we*)<sup>23</sup>. Since it was found inside the citadel of Mycenae, being therefore one of the few remnants of the destroyed palatial archives of this city<sup>24</sup>, it is possible that a series similar to the Theban Fq tablets existed at Mycenae also. However, this parallel does not help to identify the real nature of the Theban texts, since its own character remains obscure.

Fortunately, a much more informative group of documents also exists outside the Linear B corpus. A combination of recipients almost identical to that of the Theban Fq series is attested in Sumerian ration lists from Lagash of the period of the third dynasty of Ur (last century of the third millennium BC). These are records dealing with the distribution of bread rations (*ninda*) to the personnel of the messengers' station (*é-kas*<sub>4</sub> – "house of couriers"), issued daily during the fifth year of Amar-Sîn<sup>25</sup>. 76 texts of this group have been identified so far<sup>26</sup>. They can be subdivided into two equal subgroups: (1) records of the guesthouse itself, where various messengers lodged, and (2) records of the household attached to the guesthouse, which served its needs<sup>27</sup>. Four female Amorites (*Mar-tu-mi*, three women and one girl) were present in both groups, and two or three "shipbuilders of Magan" (*má-gín-Má-gan*<sup>ki</sup>) appeared in group (2) during the first month of the year, but they were transferred to group (1) from the fourth month to the end of the year.

Apart from these two groups of personnel, the guesthouse of the messengers' station permanently employed a team of "junior scribes" (*dub-sar-tur-tur*) and had a kennel with watchdogs (*ur-gi-gal-gal*) and two kennelmen (*sipa-ur-gi*<sub>7</sub>). Guests who stayed there for few days only were usually various envoys of a high official entitled *zabar-dab*<sub>5</sub> ("bronze-holder"): his messengers (*lú-kin-gi*<sub>4</sub>-*a-zabar-dab*<sub>5</sub>-*a*, *rá-*

<sup>22</sup> V. L. Aravantinos, L. Godart, A. Sacconi, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 196-197, 201-202.

<sup>23</sup> All these words are either in the nom. pl. or in the dat. sg. The latter possibility is more likely.

<sup>24</sup> G. E. Mylonas, "A New Tablet from Mycenae, MY Fu 711", *Kadmos* 9, 1970, pp. 48-50.

<sup>25</sup> See G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, Napoli 1966, pp. 312-314; M. Sigrist, "Les courriers de Lagas", *Fragmenta historicae Elamicae (mélanges offerts à M.J. Steve)* ed. L. de Meyer, H. Gasche, F. Vallat, Paris 1986, pp. 60-62; A. Uchitel, "Erín-èš-didli", *ASJ* 14, 1992, pp. 322-326; P. Mander, *An Archive of Kennelmen and Other Workers in Ur III Lagash*, Napoli 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Mander republished 47 previously known texts and published 27 new texts in his book. However, two of them (Mander 28 and 54) do not belong to this group, while four others (Pinches BC 88, Sigrist SAT 1.449, Sollberger, *MVN* V.282, and Uchitel ASJ 14.37) are omitted.

<sup>27</sup> Arranged in chronological order the texts of group (1) are: Mander 47, 6, 19, Sollberger *MVN* V.282, Mander 48, 8, 7, 9, 52, 68, 66, 35, 10, 11, 12, 13, 50, 56, 60, 2, 3, 1, 4, 41, 61, 32, 55, 40, 59, 73, 62, 5, 57, 58, 27, 30 (Pinches BC 88 and Mander 14 are undated); the texts of group (2) are: Mander 69, 65, 33, 34, 29, 20, 51, 49, 74, 44, 31, 26, 70, 23, 24, 45, 64, 25, 72, 18, 46, 21, 15, 16, 71, 67, 17, 36, 22, 37, 43, 53, 39, 42, Uchitel ASJ 14.37, Mander 38, 63 (Sigrist SAT 1.449 is undated).

