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including a discussion of the hieroglyphic Luwian lexemes hatura-, api
and (*205)atun(i)-**

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Citation

Waal, W. J. I. (2021). A new interpretation of the opening lines of the Assur letters:
including a discussion of the hieroglyphic Luwian lexemes hatura-, api and (*205)atun(i)-.
Zeitschrift Für Assyriologie Und Vorderasiatische Archäologie, 111(2), 263-281.
doi:10.1515/za-2021-2006

Version: Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3247546>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Abhandlung

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A New Interpretation of the Opening Lines of the Assur Letters

Including a Discussion of the Hieroglyphic Luwian Lexemes *hatura-*, *api* and *(*205)atun(i)-*<https://doi.org/10.1515/za-2021-2006>

Abstract: In this paper a new interpretation of the *hatura*-clauses in the Hieroglyphic Luwian Assur letters will be presented. First of all, it will be argued that the Hieroglyphic Luwian lexeme *hatura-*, which is usually connected to the Hittite verb *ḫatrae-* ‘to send’, ‘to write’ and translated as ‘letter’, is in fact related to the Hittite word *ḫattuli-* and Cuneiform Luwian *ḫattulaḫid-*, meaning ‘health’, ‘wellbeing’. Secondly, the article will suggest that the Hieroglyphic Luwian word *api*, which is usually translated as ‘back’, or ‘again’, primarily functions as a discourse marker. Lastly, it will be proposed that the Hieroglyphic Luwian word for ‘letter’ or ‘message’ is *(*205)atun(i)-*. These new interpretations yield a better understanding of the opening lines of the Assur-letters and elucidate some other opaque passages of this intriguing correspondence.¹

1 Introduction: The Assur letters

In 1905 a modest, but fascinating collection of documents was found in Assur under the floor of a secondarily built house, consisting of an alabaster tablet and seven rectangular lead strips of varying sizes.² The alabaster tablet

contains an Old Assyrian cuneiform inscription and can be dated to the 18th/17th century BCE (Grayson 1985, 9–14). The seven lead strips are inscribed with Anatolian Hieroglyphs and they are dated some thousand years later, to the late 8th century BCE (Hawkins 2000, 534). It has been proposed that these lead strips originally came from the area around Karkamish and that they were taken to Assur as booty (e.g., Payne 2014, 135), but apart from the fact that Karkamish appears to be mentioned as the place of residence of the addressee in one of the letters, there is no evidence to substantiate this claim.³ According to Walter Andrae (1924, 4) the Old Assyrian tablet and Hieroglyphic Luwian lead strips were deliberately buried together, which is remarkable as they apparently represent completely unrelated documents, stemming from very different time periods. In order to explain this curious fact, Andrae (1924, 4–5) suggests that they were ritually deposited in the 7th century BCE by a house owner, who was unaware of their content. All in all, the fortuitous discovery of these Hieroglyphic Luwian texts in Assur raises some intriguing questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered. Not only the provenance, but also the contents

¹ This article is based on a lecture I gave in 2016 at the workshop ‘Luwic Dialects: Inheritance and Diffusion’ at the University of Barcelona. Afterwards, Zsolt Simon kindly informed me that Rostislav Oreshko independently reached a very similar conclusion in his unpublished dissertation (Oreshko 2012, 116). He suggests connecting *hatura-* with Luwian *ḫattulāḫit-* ‘health’; and sees *hatura-* as a graphic variant of *ha-tā-ra/i-* / *ha-IUDEX-ra/i-*. Though he briefly refers to the possible implications of this new interpretation for the opening lines of the Assur letters (Oreshko 2012, 116, n. 449), he does not discuss them in any detail. I am very grateful to Martien Dillo, Alwin Kloekhorst, Xander Vertegaal and Theo van den Hout for their very useful and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and to the reviewers of ZA, Federico Giusfredi, Petra Goedegebuure, and Walther Sallaberger for their extremely valuable suggestions. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for the views expressed here and any errors that may remain. Abbreviations follow those of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary.

² For the dimensions of the lead strips and their discovery, see Hawkins (2000, 533) with references. Other Hieroglyphic Luwian texts on lead strips include 5 texts from Kululu (Hawkins 2000,

503–513), the Kırşehir letter (Akdoğan/Hawkins 2010; Weeden 2013) and an illegible lead strip from Boğazköy (Akdoğan/Hawkins 2010, 2. 14–16).

³ See letter *a* § 6.

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of the lead strips are enigmatic. The documents have been identified as letters, but there are still many uncertainties regarding their precise meaning and interpretation.⁴ In this article, I would like to shed new light on the so-called ‘*hatura*-clauses’, which occur in all of the Assur letters. In doing so, I have gratefully made use of David Hawkins’ monumental edition *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* (CHLI) and the online *Annotated Corpus of Luwian Texts* (ACLT) of the team led by Ilya Yakubovich.⁵

2 The *hatura*-clauses

The *hatura*-clauses occur in the incipits of all the Assur letters, and there are some additional attestations of the word *hatura*- in the longer letters *e* and *f+g* (see below § 8.5–6). In the opening lines, the *hatura*-clauses show the same basic pattern (cf. Hawkins 2000, 539–40).

hatura-clauses in the opening lines of the Assur letters

- Ia. with orthotonic pronoun + enclitic pronoun of the 1st person plural
 | *a-za₅-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*a* § 3)
 | *á-za₅-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*e* § 4⁶)
 | *á-za₅-za-haⁱ-wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a* || (*d* § 4)
 | *a-za₅-a-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*f+g* § 3)
- Ib. with enclitic pronoun of the 1st person plural
 | *á-pi-wa/i-za* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*c* § 2)
- Ic. with orthotonic pronoun + enclitic pronoun of the 1st person singular
 | *á-mu-ha-wa/i-mu* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*b* § 3)
- Id. with orthotonic pronoun + enclitic pronoun of the 2nd person plural
 | *u-za₅-za* || *-wa/i-ma-za* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*c* § 4)
 | *wa/i-ma-za* | *u-za₅-za* | *ha-tu-ra-a* | *a-sa-ta-ni* (*e* § 6)

In the letters *d* and *e* the clause is followed by a clause in negation:

- II | *wa/i-za* NEG₂- | REL-*ha-na* | *ha-tu+ra/i-naⁱ* | *ha-tu-ra+aⁱ* (*d* § 5)

⁴ For a study of these letters from a diplomatic perspective, see Dillo (2017).

⁵ Available online at <http://web-corpora.net/LuwianCorpus>. My research has further benefitted from the editions of Giusfredi (2010, 208–233) and Payne (2012, 108–118).

⁶ Compare also letter *e* § 8 | *wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *a-za₅-za-ha* | *ha-tu+ra/i-* ||, see below § 8.5.

| *wa/i-za* NEG₂- | REL-*i-ha* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na* | *ha-tu-ra+a* (*e* § 5)

The following recurring elements may be identified in the *hatura*-clauses:

1. orthotonic pronoun (1st or 2nd plural/singular)⁷
2. connective particle *-ha* + quotative particle *-wa*⁸
3. enclitic pronoun (1st or 2nd plural/singular)
4. *á-pi*⁹
5. *ha-tu-ra+a*

Of particular interest is the second example listed under Id (*e*, § 6), where the verb form *a-sa-ta-ni* ‘you (pl.) are’ has been added. The presence of the verb ‘to be’ in this sentence makes it highly plausible that in the other cases we are dealing with nominal sentences. Since the verb form (2nd pl. pres.) corresponds to the orthotonic pronoun *u-za₅-za* (2nd pl.) in the same clause, it follows that the orthotonic pronouns function as the subject of the sentence (cf. Hawkins 2000, 540). In Hittite, nominal sentences in the first and second person always contain either the reflexive *-za* or the corresponding form of the dative enclitic pronoun.¹⁰ In Hieroglyphic Luwian, we find a similar construction (Hoffner/Melchert 2008, 364 with references), which would account for the presence of the enclitic pronouns in the *hatura*-clauses. These clauses are thus to be interpreted as nominal clauses with a subject in the first or second person, in which *ha-tu-ra+a* must function as the predicate (cf. Hawkins 2000, 540). Now that the general grammatical structure of the clauses and the function of the pronouns seem clear, we can turn to the meaning of *hatura*-.

3 The meaning of *hatura*:- previous interpretations

The word *hatura*- is usually connected to the Hittite verb *ḫatrae*- ‘to send’, ‘to write’.¹¹ The form *ha-tu-ra+a* has been interpreted as a verbal noun in the dat./loc sg.,¹² and the

⁷ The orthotonic pronoun is missing in letter *c*, § 2.

⁸ For a recent discussion of the function of these clitics, see Giusfredi (2020, 145–151).

⁹ For the meaning of *api*, see below § 7.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Hoffner/Melchert (2008, 362); van den Hout (2011, 63).

¹¹ See below § 6.

¹² Hawkins (2000, 541) prefers to make a distinction between **hatur* n. ‘writing’ and *hatura*- c. ‘letter’ and Yakubovich (2015, 34) takes *ha-tu-ra+a* as a gerundive form with the *-ura/-wara* suffix (but see Giusfredi 2020, 135–136, and below n. 32). Note that in the spelling

construction of the *hatura*-clauses has been compared to the Hittite construction ‘to be’ + infinitive.¹³ The adverb *api*, which is present in many of the clauses, is usually seen as the Hieroglyphic Luwian equivalent of Hittite *appa*, meaning ‘back’, ‘again’ or ‘behind’. This yields the following translations for, e. g., letter *a* § 3 and letter *e* § 6:

Assur letter *a* § 3

| *a-za₅-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*

We are to write back. / Are we ourselves to write back?

Assur letter *e* § 6

| *wa/i-ma-za* | *u-za₅-za* | *ha-tu-ra+a* | *a-sa-ta-ni*

You yourselves are to write.¹⁴

The above interpretation is problematic from both a formal and semantic perspective. To start with the first: the construction with the verb ‘to be’ + dative is not unambiguously attested anywhere else in the Hieroglyphic Luwian text corpus. There are two possible cases, but their interpretation is fraught with uncertainties.¹⁵ The adduced parallel with the Hittite construction ‘to be’ + infinitive is also weak. Apart from the fact that one could argue that a construction with a dative verbal noun is hardly the same as a construction with an infinitive, the occurrence of the construction of the verb ‘to be’ + infinitive is quite rare, if not non-existent, in Hittite.¹⁶ The lack of clear parallels makes

this solution unappealing. More serious, however, are the semantic difficulties. If we look at the wider context, the current interpretation does not yield a particularly persuasive meaning, see for example:

Assur letter *b* § 1–3:

1 | *á-sa₅-za* | DOMUS-*ni-wa/i+ra/i-ia* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i-*
⟨LOQUI ...?⟩

2 | *sa-na-wa/i+ra/i-i* | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*si*

3 | *á-mu-ha-wa/i-mu* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*

Say to Parniwari, Taksala (speaks):

May you *guard* yourself well!¹⁷

And I must write back/Must I write back?

This is a peculiar start of a letter; why would the sender Taksala begin with the statement that he has to write back? The sentence has been interpreted as a rhetorical question (Hawkins 2000, 541), which is altogether not a very satisfying solution. Things get even more problematic if we look at the additional clauses in letters *d* and *e* in which the necessity of writing a letter is seemingly denied:

Assur letter *d* § 5

| *wa/i-za* | NEG₂-’ | REL-*ha-na* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na-i* | *ha-tu-ra+a-i*

Assur letter *e* § 5

| *wa/i-za* | NEG₂-’ | REL-*i-ha* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na* | *ha-tu-ra+a*

We are not to write any letter.

Why would the persons who are writing the letter state that they do not need to write a letter? This contradictory statement has been understood as an indignant denial; the sender is not to write a letter, because it is actually the turn of the addressee, and not the sender, to write a letter.¹⁸ Such an explanation is certainly possible, as complaints

ha-tu-ra+a-i, the *-i* has to be understood as a space filler, see Hawkins (2000, 540) and Vertegaal (2017).

¹³ Morpurgo Davies 1980, 91.

¹⁴ For this translation, see, e. g., Hawkins (2000, 541) and Payne (2014, 141).

¹⁵ See Hawkins (2000, 541 with references) and Giusfredi (2020, 135–35).

¹⁶ The examples of this construction given by Friedrich (1974, 143) can mostly be explained otherwise: KUB 23.11 rev. iii 9f.: [n]uza *kuitman* ^mTudhaliyaš LUGAL.GAL INA KUR ^{URU}Aššūwa *lahhīyawanzi ešun*, which Friedrich translates as ‘... ich hatte ins Land Assuwa zu Felde zu ziehen’, should rather be interpreted as follows: ‘while, I the Great King, Tudhaliya, was in Assuwa for military operations’, see CHD L-N s. v. *lah(h)iya-*. Likewise, KUB 12.12 obv. 32: NINDA.KUR₄.RA *paršīyawanzi* NU.GÁL – ‘Brot gibt es nicht zu brechen’ should be understood as ‘there was no bread to break/for breaking’, with the infinitive *paršīyawanzi* depending on the noun NINDA.KUR₄.RA (differently Hoffner/Melchert (2008, 334) who, like Friedrich, take *paršīyawanzi* as dependent on the verb ‘to be’). The only possible example of ‘to be’ + infinitive in the meaning ‘to have to’ is the following passage in KUB 6.44 rev. iv 23: *tuk-ma* [kī ut]tar šā-ta šianna *išhiull-a ešdu* (Friedrich 1974, 143: ‘dir aber soll dieses Wort ins Herz zu legen und eine Vorschrift sein’, cf. CHD Š, 17s. v. *šai-*, *šiye-*: ‘But let [this] matter be for you something to be taken to heart and an obligation’. Note, however, that the expression šā-ta šianna can also be used independently in the meaning ‘to remember’ (see KUB 30.39 rev. 7 and its duplicate KBo 10.20 iv 24, in case of the latter we find the form šā-ta

ši-ia-an-na-aš). Rather than interpreting the sentence as a zeugmatic construction, in which the infinitive *šianna* is governed by *ešdu*, it is preferable to take šā-ta šianna to be dependent on *uttar*: ‘Let this be a matter to remember and an obligation for you’.

¹⁷ The translation and reading of the verb PUGNUS.PUGNUS is debated. Oreshko (2012, 150–223) has argued that the verb PUGNUS.PUGNUS means ‘to protect’ and therefore proposes a reading TUTOR. TUTOR. He translates the above greeting formula as ‘Be protected in respect of (your) well-being!’ (Oreshko 2012, 163). Differently, Melchert (2014) has proposed that PUGNUS.PUGNUS means ‘to hold, to grasp.’ He translates the above sentence as ‘Have/ You shall have good things for yourself!’. Based on the available evidence, I suggest that the basic meaning of the verb is ‘to (safe)guard’, ‘to keep’, which more or less reconciles the interpretations of Melchert and Oreshko. For a discussion of *sa-na-wa/i-* see Yakubovich (2016, esp. p. 470–71).

¹⁸ Hawkins 2000, 541. See also Morpurgo Davies (1980, 91): ‘We have to write, but we have no letter to write; it is you who have to write’. Compare also letter *c* § 4 *u-za₅-za-wa/i-ma-za ha-tu-ra+a* – ‘You yourselves are to write’.

about not receiving letters are known from other ancient Near Eastern letters (see, e.g., Sallaberger 1999, 108–109 and below § 8.1). In this case, however, it is not an attractive solution, as the *hatura*-clauses occur in all of the letters, which are written by different senders to different addressees. It would be quite a coincidence if all the senders would consistently start their letters with a rhetorical question and/or complaint about the lack of response from the addressee(s). The omnipresence of the *hatura*-clause in the opening lines rather suggests that they represent some kind of standard greeting formula. This idea is all the more appealing, because formulaic opening lines are a well-known phenomenon in ancient Near Eastern letters.

4 The opening lines of ancient Near Eastern letters

The corpus of cuneiform letters that has come down to us is vast and diverse. Though they may be written in different languages by different people in different regions and time periods, one can discern some general patterns in the opening lines of the letters. They typically start with the conventional address formula ‘Thus speaks X, say to Y’, after which follow the greeting formulae. These usually consist of a customary blessing regarding the health, life or longevity of the addressee.¹⁹ In addition, the sender may inform the addressee about his or her own well-being, particularly when the sender and addressee are of the same rank – which seems to be the case for the Assur letters.²⁰ We find examples hereof from all time periods. From the second millennium BCE, one may, for instance, recall the famous opening lines of the international Amarna correspondence, in which the sender informs the addressee about his or her health and then wishes the addressee well, for which elaborate standard formulae are used.

EA 1: 1–9

1. [a-n]a ^mka-da-aš^l-ma-an-en-líl sār KUR ka-ra-an-du-n[i]-še^l
2. ^lšeš^l-ia qí-bí-ma um-ma ^mni-ib-mu-a-re-a LUGAL GAL
3. šār KUR mī-iš-ri-^{ik}l šēš-ka-ma a-na maḥ-ri-ia šul-mu
4. a-na maḥ-ri-ka ^llu^l-ú šul-mu a-na é-ka a-na DAM^{meš}-ka

¹⁹ For discussion of these greeting formulae see, e.g., Salonen (1967); Sallaberger (1999, 74–86); Hoffner (2009, 28–29) and Hackl [e.a.] (2014, 7–16).

²⁰ Letters from an inferior to a superior usually contain only the blessing formula for the addressee, see, e.g., Hackl [e.a.] (2014, 32); Baker/Gross (2015, 86–89); Radner (2015, 68–70). Kings and high officials could leave out or abbreviate the standardized greeting formulae in letters to their inferiors (Jursa/Hackl 2015, 104).