*gaba-zabar-dab<sub>5</sub>*)<sup>28</sup>, his soldier (*agà-uš-zabar-dab<sub>5</sub>*), his cup-bearer (*sagi-zabar-dab<sub>5</sub>-ba*), his cook (*muhaldim-zabar-dab<sub>5</sub>*), and a spear man who came from him (*lú-gi<sup>is</sup>tukul ki zabar-dab<sub>5</sub>-ta gin-na*). Other functionaries, such as royal scribes (*dub-sar-lugal-me*), a judge (*dí-ku<sub>5</sub>*), and foreign envoys (NIM – Elamite), were also present. Outside this group of texts various messengers are well attested in numerous “messenger texts”, which record distribution of beer (*kaš*), bread (*ninda*), and oil (*i-giš*) as their travel rations<sup>29</sup>.

The household of the messengers’ station included the following services: two kinds of storehouses – *gá-nun* manned by one to three old men (*šu-gi<sub>4</sub>*) from the Khabur region (*lú-Hu-bur<sub>x</sub>*)<sup>30</sup>, and a wood stock (*gá-nun-giš-ka*), which employed a team of six to nine “men captured with a throw-net” (*lú-sa-bar-ri-dab<sub>5</sub>-ba*)<sup>31</sup> also from the Khabur valley; a sheep-fold (*é-udu*) with a team of one to four shepherds (*erín-é-udu* or *un-íl-é-udu*); a stable with a team of two donkey-drivers (*dumu-sipa-anše-bar-an*); a poultry farm with one fowl-breeder (*sipa-mušēn*); a vegetable garden with an Elamite horticulturist (NIM *sig<sub>7</sub>-a*); a patrol boat (*má-en-nu-gu-la*) with its “captain” (*šár-ra-ab-túm*)<sup>32</sup> and his team of two (*šà má-en-nu-gu-la*).

Only female Amorites and the old men of the storehouse were permanently employed in this household. All the rest of its personnel appeared for periods of time of various length: the patrol boat was operational on 24/2 and from 19/7 to 12/8; the fowl-breeder appeared from 7/3 to 27/5, and again on 11/6, and from 6/12 to 30/12; the sheepfold operated from 3/6 to 30/12; the horticulturist worked from 3/6 to 5/6 and again from 19/7 to 2/9; the staff of the wood stock worked from 19/7 to 5/11; and the donkey-drivers were employed from 17/9 to 30/12. These temporary workers were probably recruited through the system of the compulsory labour service, and indeed the messengers’ station (*é-kaš*) appears as a destination of four to five conscripts in seven rosters of work-teams from the last two years of the reign of Amar-Sîn (years 8 and 9)<sup>33</sup>.

Similarities between the Theban texts and the Sumerian records of the messengers’ station are obvious enough, even if only the most certain identifications are taken into account. The minor differences between them are easily explicable by different diet habits in Mesopotamia and Greece, and by cultural changes which occurred during the time gap of about eight centuries. It is only natural to find wine in Greece but beer in Mesopotamia, donkeys in the third millennium BC but horses in the second millennium. On the other hand, horses (*anše-sí-sí*)<sup>34</sup> are also attested in Mander 28 associated with the discussed group of texts, and mules (*e-*

<sup>28</sup> *rá-gaba* is an Akkadian loanword. See *rakbû* in *CAD R*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>29</sup> See for example M. Sigrist, *Messenger Texts from the British Museum*, Ann Arbor 1990.

<sup>30</sup> For this reading see M. Sigrist, *Texts from the British Museum* (SAT 1), Bethesda 1993, Nos. 393 (p. 140), 449 (p. 158).

<sup>31</sup> *sa-bar-ri* is an Akkadian loanword. See *saparru* in *CAD S*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>32</sup> *šár-ra-ab-túm* is an Akkadian loanword, see *šarrabtû* in *CAD Š/II*, pp. 66-67. For this reading see A. Uchitel, *ASJ* 14, 1992, No. 3 (pp. 330, 336).

<sup>33</sup> See A. Uchitel, “Erín-èš-didli (II): Patterns of Conscription and Work Assignment during the Years AS 8 – ŠS 1”, *ASJ* 18, 1996, pp. 217-228 (texts Nos. 3-9).

<sup>34</sup> See J. Zarins, “The Domesticated Equidae of Third Millennium BC Mesopotamia”, *JCS* 30, 1978, pp. 4-17.