5. a-na DUMU^{meš}-ka a-na LÚ^{meš} GAL.GAL^{meš}-ka ANŠE.KUR.RA^{meš}-ka
6. ^{giš}GIGIR^{meš}-ka a-na lib-bi KUR.KUR-ka da-an-ni-iš lu-ú šul-mu
7. a-na ia-a-ši šul-mu a-na é-ia a-na DAM^{meš}-ia a-na DUMU^{meš}-ia
8. a-na LÚ^{meš} GAL.GAL^{meš}-ia ANŠE.KUR.RA^{meš}-ia ^{giš}GIGIR^{meš}-ia
9. ÉRIN^{meš}-(ia) ma-ad šul-mu ù (a-na) lib-bi KUR.KUR-ia ma-gal
šul-mu

Speak to Kadašman-Enlil, king of the land of Karaduniaš my brother! Thus Nibmu'are'a, the great king, king of the land of Egypt, your brother: With me all is well; may all be well with you. With your house, with your wives, with your sons, with your senior officials, with your horses and with your chariotry, (and) in the midst of your territories, may all be exceedingly well.

With me all is well, with my house, my wives, with my sons, with my senior officials, my horses, my chariotry (and) (my) troops, it is all very well and within my territories it is very well. (translation: Rainey 2015, 58–59)

Similar, though less ostentatious, greeting formulae exchanging wishes and information about each other's wellbeing, are found in Hittite correspondence (Hoffner 2009, 32 with references), see, for example, the opening lines of the piggyback letter HKM 21 from Mašat Höyük.

HKM 21: 16–18

(16) UM-MA ^mša-an-d[a] A-NA ^muz-zu-u

(17) ŠEŠ DÜG.GA-IA QÍ-[B]í-MA kat-ti-mi SIG₅-in

(18) Ū MA-ḤAR ŠEŠ DÜG.GA-[I]A ḥu-u-ma-an SIG₅-in e-eš-du

Thus speaks Šanda: Say to my dear brother Uzzū: All is well with me. May all be well with my dear brother. (translation: Hoffner 2009, 133)

The Old Babylonian standard greeting formulae in private letters more or less follow the following pattern: *ana šulmīya tašpuram – šalmāku. ana šulmika ašpuram – šulumka šupram* – ‘Mir zum Heil hast Du geschrieben – Mir geht es gut. Dir zum Heil schreibe ich – Schreibe dein Heil!’ (Sallaberger 1999, 90).

Similar opening lines are found in private letters from the first millennium BCE, such as the following Neo-Babylonian letter from Sippar.

Istanbul S. 54: 1–6

1. IM ^mir-^dgu-la

2. a-na ^lma-a-ta-ri-šat

3. ^mDINGIR-ú-kal-an-ni u ^mga-bi-e

4. u ÉRIN^{meš} gab-bi ša ina é

5. šu-lum ia-a-ši

6. lu-ú šu-lum a-na ka-šú-nu

Brief von Arad-Gula an Mat-rišat, Ilu-ukallanni und Gabe sowie das ganze Personal, das sich am Haus aufhält. Ich bin wohlauf. Ich hoffe, euch geht es gut. (translation: Hackl [e.a.] 2014, 333, no. 224)²¹

²¹ Compare also the opening lines of CT 22 193, see Hackl [e.a.] (2014, 128).

To the above, an infinite number of examples could be added from various regions and time periods. Though it is not attested in all correspondence, the practice to start a letter by exchanging information and wishes regarding each other's wellbeing was very common all over the ancient Near East. This is hardly surprising, as similar opening lines can be found in letters from virtually all ages all over the world— it is still a customary start of a letter or email today. The opening lines in the cuneiform correspondence are quite formulaic and standardized, and in some cases may even have become a meaningless truism (Sallaberger 1999, 100, see also below § 8.4), though they could certainly also reflect genuine interest and concern (Hackl [e.a.] 2014, 101–2).

5 The opening lines of the Assur-letters

The first lines of the Assur-letters all follow the same pattern which is quite similar to the address formulae of ancient Near Eastern letters discussed above ('Thus speaks X, say to Y'):²²

Assur letter a § 1

1. | *á-sa₅-za* | REL-*pa-ti-wa/i+ra/i-ia* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/iⁱ* |
('LOQUI') *ha-ri+i-ti-i*

Say to Kwipatiwari, Taksala speaks:

Assur letter b § 1

1 | *á-sa₅-za* | DOMUS-*ni-wa/i+ra/i-ia* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/iⁱ* |
(LOQUI *ha-ri+i-ti-i*)

Say to Parniwari, Taksala (speaks):

Assur letter c § 1

1 | *á-sa₅-za-wa/i* | *ka-ka-ia* | REL-*si-ti-ti-mi-ha* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i* |
('LOQUI')-*ha-ri+i-ti*

Say to Kaka and Kwisistimi, Taksala speaks:

Assur-letter d § 1

1 | *á-sa₅-za-wa/i* | [DOM]US-*ni-**375-*[...]-ia-i* | [*ta*]-*ka-sa-i*-[*la-s*]*á-wa/i* | [*(LOQ)UI*]-*ha-ri+i-ti'*

Say to Parni- ..[...], Taksala speaks:

Assur letter e § 1

1 | *á-sa₅-za* | [*i*] *pi-ha-mi* | *hara/i-na-wa/i-za-sa-wa/i* | ('LOQUI')-*ha-ri+i-ti*

Say to Pihami, Harnawiza speaks:

Assur letter f+g § 1

1 | *á-sa₅-za* | *i-ia-mi* | *ma-mu-ti-ha* | *ta-ka-sa-la-wa/iⁱ* | *ma-mu-sa-ha* | ('LOQUI') *ha-ti-i-ti*

Say to Iyami and *partner*, Taksala and *partner* speak:

We find an identical phrasing in the only other preserved letter, the Kırşehir lead strip, which suggests that this address formula was conventional and widely spread:

Kırşehir letter § 1

1 *á-sa₅-za-a-wa/i* DOMINUS-*[ni-i]* *á-mi-i tu-wa/i-ti-ia* SERVUS-*la/i-ti-sa-wa/i tu-wa/i-sà* [*m*] *mu-wa/i-ta-li-i-sá* | (LOQUI) *ha+ra/i-i-ti*

Say to my lord Tuwatti, your servant Muwatali speaks:

In the Assur-letters, the address formula is followed by a wish of wellbeing to the addressee, except in the case of letter c.²³ In letters, *a*, *b* and *d*, this is expressed in the following manner:

| *sa-na-wa/i+ra/i* | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*si* (*a* § 2, *b* § 2, *d* § 2)

The above phrase must mean something like 'May you guard/keep yourself well'.²⁴ In letters *e* and *f+g*, a different phrasing is used, which is also found in letter *d* § 3:

[*i*] *sa-pi-su+ra/i-wa/i-ti* (*e* § 2)

| *sa-pi-su+ra/i-wa/i-ma-za* (*f+g* § 2)

| *sa-pi-su+ra/i-ha-wa/i-ri+i* (*d* § 3)

Peace be to you!

The form *sa-pi-su+ra/i* can be interpreted as a nominative (/accusative) neuter singular, and the enclitic pronouns *-ti* (or rhotacized *-ri*) and *-ma(n)za* as datives/locatives ('peace be to you').²⁵ Alternatively, following Melchert (1988, 42), one can take *sa-pi-su+ra/i* as a dative singular, and *-ti* (or rhotacized *-ri*) and *-ma(n)za* as reflexives or dative enclitic pronouns which are obligatory in a nominal sentence in the first or second person (cf. § 2 above): '(May) you (be) in health'.²⁶

Both Hawkins (2000, 539) and Melchert (1988, 42) have pointed out the apparent correspondence between the grammatical construction of the *hatura*-clauses and the preceding *sapisur(a)*-clauses. I would like to propose that these two clauses are not only similar on a syntactic

²² For discussion of this formula, see Hawkins (2000, 538) and Dillo (2017, 532–533).

²³ See also Dillo (2017, 533).

²⁴ See above n. 17.

²⁵ See Hawkins (2000, 538–539) for discussion. For the blessing formula in the Kırşehir letter § 2–3, see below § 8.7.

²⁶ Note that Melchert (1988, 42) interprets *-ti/-ri* and *-ma(n)za* as reflexives.

level, but that they are also semantically related, and that, like the *sapisur(a)*-clauses, the *hatura*-clauses are part of the standard greeting formulae of letters.²⁷ As shown in the previous paragraph, the opening lines of letters typically contain (1) the conventional address formula, (2) a blessing of the health of the addressee and (3) information about the sender's well-being.²⁸ In the current interpretation of the Assur-letters, the first two elements (address formula and blessing) are present, but the sender does not disclose anything about his own situation. In the following, it will be argued that this information is conveyed in the *hatura*-clauses, which have a comparable function as the conventional Akkadian formula *šalmāku* – 'I am well'.