*mi-jo-no-i*)<sup>35</sup> are attested in Gp 129 and 237 associated with the Fq series. There was also a pigsty at Thebes since pigs (*ko-ro*)<sup>36</sup> are found together with geese as recipients of olives in Ft 219, 220+248, 234, but shepherds (*po-me-ne*)<sup>37</sup> are also attested in a list of personnel Av 101 among other typical recipients of ration of the Fq series<sup>38</sup>.

If less certain identifications of Linear B words are considered, the similarities between the two groups of texts become even more evident. A word *to-jo*, frequently attested in Fq and Gp series<sup>39</sup>, probably stands for the occupational qualification *στοῖος*, unattested in classical Greek, derived from *στοιᾶ* – “storehouse”<sup>40</sup>. Kennelmen, or rather “kennelwomen”, probably appear in Av 100 and Fq 200 in the form *ku-na-ki-si*, which can be interpreted as *κυνηγίσι*, the dative plural of *κυνηγίς*<sup>41</sup>, and geese-keepers are possibly attested in Fq 254+255 as *ka-ne-jo*<sup>42</sup>.

The external connections of the Sumerian records of the messengers' station also find their match at Mycenaean Thebes. The travel rations of beer in Sumerian messenger texts correspond to the Theban wine lists (Gp series), and Sumerian rosters of conscripts correspond to the Theban lists of personnel (Av series). This last correspondence means that at least part of the personnel of Fq series were conscripted through the compulsory labour system.

We have seen that the foreigners at the messengers' station at Lagash were of two kinds: Elamite envoys (NIM) at the guesthouse and foreign workers employed in the household (female Amorites, people from the Khabur valley, Elamites, and ship-builders of Magan<sup>43</sup>). This seems to be the case also at Mycenaean Thebes. Only four members of the personnel of the Fq series received flour instead of barley: a Lacedaemonian<sup>44</sup>, a man from Halai in Opuntian Locris (*a-ra-o*)<sup>45</sup>, *o-to-ro-no* which stands possibly for Othronos (Fq 214)<sup>46</sup>, and an unidentified *ka-wi-jo* (Fq 123, 130, 254+255, 342)<sup>47</sup>. Two of them (a Lacedaemonian and a man of Halai) reappear as recipients of wine in Gp 197, 227, 231. Two other possible foreigners, however, appear as recipients of barley only: an Arcadian<sup>48</sup> and a Milesian<sup>49</sup>. If the comparison with the Sumerian material presented so far is valid, the former were

<sup>35</sup> ἡμίονοις dat. pl.

<sup>36</sup> χοίρω dat. sg.

<sup>37</sup> nom. pl. or dual. of ποιμήν.

<sup>38</sup> *a-ko-da-mo* (Fq 117, 240, 241, 253, 254+255, 257, 258, 275, 307, 309, 343), *ma-di-je* (Fq 214, 241, 254+255, 258, 263, 285, 309, 339, 357), *ko-ru-we* (Fq 117, 126, 169, 214, 241, 284, 309, 331), *to-pa-po-ro-i* (Fq 341).

<sup>39</sup> Fq 214, 239, 240, 241, 253, 254+255, 257, 258, 284, 360, 370; Gp 150, 235.

<sup>40</sup> See V. L. Aravantinos, L. Godart, A. Sacconi, *op. cit.* (note 1), vol. 1, p. 211.

<sup>41</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 167. Another possible interpretation is γυναιξί “for women”.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 226. Another possible interpretation is “goslings”.

<sup>43</sup> Probably modern Makran in south-eastern Iran (Old Persian Maka, Herodotean Mykoi).

<sup>44</sup> See note 16.

<sup>45</sup> Fq 214, 254+255. See V. L. Aravantinos, L. Godart, A. Sacconi, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 211.

<sup>46</sup> An island off Sicily. See *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 182. The proposed cultic interpretation (“servants of the Earth goddess”) is hardly acceptable.

<sup>48</sup> *a-ka-de-i* in Fq 240, 276. See *ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>49</sup> *mi-ra-ti-jo* in Fq 269, 276. See *ibid.*, p. 204.

the envoys temporarily lodged at Thebes, while the latter were members of the personnel of the Theban messengers' station.

The Ur III messengers' station at Lagash was the earliest forerunner of the famous Achaemenid postal system so lucidly described by Herodotus (V.52-54; VIII.98)<sup>50</sup>. Not surprisingly, numerous records of travel rations of flour (ZÍD.DA), beer (KAŠ), and wine (GEŠTIN) similar to the Ur III "messenger texts" were found among the so-called Persepolis Fortification Texts (PFT) from the reign of Darius I<sup>51</sup>. No records of any Achaemenid messengers' station comparable with the Ur III documents discussed above have been identified so far.

However, by the same criteria that enabled us to identify the Theban Fq series as records of the messengers' station, it is possible, in my opinion, to isolate three recapitulative records (so-called "journals" or V series), namely PF 1942, 1943, and PFa 32<sup>52</sup>, from the 19<sup>th</sup> year of Darius I (502 BC) as a file of documents dealing with a messengers' station at Hadaran<sup>53</sup>. The following recipients of barley (ŠE.BAR) are recorded in PF 1943 in this order: (1) 19 women with 16 boys and six girls, including five women who gave birth to two boys and three girls; (2) two horses (ANŠE.KUR.RA) with a stable-master (*hamarnabattiš*)<sup>54</sup> and a horseman (*mudunra*)<sup>55</sup>; (3) a royal storehouse (*hudduhuddu sunkina*) with a baker (*abbebe huttir*), a brewer (KAŠ *huttir*), and a miller (*hardakana*)<sup>56</sup>; (4) a poultry farm (MUŠEN *kittukka*)<sup>57</sup> with a fowl-breeder (MUŠEN *nuškir*) and 332 birds including 150 chickens (*šarnuzza*)<sup>58</sup>, two geese (*ippur*)<sup>59</sup>, and ten ducks (*basbas*)<sup>60</sup>; (5) four oxen (GUD) with an ox-herd (GUD *nuškir*); (6) 30 sheep (UDU) with a shepherd (*šeyaziba*). Travel rations for a tithe collector (*dasaziya*)<sup>61</sup> accompanied by 40 "gentlemen"

<sup>50</sup> The literature on the Persian "royal road" is very extensive, see P. Briant, "De Sardes à Suse", *Achaemenid History VI, Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt), Leiden 1991, pp. 67-82; D. F. Graf, "The Persian Royal Road System", *Achaemenid History VIII, Continuity and Change* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt and M. Cool Rost), Leiden 1994, pp. 167-189; W. Kleiss, "Ein Abschnitt der achaemenidischen Königsstraße von Pasargadae und Persepolis nach Susa, bei Naqsh-e Rostam (Tafeln 7-11)", *AMI* 14, 1981, pp. 45-54; H. Koch, "Die achaemenidische Poststraße von Persepolis nach Susa", *AMI* 19, 1986, pp. 133-148; M. T. Mostafavi, "The Achaemenid Royal Road Post Stations between Susa and Persepolis", *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present* 14 (ed. A. U. Pope and Ph. Ackerman), London/Oxford 1964, pp. 3008-3010.

<sup>51</sup> Q series (PF 1285-1579, 2049-2057). See R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Texts*, Chicago, 1969 (PF) and R. T. Hallock, "Selected Fortification Texts", *CDAFI* 8, 1978, pp. 109-136 (PFa).

<sup>52</sup> PFa 32 records totals of grain distributed to individual recipients in PF 1943.

<sup>53</sup> Alternative spellings are Hašaran (PF 1942), Hadaraš (PF 1943.1, PFa 30) and Hadara (PF 1943.15).

<sup>54</sup> Old Persian *axvarnapati*, W. Hinz and H. Koch, *Elamisches Wörterbuch*, Berlin 1987 (EW), p. 612.

<sup>55</sup> EW, p. 947.

<sup>56</sup> Old Persian *artakana*, EW, p. 591.

<sup>57</sup> EW, p. 494.

<sup>58</sup> EW, p. 1122.

<sup>59</sup> EW, p. 765.

<sup>60</sup> Akkadian *paspasu*, see Hallock, *PFT*, p. 48. Hinz and Koch interpret this word as "peacocks", which is less probable (EW, p. 125).