6 A new interpretation of *hatura*-

As mentioned in § 3, the word *hatura*- is usually linked to the Hittite word *ḫatrae*- 'to send', 'to write'. This relation was first proposed by Meriggi (1935–36, 113, 116–117) rejecting an earlier suggestion by Emil Forrer (1932, 45) who suggested that *hatura*- (which he read as *ha-tu-a*-') must mean 'heil' or 'gut'. Meriggi's interpretation has been followed by most scholars,²⁹ but I would like to rehabilitate the proposal of Forrer, for which a solid etymology can be provided. As already suggested by Rostislav Oreshko, the word *hatura*- can be related to the Hittite word *ḫattuli*- 'health', 'well-being', and to the Cuneiform Luwian word *ḫattulaḫid*- 'health'.³⁰ This interpretation meets no formal problems, as in Hieroglyphic Luwian /l/ is often changed to /r/ (Melchert 1994, 259). In the *hatura*-clauses, *hatura*- is to be understood as the dative-locative sg. of the noun *hatura*-, meaning 'in health'. This yields the following translation for the opening lines of Assur letter *b*:

Assur letter *b* § 1–3:

1 | *á-sa₅-za* | DOMUS-*ni-wa/i+ra/i-ia* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i*-'(LO-
QUI *ha-ri+i-ti*)

2 | *sa-na-wa/i+ra/i-i* | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*si*

3 | *á-mu-ha-wa/i-mu* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*

Say to Pamiwari, Taksala [speaks]: May you *guard* yourself well!
And me, I am in health *api*. (But now do this first request for me: ...)

²⁷ Cf. Giusfredi (2010, 209). With respect to the *hatura*-clause in Assur letter *b* § 3 he suggests that the sentence 'probably represented a technical element of the economic correspondence' (Giusfredi 2010, 215).

²⁸ Cf. Dillo (2017, 532–533).

²⁹ See, e.g., Melchert (1988, 30); Hawkins (2000, 540); Yakubovich (2015, 34) and Giusfredi (2012, 157–58).

³⁰ Oreshko 2012, 166.

From a semantic perspective, the above translation is appealing: the opening lines (including those of letter *c*!) now present an exchange of wishes and information about the addressee's and sender's health, similar to the standard *incipits* of other ancient Near Eastern letters.³¹ It is also preferable from a syntactic point of view, as it produces a much simpler and more common construction than the current interpretation. Lastly, the here proposed etymology, linking *hatura*- to *ḫattuli*- 'health' is more straightforward than the earlier proposed connection between *ḫatrae*- and *hatura*-, which is not without problems.³²

The here suggested interpretation, however, does require a different understanding of the adverb *api*, which occurs in many of the *hatura*-clauses. This word is now usually translated as 'back' or 'again' – a translation that does not fit the new interpretation. As will be shown below, however, this is not an unsurmountable problem, as *api* should in fact be interpreted differently.

7 The meaning of *api*

The meaning of the word *api*, which is predominantly attested in the Assur-letters, is not certain and several interpretations have been suggested.³³ Emmanuel Laroche (1960a, 182) compared it to Hittite *apiya* (and Lycian *ebi*), suggesting a translation 'là', 'alors'. Later, Terumasa Oshiro (1988) identified it as the equivalent of the Hittite local adverb *appa* 'back', 'again', 'after(wards)' and this interpretation has generally been followed with respect to its attestations in the *hatura*-clauses. Hawkins (2000, 555) concludes that 'some at least of the evidence examined supports Oshiro's conclusions, and since there is little doubt that we are dealing with the same word in all the passages, that would indicate a similar interpretation even in the most doubtful occurrences.' However, the

³¹ With respect to the attestation of *ha-tu+ra/i-la*-' (followed by PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*la*-) in HİSARCIK 1 § 5 which is probably a derivative of *hatura*-, the context is too unclear to determine its meaning. However, a reference to health or well-being would not be out of place, and is in any case more plausible than the current suggestion 'messenger' which, as remarked by Hawkins (2000, 484) does not provide any obvious sense here.

³² In the present interpretation, *hatura*- presents the only example of an alleged verbal noun in *-w(a)r(a)*, (Yakubovich 2015, 34). As pointed out by Giusfredi (2020, 45 n. 46), if this word is in fact unrelated to the verb *ḫatrae*-, we could dispense with this dubious category.

³³ For discussion, see Hawkins (2000, 550, 554–555) and Oshiro (1988). Apart from the Assur-letters, the word *api* occurs in the Kırşehir-letter and in two inscriptions: BOYBEYPINARI 2 and SULTANHAN.

fact that only *some* of the evidence agrees with Oshiro's interpretation, certainly leaves room for doubt. Moreover, as Craig Melchert has pointed out, the attestations of *api* in combination with *-ha(wa)* in the Assur letters can serve to introduce new topics (see Hawkins 2000, 554).³⁴ A closer look at all attestations of *api* shows that such an interpretation works for most other instances as well. In fact, in none of the cases a translation 'back', 'again' or 'after(wards)' is imperative and in some instances, it yields a rather awkward result. An example hereof is inscription SULTANHAN, in which Sarwatiwara proudly declares that he has set up a statue of Tarhunza of the Vineyard. The opening lines read as follows:

Sultanhan § 1–3

- 1 EGO-mi-i [sa₅+ra/i-wa/i-ti | -'wa/i+ra/i^l-[sa]-wa/i-...] | INFANS-ni-sa | wa/i-su-SARMA-ma-sá-' | HEROS-li-i-sá SERVUS-lá/i-sa
 2 | a-wa/i | za-a-na | (DEUS)TONITRUS-hu-zá-na | tu-wa/i+ra/i-sá-si-i-na | ta-nu-wa/i-ha ||
 3 | a-wa/i-sa | á-pi-i | CRUS-nú-wa/i-mi-i-na | BOS(ANIMAL)-ri+i-i
 9 OVIS a+ra/i-ma-sa-ri+i-i

Translation CHLI, 465–466

I am [Sarwatiwaras, PN's] son, the hero Wasusarmas's servant. I set up this Tarhunzas of the Vineyard (saying): "We will set (him) up afterwards with an ox and nine monthling sheep".³⁵

It is a bit puzzling that the opening lines of the inscription start with an announcement of what is happening *afterwards*.³⁶ This would only make sense if this event is contrasted to what is happening now, or what has happened before, but that is not the case here. It seems more logical that the word *api* serves to give emphasis, underlining the momentous occasion of the event.

New translation

I am [Sarwatiwara, PN] son, the hero Wasusarma's servant. I set up this Tarhunza of the Vineyard (saying): "Now he is to be set up with an ox and nine monthling sheep."³⁷

Towards the end of the inscription, we find the following passage:

³⁴ See also Giusfredi (2020, 55), who remarks that *api* occurs frequently in the meaning 'after, furthermore' as a sentence modifier.

³⁵ Thus also Oshiro (1988, 250). Payne (2012, 101) translates: 'He is to be set up again'.

³⁶ Note that Melchert (2004, 358–359) suggests that Sarwatiwara here stipulates that the Tarhunza of the Vineyard whom he had established was to be regularly re-established (*api* in the meaning 'again') after his death, by his successors.

³⁷ For the interpretation of the verbal ending *-min(a)* as a gerundive, see Melchert (2004).

Sultanhan § 43–45

- 43 | a-wa/i-' | REL-sá | kwa/i-sá | za | LOCUS-lá/i-za | PUGNUS. PUGNUS-i-ta ||
 44 | wa/i-tà | NEG₂-' | HW/I/A-sa-ha | mu-wa/i-ta
 45 | a-wa/i-tà | á-pi-i | sa₅+ra/i-wa/i-ti-wa/i+ra/i-sá | á-tà | wa/i-su-SARMA-ma-sa-a-ri+i |
 wa/i+ra/i-ia-ri+i | sa-na-wa/i-sa-tara/i-ri+i-ha

Translation CHLI, 467

Whosoever has ...-ed this place, no one has *dominated* it, but Sarwatiwaras has re-made it by Wasusarmas's help and goodness.³⁸

The adverb *api* is taken together with the verb *a(ya)-* 'to do', 'to make' and is translated as 'to repair, 'to re-make'. Considering the context, however, this interpretation is not attractive. The text gives no indication whatsoever that the place (presumably a vineyard) has been ruined or damaged. The preceding line mentions that no-one before has dominated or strengthened– or whatever the precise meaning of the verb may be– it. This remark clearly functions to underscore the uniqueness of the current accomplishment of Sarwatiwara. If one translates that he 're-made' the place this would not only substantially diminish his triumph, as he would no longer be a pioneer, but rather be copying the work of someone else, it would also invalidate the contrast indicated in the previous line between the actions of Sarwatiwara and his predecessors. It is much more convincing that the former is boasting that he has achieved something that no-one before had. The function of *api* is to mark the contrast between the (lack of) success of his predecessors and of Sarwatiwara himself, which is a well-known trope in these kinds of inscriptions.

New translation of Sultanhan § 43–45

Whoever *guarded* this place, no one *strengthened*³⁹ it, but now Sarwatiwara has made/done it with Wasusarma's help and goodness.⁴⁰

The meaning 'again' or 'back' is also not particularly cogent in the following two passages of the Assur-letters:

Assur letter d § 8–10

- 8 | “*272”(-)ha+ra/i-ti-ha-wa/i-mu || | hara/i-li-na | sa-na-wa/i-zi-na-i | VIA-wa/i-ni

³⁸ Oshiro (1988, 249): 'but Sarwatiwara did (= strengthened) it *again* by the help and goodness of Wasusarma'.

³⁹ For this interpretation, see Rieken/Yakubovich (2010, 207) and Melchert (2014, 133).

⁴⁰ Or: 'Whoever *guarded* this place, no one *strengthened* it, but then Sarwatiwara made/did it with Wasusarma's help and goodness.'

9 | DOMINUS-*ni-wa/i* | (CURRUS⁴¹)*za-la-la-si-na* | REL-*ti-sà-mi-na-i* | (VIA)*ha+ra/i-wa/i-ni*
 10 | *ni-wa/i-mu-i* | *á-pi* | NEG₂' | VIA-*wa/i-ni-si* |

Translation CHLI, 535

(Now send me good *atuti*'s and send me *masari*'s) and send me a *harati* shield (as) a good shield!

To the lord send the ... of a cart,⁴² don't not send (these) back to me!⁴³

Similarly, in letter *f+g* § 25–26 we find the following request:

Assur letter *f+g* § 25–26

(Now, if there is a *mule* to you, send (it) to us! *Come*, shall I go out on foot?

25 | *wa/i-ma-na* | (VIA)*ha+ra/i-wa/i-ni*

26 | *á-pi-wa/i-ma-na* | *ni-i-i'* | NEG₂' | VIA-*wa/i-ni-si*

Translation CHLI, 537

(So), send it to me, don't not send it back to me!

In the current interpretation, it is implied that the items are sent 'back' to the sender, but in both cases, there is nothing in the preceding part to indicate that the sender is asking for the return of items belonging to him, and in the case of letter *f+g* the context makes this highly unlikely: why would the sender introduce his request with the remark 'now if there is a mule to you', if it was his own mule that would be returned to him? Likewise, in letter *d* there is no reason to assume it concerns the return of goods. In both cases, the sender is apparently anxiously waiting for the delivery and emphatically repeats his request with a double negation ('don't fail to send').⁴⁴ The function of *api* here seems to be either to underline the urgency of the message, or to indicate that the clause is a further elaboration of the request:

New translation Assur letter *d* § 10

To the lord send a ... of a cart, now/so don't fail to send (it) to me!

New translation Assur letter *f+g* § 26

Send it to me, now/so don't fail to send it to me!

In the above discussed cases, the translation 'back', 'again' or 'afterwards' is not satisfying, and *api* rather seems to be functioning as a discourse marker introducing

a new topic, marking a contrast or giving emphasis. This fits in well with the above-mentioned observation of Craig Melchert that a number of attestations of *api* in combination with *-ha(wa)* in the Assur letters appear to indicate a topic switch, see, for example:⁴⁵

Assur letter *f+g* § 21

21 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-za-* | ASINUS.ANIMAL-*na-zi* | *a-pa-zi* | ARHA-' | MORI-*ta* ||

And now/further, those donkeys have died on us.⁴⁶

Assur letter *f+g* § 27

27 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-za* | (*420) *wa/i-sa-ha-sa* | REL-*za* | VIA-*wa/i-ni-ta*

And now/further, why did they(?) send us *washasa*?⁴⁷

The attestations of *api* in § 37–45 in the same letter appear to have a similar function (cf. Hawkins 2000, 554).

Assur letter *f+g* § 37–41

37 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-* | ("LEPUS")*ta-pa-sà-la-ia* | ("*286.*317")*wa/i-ara/i-ma-* | *ku-ru-pi* | *á-mi-i* | *a-ta-ti* | ARHA-' | ("*69")*sa-ha-na*

38 | *á-pa-i-ia-pa-wa/i* | DOMUS-*ni-i* | *a-ta-ti* ARHA-' | ("*69")*sa-ha-*

39 | *wa/i-ra+a-i* | ("*69")*ha+ra/i-za*

40 | *wa/i-ma-ra+a* ARHA-' | VIA-*wa/i-ni* ||

41 | *á-pi-wa/i-ra+a-i* | 11 ("*78")*a-ru-ti-sá*

42 | *ni-pa-wa/i-ra/i-i* | NEG₂' | *wa/i-mi-LITUUS-si*

43 | *a-wa/i-i* | LITUUS+*na-ti-sa* | REL-*ta-ha* | 10 ("*78")*a-ru-ti-na*

44 | *wa/i-mu-u* | VIA-*wa/i-ni-i*

45 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-ra/i-ta* | *hara/i-na-wa/i-ra/i-sa* | ("PANIS.SCU-TELLA")*tu-ni-ka-ra+a-sa* | ARHA-' | OCCIDENS (-)*la/i-u-si-ta* And now/further, urgent demands, I left *kurupi*'s in my *a(n)tati* – I left those behind in the house(hold)'s *a(n)tati*⁴⁸ – lay hold of them and send them out to me!⁴⁹

Now/further, they are 11 *baskets*, or if you do not find(?) them, wherever you see 10 *baskets*, send (them) to me!

And now/further, Haranawari, the baker of *tunik* bread⁵⁰ has *absented* himself.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Hawkins (2000, *passim*) translates *á-pi* as 'further' in these cases.

⁴⁶ Differently Oshiro (1988, 249): 'And those donkeys for us have died *behind*'.

⁴⁷ Probably, we can also add the uncertain attestation of *f+g* § 16: || *á-pi-[ha-wa/i]-* || [...] *-la-[...]* (URBS) || *á-pa-ti* | INFANS-*ni-i* | *ha+ra/i-na-i-na* | CUM-*ni-i* | *77-*ha-* | *tu-u* | VERSUS-*na* – Further, [in?] the city of [A]la[wara?] I pledged *harnais* for that child in your presence', translation CHLI, 536.

⁴⁸ Giusfredi (2010, 230): 'the *chamber* of the house(hold)'; Payne (2012, 118): 'my rooms (?)'; Dillo (2017, 539): 'my interior (chamber)'.

⁴⁹ For discussion of this passage, see Dillo (2017, 539–540).

⁵⁰ For this interpretation, see most recently Simon (2019a, 118 with references).

⁵¹ Translation following CHLI, 537.

⁴¹ For this reading, see Giusfredi (2018, esp. p. 12).

⁴² Translation following Giusfredi (2018, 4).

⁴³ Oshiro (1988, 250): 'And *afterwards/further*, don't fail to send (it) to me'.

⁴⁴ See Hawkins (2002, 546) for the remarkable prohibitive + negative construction, which he interprets as 'don't fail to'.

In § 37 and § 45 *api-ha(wa)* introduces a new topic. As proposed by Hawkins (2000, 555) *api* without *-ha* in § 41 could have a similar function, but since the context is too unclear this has to remain a suggestion. In Assur letter c § 5–6, *api-hawa*) is attested twice:

Assur letter c § 5–7

5 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-tu-u-ta* | *ni-i-' ARHA-'* | *ma-nu-ha pa+ra/i-ra+a-wa/i*

6 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-mu-ta* | *NEG₂-'* | *REL-ha-na* | *u-si-ti-sa*

7 | *wa/i-mu-ta* | *187-*tu-wa/i-i-za* | *REL-za* | *u-si-ti-sà* ||

And now, I am completely irrelevant to you; you ... me in no way / and now you ... in no way. Why do you ... me ...⁵² (Send me 10 *haspi* and a 100 *sumila*.)

In § 5, *api-ha(wa)* marks a topic switch and in § 6, it could indicate another change of topic, or perhaps more likely, it signals that § 6 is a further explanation of the statement made in the previous sentence.

Let us now turn to the attestations of *api* in which it is currently interpreted as a preverb, in order to see if, here as well, *api* is better understood as a discourse marker.

Assur letter f+g § 20

(the requests which I requested to you by means of (my) previous message,⁵³ send (it) all to us)

á-pi-wa/i-za-' | *NEG₂-'* | *REL-ha-na* | *a-sa-ti*⁵⁴

Translation CHLI, 537

To us there remains nothing.⁵⁵

Assur letter f+G § 32–33

(Send us any *kapar(r)a*'s,)

ni-pa-wa/i-tu-u-' | *NEG₂-'* | *a-sa-ti*

| *a-wa/i* | *á-pi* || [DOMUS]-*ni-wa/i+ra/i-ia* || (X)|*á-mu+ra/i[-?]-la/i* | *u+ra/i-i* | *a-sa-ti*

Translation CHLI, 537

or (if) to you there is not (any), and there remains to [Par]-niwaris, the *amuralura*, buy it from him.

In both cases *api* is taken to belong to the verb and the combination *api as-* is translated as 'to remain'.⁵⁶ Though

this is possible, it is by no means the only interpretation imaginable and *api* could also function as a discourse marker, like in the previous examples. In letter f+g § 20, *api* could either emphasize the urgency of the request, or signal the causal connection with the preceding sentence, and in § 33, it seems to mark a contrast:

New translation Assur letter f+g § 20

(the requests which I requested to you by means of (my) previous message, send (it) all to us), now/as to us there is nothing at all⁵⁷

New translation Assur letter f+g § 31–33:

Send us any *kapar(r)a*'s, or (if) you do not have (any), but (now) [Par]niwari, the *amural(l)ura*,⁵⁸ does have (them), buy it from him.