<sup>61</sup> Old Persian *dabaçiya*, EW, p. 294.

(*šalup*) with 11 boys and five horses are recorded in PF 1942 together with 17 more horses, two horsemen (*manturrabatiš*)<sup>62</sup>, and two grooms (*pasanabattiš*)<sup>63</sup>.

This pair of texts almost exactly corresponds to the two groups of documents from Ur III Lagash dealing respectively with the household and the guesthouse of the messengers' station. The latter probably corresponds to κατάλυσις of Herodotus (V.52), which was borrowed into the Aramaic in the forms *qaṭloza'* and *'aṭluza'* with the meaning "butcher shop".<sup>64</sup> The assumption that there was a messengers' station at Hadaran is further confirmed by PFa 30, where in the 21 year of Darius I (500 BC) four spear bearers (<sup>65</sup>SI.KAK *kutip*)<sup>65</sup> and "road surveyors" (*dattišmarašpe*)<sup>66</sup> received their wine rations while waiting for six days at Hadaran for the king's coming.

The following services can be identified as essential components of the messengers' station at Ur III Lagash, Mycenaean Thebes, and Achaemenid Hadaran: (1) a kitchen which employed women with children, (2) a poultry farm, (3) stables with donkeys and/or horses, (4) a sheepfold, (5) a food-store, (6) the guesthouse itself, which hosted foreign envoys and other messengers. Additionally, a kennel is attested at Ur III Lagash, Mycenae, and Thebes. Woodworks are attested only at Ur III Lagash (wood stock and ship-builders), and Mycenaean Thebes (carpenters). A cattle-shed is found only at Mycenae and Achaemenid Hadaran. A scriptorium, patrol boat, and vegetable garden are found only at Ur III Lagash, and a pigsty was only at Mycenaean Thebes. As for the commodities distributed, Theban and Achaemenid texts are the most similar: barley was distributed to the employees of the household, and flour and wine to its guests in both cases.

The correspondences between the four groups of texts from Ur III Lagash, Mycenaean Thebes, Mycenae (Fu 711), and Achaemenid Hadaran are shown in the following table.

The proposed interpretation of the Theban Fq series and related texts from Odo Pelopidou as records of messengers' station raises several important questions. Both Ur III and Achaemenid Persian documents reflect the imperial network of messengers' stations connecting the centre with the periphery of vast bureaucratic empires. The collapse of this network caused by the Amorite migration at the end of the third millennium BC caused in turn a collapse of the Ur III empire. Did such network also exist in Mycenaean Greece? Does Fu 711 testify that a messengers' station existed also at Mycenae? Is there any connection between the Theban messengers' station and the famous Theban collection of Babylonian cylinder seals, which were identified by Porada<sup>67</sup> as a royal gift of the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I to the ruler of Ahhiyawa?

<sup>62</sup> Old Persian equivalent of the Elamite *mudunra*: see Hallock *PFT*, p. 724 and *EW*, p. 872.

<sup>63</sup> Old Persian *faṭhanapati*, *EW*, p. 162.

<sup>64</sup> Hebrew *'itiliz*. For this etymology see A. Steinsalz (ed.), *Talmud bavli*, vol. 22, *Masekhet 'avodah zarah*, Jerusalem 2001, p. 49.

<sup>65</sup> <sup>65</sup>SI.KAK is a misspelling for <sup>65</sup>ŠI.DÛ, see *EW*, pp. 1080, 1155.

<sup>66</sup> Old Persian *dātiš-hmāra*, *EW*, p. 257.

<sup>67</sup> E. Porada, "The Cylinder Seals Found at Thebes in Boeotia", *AfO* 28, 1981/82, pp. 1-70.

The problem of Ahhiyawa has a long history of its own. Forrer's original hypothesis that this was Mycenaean Greece<sup>68</sup> suffered decades of almost unanimous rejection; then an influential article by Güterbock<sup>69</sup> turned the tide, and now this equation is part of general consensus. However, Mycenologists have never seriously confronted this identification<sup>70</sup>. It is true that two major Linear B archives from Knossos and Pylos provide practically no information from outside Crete and Messenia, but the power allied with Assyria against the Hittites could not possibly have been the Theban principality, which did not control even neighbouring Orchomenus.<sup>71</sup> The interpretation proposed here of the Theban Fq series and associated texts from Odos Pelopidou as records of the messengers' station means, among other things, that the first glimpse on an institution operating in the imperial framework of the hypothetical kingdom of Ahhiyawa is possible.