The word *api* further occurs in § 41 of the SULTANHAN inscription:

Sultanhan § 40–41

(or (if) anyone inclines to damage for the city, or (if) anyone inclines to damage the land)

40 | *ni-pa-wa/i-ta* | *wa/i-na* | *REL-sa-ha* | *ka-ti-i* | *CRUS-i*

41 | *á-pi-i-wa/i-tà-'* | *REX-ti-ia-ri-i* | *LEPUS+ra/i-ia-ti-i* | *i-zi-ia-mi-na-'*

Translation CHLI, 467

... or if anyone inclines to damage for the vine (?),

We shall requite them with local authority.⁵⁹

The expression *api izziya-* is here understood as the equivalent of Hittite *appa iya-* 'to do again' which can also be used in the meaning 'to requite' or 'to avenge'. This interpretation cannot be excluded, but the following translation, in which *api* marks a cause-effect relation, is equally possible:

New translation

or if anyone inclines to damage for the vine,

then they are to be requited by royal authority

In Assur-letter b § 5, we find the combination *a-wa/i api* at the beginning of the sentence. Unfortunately, the context is very unclear, but the passage is somewhat comparable to § 37 of letter f+g, which has just been discussed above:

Assur letter b § 5

| *a-wa/i* || | *á-pi* | *ku-ru-pi* | *REL-ia* | ("*286.*317") (') *wa/i-ra+a-ma* | *LEPUS-pa-sà-la-ia* | *ARHA-'* | ("*69") *sa-ha-na*

52 Translation CHLI, 535: *Further*, let me by no means miss you, and further you bring me nothing. Why do you *bring* me *tuwi(n)za*? For further discussion of this passage, see below § 8.3.

53 For this interpretation, see below § 9.

54 For the expression *NEG₂-' REL-ha-na*, see below § 8.4.

55 Cf. Oshiro (1988, 249): 'for us nothing remains behind' and Giusfredi (2010, 229): 'to us there is nothing left'.

56 Oshiro 1988, 249. Hawkins (2000, 554) refers to Morpurgo Davis (1983, 308 n. 60) who remarks that there may be a similar use of Hittite *appan* (EGIR-*an*) in KUB 26.69 rev. v 11, but the exact meaning of EGIR-*an* here is unclear.

57 Compare also Hawkins (1975, 140): 'to us there is nothing!'

58 As suggested by Martien Dillo (2017, 544), *amural(l)ura/i* may refer to a 'chief of the dogmen'.

59 Thus also Oshiro (1988, 249). Morpurgo Davies (1980, 96) translates: 'we shall act by royal authority'.

Now then, the *kurupi*'s which I left, *urgent demands*, (lay hold of them, and send them out to me!)

Compare:

Assur letter f+g § 37

37 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-'* | ("LEPUS")*ta-pa-sà-la-ia* ("*286.*317")
wa/i-ara/i-ma-' | *ku-ru-pi* | *á-mi-i* | *a-ta-ti* | *ARHA-'* | ("*69")
sa-ha-na

And now, *urgent demands*, I left *kurupi*'s in my *a(n)tati* – I left those behind in the house(hold) *a(n)tati* – (lay hold of them and send them out to me!)

In his discussion of *api*, Hawkins (2000, 554) remarks that Anna Morpurgo Davies has tentatively suggested that the distinction between the two clauses is that *ARHA sa-* means 'to leave' and *api ARHA sa-* 'to leave behind'. However, considering the strong parallels between b § 5 and f+g § 37, it seems preferable to interpret *awa api* as a variant of *api-ha(wa)*, introducing a new topic. The attestations of *api* in letter f+g § 28 could be explained in a similar manner:

Assur letter f+g § 27–28

(Send it to me, now/so don't fail to send it to me!).

27 | *á-pi-ha-wa/i-za* | (*420)*wa/i-sa-ha-sa* | *REL-za* | *VIA-wa/i-ni-ta*

28 | *wa/i-za* | *á-pi 4-zi-i* | *ka-mara/i-zi* | *i-sa-u-ta*

And now, why did they send us *washasa*?

Now, they (?) bought us 4 *kamara*'s.⁶⁰

In the above, three attestations of *api* in the SULTANHAN inscription have already been discussed. The remaining attestation of *api* in this inscription is preceded by various clauses that are introduced by *REL-i* ('when') and it seems to mark a temporal contrast (cf. Hawkins 2000, 555):

Sultanhan § 10–12

10 | *ta-nu-wa/i-ha-wa/i-na* | *kwa/i-i*

11 | *kwa/i-i-pa-wa/i* | (TERRA)*ta-sà-kwa/i-ra/i* | 2 "OVIS"-*sa* 80
 "*179" CRUS+RA/I ||

12 | *wa/i-na-'* | *á-pi-i* | *zi-na* | ("AVIS")*ta-wa/i-na-ri-i* | ("PES")
u-pa-ha

When I set him up, and when in the land 2 sheep stood (for) 80 (measures of) barley, I then⁶¹ presented him with this ("AVIS") *ta-wa/i-na*.⁶²

⁶⁰ For this interpretation, see Hawkins (2000, 551–552).

⁶¹ Hawkins (2000, 466) translates: 'afterwards'. For the interpretation of *zi-na*, see Goedegebuure (2007, 324).

⁶² Simon (2019b) suggests to read ("AVIS")*ta-wa/i-na-* as *kuta-wan(i)-*, meaning 'precinct', translating 'I furnished him with this precinct'.

Lastly, we may discuss three attestations of *api* in unclear context. It occurs in BOYBEYPINARI 2, where it is tentatively translated as 'then' by the CHLI, 337.

Boybeypinari 2 § 8–9

8a *mu'-pa-wa/i* | *za-a-ti á-lá/i* DEUS.AVIS PRAE-na MONS'(-)
*ha-ta-[x²]mi-na||*⁶³

8b *sa-ma-ni-ha*

9 *a-wa/i á-pi* SCRIBA+RA/I-*wa/i-ma-za* ARHA (PES₂)*i-ha*

Before this *Lady*⁶⁴ Kubaba I myself...

created and then I went forth to/away ...⁶⁵

Further, *api* is attested twice in the Kırşehir letter, which is, just like the Assur letters, written on a lead strip. The letter is not well preserved and many passages are not well understood:

Kırşehir letter § 6–9

6 *wa/i-'mu-u¹-mi-i x[.....]* *69-*la/i/u-[w]a/i-wa/i*

7 *á-pi-ha-wa/i tá-ti-na* | *tá-mi-na-'* ARHA(-)*sa-mi-na* PUGNUS.
 PUGNUS-i

8 | *wa/i-tu-u wa/i-ti-ia*

I myself (will) ... [...] for myself.

And now guard the old⁶⁶ father ...⁶⁷

and ...⁶⁸ him,

Kırşehir letter § 19–21

19 *á-mu-u-ha-wa/i ||-mu m²pu-wa/i-na x[.....]* ...]*pa-ti-sa-ha*

20 CRUS₂-*nú-pa-wa/i* *187(-)*ka-pa-ra/i-na-¹¹* NEG₂ CAPERE⁶⁹-*na*
 *69(-)*sà-tara/i-ti* PUGNUS.PUGNUS-i-*wa/i*

21 *á-pi-wa/i-mu* | *wa/i-ti-ia-ta-'*

And, as for me, I have ...-ed Puwa ... for myself. But now I will guard with/because of ... the ... that was not taken. Now/then to me he ...ed.⁷⁰

The context is too obscure to determine the meaning of *api*, but in § 7 it could very well introduce a new topic, like the other attestations of *api-ha(wa)* discussed above, and a similar function cannot be excluded for *api* in § 21.

⁶³ For the organization of the text, which runs over two blocks, see Hawkins (2000, 334–337).

⁶⁴ For this interpretation of *ala/i-*, see Hutter (2016).

⁶⁵ For this obscure passage, see Hawkins (2000, 339). The translation suggested by Oshiro (1988, 250) is grammatically impossible.

⁶⁶ Oreshko (2012, 177) suggests the meaning 'old' for *tá-mi-na-*, translating: 'take care of your old father'.

⁶⁷ Akdoğan/Hawkins (2010, 4): 'And PUGNUS.PUGNUS again the father...'

⁶⁸ As suggested by the ALCT, this verb may mean 'to support', 'to help'.

⁶⁹ For this reading, see ALCT.

⁷⁰ Akdoğan/Hawkins (2010, 4) translate: 'to me he *watyi*-ed back'.

Finally, *api* is attested in damaged context in combination with *-pa* in the inscription HAMA 4:

Hama 4 § 8–9
[and for every single god I made his own seat, but this seat for Ba'alati I built, and I put Ba'alati and my name (on it)].
8 *za-ti-pa-wa/i-ta* SOLIUM-*sa-'* REL-*i-sà* (DEUS)*pa-ha-la-ti-sà*
â-ma-za-ha â-lâ/i-ma-za wa/i-na-ha "CAPERE"-*ia*
9 *â-pi-pa-wa/i* (DEUS.TONITRUS)*tara/i-hu-za-sa* || [...]
He who shall take...⁷¹ Ba'alati's and my name from this *seat*,
Tarhunzas (will) then ...⁷²

The verb of § 9 is not preserved, but based on comparison with other inscriptions, it seems plausible that Tarhunza is to punish the person 'taking' the names away. Possibly, we have a take *-pa* as marking a subject change, and *api* as making the connection to the previous sentence.

If we now return to the *hatura*-clauses, *api* could signal a topic switch from the health of the addressee to the well-being of the sender in letters, see, e. g.:⁷³

Assur letter b § 1–3
1. | *â-sa₅-za* | DOMUS-*ni-wa/i+ra/i-ia* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i-'*(LO-QUI ...?)
2. | *sa-na-wa/i+ra/i-i* | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*si*
3. | *â-mu-ha-wa/i-mu* | *â-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
Say to Parniwari, Taksala *speaks*: May you *guard* yourself well!
And as for me / And me now, I am in health. (But now do this first request for me: ...)

Summing up, though it is not always possible to pinpoint the precise meaning of *api*, it appears in the following functions:

- indicating a topic switch or introducing a new topic in an enumeration
- marking a (temporal) contrast
- giving emphasis
- marking a (causal) connection to the previous sentence (?)

The suggestion that *api* serves as a discourse marker finds support in the fact that it is usually the first or second word of the clause. It is further telling that 75 % of the attestations of *api* occur in letters, which overall display a more

colloquial language and where one would typically expect a higher frequency of particles than in formal inscriptions. Particles are notoriously tricky to translate. In most cases, the versatile English 'now', or occasionally 'then' or 'so' provide a fitting translation of *api*, which comes very close to the French translation 'alors', 'là' proposed by Laroche (1960a, 182).⁷⁴

8 The *hatura*-clauses in light of the new interpretation of *hatura*- and *api*

In the following, the implications of the here proposed new interpretation of the words *hatura*- and *api* for our understanding of the Assur-letters will be addressed.

8.1 Assur-letter a § 1–9

1. | *â-sa₅-za* | REL-*pa-ti-wa/i+ra/i-ia* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i-i* | ("LOQUI") *ha-ri+i-ti-i*
2. | *sa-na-wa/i+ra/i* | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*si*
3. | *a-za₅-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *â-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
4. | *u-nu-ha-wa/i-tu-u-ta* | *u-za-ri+i* | ARHA-*'* || *pa+ra/i-ra+a-ha*
5. | *wa/i-mu-i* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na* | NEG₂-*'* | *ma-nu-ha* | ("LOQUI")^(?) *pu-pa-la-ta*
6. | NEG₂-*a-wa/i* | *tara/i-pa-i-mi-i-sa* | *za-na* | *a-pa-ha* | ("PES₂") *a+ra/i-ta-'* | *ka+ra/i-mi-sà*(URBS)
7. (*205) *â-tu-ni-na-wa/i-mu* | REL-*za* | NEG₂-*'* | *ma-nu-ha* | VIA-*wa/i-ni-ta*
8. | ARHA-*ha-wa/i-mu-u* | REL-*ri+i* MORI-*ha-na*
9. | *wa/i-mu-u* | *u-za+ra/i-i* | ("*476.*311") *a-li-ia-ta*

Say to Kwipatiwari, Taksala *speaks*: (May) you *guard* yourself well! And as for us, we are in health. And now, *have* I *become irrelevant/disappeared* for you *at your place*!

⁷¹ For the interpretation of *wa/i-na-ha* as a cognate of the Hittite complex *awan arha*, meaning 'away' see Yakubovich (2012, esp. p. 325).

⁷² Translation CHLI, 405: 'From this *seat* (he) who shall take *wan-aha* Ba'alatis's and my name, but after(?) Tarhunzas [...]'.

⁷³ See § 8 below for a discussion of all attestations of *api* in combination with *hatura*-.

⁷⁴ In light of this, it may be worthwhile to reconsider the connection between Hieroglyphic Luwian *api* and Hittite *appa*, which, after all, already finds a perfect match in Hieroglyphic Luwian *apa* 'back', 'again'. Moreover, there are other potential candidates; Laroche (1960a, 182) has suggested that *api* was the equivalent of Hittite *apiya*. Alternatively, *api* could be linked to the Hittite sentence particle *-apa*, which seems to function in a very similar manner as *api*, indicating a topic switch, giving emphasis or marking a connection to the previous sentence (for a different view, see Rieken 2004, who suggest to connect *-apa* with Hittite *appa*).

from your side?⁷⁵ You did not write/wish⁷⁶ me well-being at all. Did not Tarpami come from here to there (to you), to Kar(ka)mis?⁷⁷ (So) why did you/he send me no message⁷⁸ whatsoever. You ignored⁷⁹/treated me at your place/from your side, as if I had died. [demands for goods follow]⁸⁰

Commentary

Due to the many uncertainties, any translation of this passage is unavoidably tentative. It would seem that the sender, Taksala, is angry because the addressee, Kwipatiwari has made him feel irrelevant, either because he did not ask about his well-being in the previous letter, or he failed to send his regards via a messenger. The latter explanation fits in well with the following lines: apparently a person named Tarpami travelled back and forth between the locations of Taksala and Kwipatiwari, but Kwipatiwari did not use this opportunity to bring over an *atuni* to Taksala.⁸¹ Taksala therefore dramatically states that it is as if he (and his family) has died and no longer exists for

Kwipatiwari. In this context, it is attractive to assume that (*205)*atuni* means ‘message’ or ‘letter’ (see also § 9 below). Complaints about not receiving greetings are known from other letters, see, e. g. HKM 56, a Middle Hittite letter found in the tablet collection of Maşat Höyük.⁸²

HKM 56: 1–10

1. A-NA ^mhu-il-li
2. ŠEŠ DÜG.GA-IA QÍ-BÍ-MA
3. UM-MA ^mhi-im-mu-DINGIR^{lim}
4. A-HU-KA-MA
5. DINGIR^{mes}-ta TI-an ḫar-kán-du
6. nu-ut-ta pa-aḫ-ša-an-ta-ru
7. am-me-el [k]u-it LÚ TE₄-MU
8. a-pé-ez ú-it ŠEŠ DÜG.GA-IA -ma-mu
9. aš-šu-ul ku-wa-at Ú-UL
10. ḫa-at-ra-a-eš

Say to my dear brother Huilli: Thus speaks Himmui, your brother. May the gods keep you alive and protect you! Why, my dear brother, did you not send your greeting to me, when my messenger came (back) from you? (translation: Hoffner 2009, 203)

This reproach is echoed in the piggyback letter on the same tablet:

HKM 56: 20–29

20. UM-MA ^mdu-mi-ia
21. A-NA ^mwa-al-wa-NU DUMU DÜG.GA-IA
22. QÍ-BÍ-MA
23. kat-ti-ti ḫu-u-ma-an SIG₅-in
24. e-eš-du nu-ut-ta (DINGIR^{mes}) aš-šu-li
25. pa-aḫ-ša-an-ta-ru
26. DUMU DÜG.GA-IA-mu aš-šu-ul
27. ku-wa-at Ú-UL ḫa-at-re-eš-ke-ši
28. am-me-el-kán aš-šu-ul PA-NI
29. ^mpí-ip-pa-pa ḫal-za-i

Thus speaks Tarḫunmiya: Say to Walwa-ziti, my dear son: May all be well with you, and may (the gods) lovingly protect you! My dear son, why are you not sending your greeting to me? Read my greetings aloud to Pippapa! (translation: Hoffner 2009, 204)

Somewhat similarly, the sender of a Late Babylonian letter whines about a lack of attention from the addressee after an elaborate blessing and greeting formula:

YOS 21, 109: 7–11

- (Letter of Nādin-aḫi to the bishop, my brother. May Bēl and Nabū cause my brother to be entirely well and bestow success upon your service.)
7. liš-ku-nu mi-nam-ma

⁷⁵ Here, I tentatively follow the interpretation of the ACLT: *unzadi*: ‘at your place’ and *parira*-. ‘to become irrelevant’.

⁷⁶ The verb (LOQUI)*pu-pa-la/i*- is usually translated as ‘to write’, or ‘to scribble’ (thus ACLT, see also Giusfredi 2009; 2012, 159 who proposes that the verb may refer to writing hieroglyphs (on lead) and Payne 2010, 184–185 who suggests ‘to compose’ or ‘to dictate’). Though a meaning ‘to write’ would certainly fit in this context, other interpretations should not be excluded. The connection with Lycian *ppuwe*- is tentative, and, as Hawkins rightly observes, the logogram LOQUI is more likely to determine a verb of speaking. The strongest case for a meaning ‘to write’ is provided by the attestation in the inscription CEKKE § 3, where a stele is the direct object of the verb *pupali*- (without determinative LOQUI). It is, however, uncertain if we are dealing with the same verb, and, moreover, the meaning ‘to write’ is not beyond doubt here either. Considering the context, which is unfortunately somewhat opaque, other interpretations cannot be excluded; it is equally possible that the stele was not ‘inscribed’, but rather ‘ordered’, ‘provided’ or ‘initiated’.