*Alexander Uchitel*  
*Dept. of General History*  
*University of Haifa*  
*IL – Mount Carmel, Haifa*

---

<sup>68</sup> E. Forrer, "Vorhomerische Griechen in den Keilschrifttexten von Boghazkoï", *MDOG* 63, 1924, pp. 1-22; "Die Griechen in den Boghazkoi-Texten", *OLZ* 27, 1924, pp. 113-118.

<sup>69</sup> H. G. Güterbock, "Hittites and Achaeans: A New Look", *PAPhS* 128, 1984, pp. 114-122.

<sup>70</sup> For the most recent survey of the problem see G. Mariotta, *Struttura politica e fisco nello "stato" miceneo. Aspetti e problemi della storia greca delle origini*, Padova 2003, pp. 177-195.

<sup>71</sup> List of "towns" under direct control of Thebes is found in Ft 140.



Attestations	Ur III Lagash	Mycenaean Thebes	Mycenae (Fu 711)	Achaemenid Hadaran
<u>Kitchen</u> Women with children Baker Brewer Miller	<i>Mar-tu-mí</i>	<i>ko-wa, ka-ra-wi-ja</i>	<i>ka-ra-u-ja</i>	19 women, 16 boys, 6 girls, 5 babies <i>abbebe hutir</i> KAŠ <i>hutir</i> <i>hardakana</i>
Kennel Dogs  Kennelmen	<i>ur-gi-gal-gal</i>  <i>sipa-ur-gi,</i>	<i>ku-si, ku-ne, ku- no</i> <i>ku-na-ki-si</i>	<i>ku-ne</i>	
Poultry farm Geese Chickens Ducks Birds Fowl-breeder	     <i>sipa-mušen</i>	<i>ka-si, ka-ne, ka-no</i>   <i>o-ni-si</i> <i>ka-ne-jo</i>		MUŠEN <i>kittukka</i> 2 <i>ippur</i> 150 <i>šarnuzza</i> 10 <i>basbas</i> 332 MUŠEN MUŠEN <i>nuškir</i>
<u>Stables</u> Mules Donkey- drivers  Horses Horsemen  Grooms Stable- masters	<i>dumu-sipa-anše- bar-an</i>	<i>e-mi-jo-no-i</i>    <i>e-pi-qi-i</i> <i>i-qi-po-qi-i</i>		24 ANŠE.KUR.RA <i>mudunra,</i> 2 <i>manturrabattiš</i> 2 <i>pasanabattiš</i> <i>hamarnabattiš</i>
<u>Sheepfold</u> Sheep Shepherds	<i>é-udu</i>  <i>erín-é-udu, un-íl-é- udu</i>	  <i>po-me-ne</i>		30 UDU <i>šeyaziba</i>
<u>Cattle-shed</u> Oxen Ox-herd			<i>qi-we</i>	4 GUD GUD <i>nuškir</i>
<u>Woodworks</u> Wood stock Ship- builders of Magan Carpenters	<i>gá-nun-giš</i> <i>má-gin-Má-gan<sup>2</sup></i>	    <i>te-ka-ta-si</i>		
<u>Food-store</u> Old-men from Khabur Store-keeper	<i>gá-num</i>  <i>šú-gi, lú-Hu-bur,</i>	  <i>to-jo</i>		<i>hudduhuddu</i> <i>sunkina</i>
Guesthouse Messengers  Foreigners  Road surveyors Spear bearers	<i>é-kaš,</i> <i>lú-kin-gi-a, rá-gaba</i>  NIM  <i>lú-<sup>2</sup>tukul-gu-la</i>	   <i>ra-ke-da-mi-ni-jo,</i> <i>a-ra-o</i>		   <i>Dattišmarašpe</i>  <sup>2</sup> ŠT.KAK <i>kutip</i>