⁷⁷ For this interpretation, see Goedegebuure (2007, 333). Differently, Melchert (2009, 153) translates: ‘Did not T. reach Carchemish by this way or that?’.

⁷⁸ For this interpretation, see below § 9.

⁷⁹ Thus ACLT, who suggest the meaning ‘to ignore’ for the verb *aliya*-.

⁸⁰ Translation CHLI, 534: ‘Say to Kwipatiwaris, Taksalas speaks: (May) you live (?) well (?)! (Are) we ourselves to write back? Now I missed you by your (letter). You by no means replied to me a letter. Did not Tarpamis come now and then to Kar(ka)mis? Why did you (he?) by no means send me the *atuni*? (As for) me, as if we(?) had died, you *aliya*-ed me by your (letter)’.

⁸¹ See Dillo (2017, 541) for the suggestion that this Tarpami was a ‘travelling agent’. Note that a similar function has also been suggested for Taksala by Giusfredi (2010, 232–233).

⁸² Compare also, e. g., HKM 58. Similar complaints are also found in Old Babylonian letters, see Sallaberger (1999, 103–104).

8. TE-ka la-pa-ni-ia
9. ta-ad-du šu-ú
10. MU.AN.NA gab-bi
11. i-na muḥ-ḫi-ka na-da-ka

Why did you not pay any attention to me? This entire year I have been depressed because of you
(translation: Jursa/Hackl 2015, 105)

8.2 Assur-letter b § 1–3

1. | á-sa₅-za | DOMUS-ni-wa/i+ra/i-ia | ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i-'
 ⟨LOQUI ha-ri+i-ti-i⟩
2. | sa-na-wa/i+ra/i-ⁱ | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-si
3. | á-mu-ha-wa/i-mu | á-pi | ha-tu-ra+a

Say to Parniwari, Taksala (speaks): (May) you *guard* yourself well! And as for me, I am in health/well-being.⁸³

The opening lines of letter *b* present the typical greeting formulae as discussed above (§ 5–6).

8.3 Assur-letter c § 1–7

1. | á-sa₅-za-wa/i | ka-ka-ia | REL-si-si-ti-mi-ha | ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/i (“LOQUI”-)ha-ri+i-ti
2. | á-pi-wa/i-za | ha-tu-ra+a
3. | á-lá/i-mí-sa-sa-ha-wa/i+ra/i
4. | u-za₅-za||-wa/i-ma-za | ha-tu-ra+a
5. | á-pi-ha-wa/i-tu-u-ta | ni-i’ ARHA-’ | ma-nu-ha pa+ra/i-ra+a-wa/i
6. | á-pi-ha-wa/i-mu-ta | NEG₂-’ | REL-ha-na | u-si-ti-sa
7. | wa/i-mu-ta | *187-tu-wa/i-i-za | REL-za | u-si-ti-sà ||

Say to Kaka and Kwisistimi, Taksala *speaks*: We now are in health/well-being. You are/may you (be) of *alamis* / It is *alamis* for you. May you be in health/well-being / Are you in health/well-being?

Now, may I not be completely *irrelevant* to you; you ... me in no way. Why do you⁸⁴ ... me ...⁸⁵

⁸³ Translation CHLI, 534: Say to Parniwaris, Taksalas (*speaks*). (May) you *live* (?) *well* (?)! (Am) I myself to write back?

⁸⁴ For the translation of NEG₂-’ REL-ha-na, see the commentary of letter *e* below.

⁸⁵ Translation CHLI, 535: ‘Say to Kakas and Kwisistimis, Taksalas *speaks*: (Are) we to write back? It (is) *atamisa*-! (or: There is *atamisa*-to you!). You yourselves (are) to write. Further let me by no means miss you, and further you *bring* me nothing. Why do you *bring* me *tuwi(n)za*?’ Note that ACLT translates *tuwi(n)za* as ‘relatives’ and the verb *us(a)i* as ‘to supply’.

Commentary

The meaning of *a-lá/i-mí-sa-sa* in § 3 is uncertain (Hawkins 2000, 545).⁸⁶ Rieken/Yakubovich (2010, 212) tentatively take it as a freestanding genitive of the neuter noun *alamis*, which they derive from the adjective *ala/i*- ‘high’, meaning ‘haughtiness, arrogance’. They translate: ‘Is it for us again to write? You are arrogant. It is for you to write!’ The connection with *ala/i* is possible, but inevitably speculative. When looking at the opening lines of letters *a, b, d, e, f+g*, we see that they all start with a wish of well-being (‘May you be in peace’/ ‘May you stay well’). In the previous interpretations of *hatura*-, letter *c* would be the only letter which does not contain such a blessing. In the new interpretation, however, this letter is no longer the exception, as § 4 now contains an inquiry or blessing regarding the addressees’ health. Possibly, we also have to understand the preceding clause as a wish or blessing for well-being. If one chooses to follow the provisional proposal of Rieken and Yakubovich, § 3 could express a wish for ‘high spirits’ or exaltation: ‘May you be of *great spirit*!’ After the greeting formulae follows a complaint similar to that in letter *a*: Taksala asks whether he has become irrelevant because, in his perception, he has not received proper attention from Kaka and Kwisistimi. Since the meaning of the verb *us(a)i*- and the word *tuwinza* are uncertain, we do not know for what reason Taksala feels neglected.⁸⁷

8.4 Assur letter d § 1–5

1. | á-sa₅-za-wa/i ||[DOM]US-ni-*375-[..]-iaⁱ ||[ta]-ka-saⁱ-[la-s]á-wa/i ||(“LOQ”)UI”)ha-ri+i-ti-’
2. | sa-na-wa/i+ra/i | PUGNUS.PUGNUS-si
3. | sa-pi-su+ra/i-ha-wa/i-ri+i
4. | á-za₅-za-haⁱ-wa/i-za | á-pi | ha-tu-ra+a ||
5. | wa/i-za | NEG₂-’ | REL-ha-na | ha-tu+ra/i-naⁱ | ha-tu-ra+aⁱ

Say to Parni- ..[.], [Ta]ksa[la] *speaks*: (May) you *guard* yourself well and (may) you (be) in peace! And as for us now, we are in well-being/ are we in health/well-being? We are in no way in health with respect to (our) well-being.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ For this reading see Rieken/Yakubovich (2012).

⁸⁷ As plausibly suggested to me by Xander Vertegaal, the verb *us(a)i*- could have the meaning ‘to respect’.

⁸⁸ Translation CHLI, 535: ‘Say to Parni- ..[.], [Ta]ksa[la]s *speaks*. (May) you *live* (?) *well* (?) and peace (be) to you! (Are) we ourselves to write back? We (are) to write no letter!’

Commentary

Lines 4–5 of this letter are very hard to understand, with the word *hatura*- appearing no less than three times.⁸⁹ The form REL-*ha-na* has been explained as a variant of REL-*i-ha* (see below letter *e*), by assuming that the accusative ending *-na* has been added after *-ha* instead of before.⁹⁰ However, it is perhaps better explained as an adverbial form, meaning ‘in no way’ or ‘not at all’.⁹¹

The negation in § 5 is in flagrant contrast with the positive assertion in § 4. Several solutions for this are possible, none of which are altogether very satisfying. One could understand § 4 as a question, which is consequently answered in § 5 (Are we in well-being? We are not all in well-being with respect to (our) health!), but this is speculative. Alternatively, one could assume that the *hatura*-formula had become a truism, devoid of meaning, which was written down automatically by the sender, even if in fact the opposite was true. Walther Sallaberger (1999, 100) mentions a remarkable example of an Old Babylonian letter which the sender starts with the conventional statement *šalmāku* ‘I am doing well’, but this immediately followed by complaints about her present grim situation, and the letter ends with the theatrical remark that she will surely die. Here, the remark *šalmāku* at the beginning is clearly a ‘Floskel’ devoid of any factual meaning.

In the following lines, the addressee is asked to send shields, which may be an indication that the senders are not safe, and *ha-tu+ra/i-na*ⁱ is possibly to be understood as referring to safety. For the moment, the ambiguity of §§ 4–5 cannot be adequately solved,⁹² but it is worth pointing out that this sentence is equally, of not even more

awkward, in the current interpretation: ‘Are we ourselves to write back? We are to write no letter!’

8.5 Assur-letter e § 1–11

1. | *ā-sa₅-za* [|] | *pi-ha-mi* | *hara/i-na-wa/i-za-sa-wa/i* |
 (“LOQUI”-’) *ha-ri+i-ti*
2. [|] *sa-pi-su+ra/i-* *wa/i-ti*
3. | *u-sa-ta-mu-ti-sà-ha-wa/i-’* | *ha-tu+ra/i-’*
4. | *a-za₅-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *ā-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
5. | *wa/i-za* | NEG₂-’ | REL-*i-ha* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
6. | *wa/i-ma-za* | *u-za₅-za* | *ha-tu-ra+a* | *a-sa-ta-ni*
7. | *a-wa/i* | *ā-pi* | *u-zi-na* | REL-*i* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na* | AUDI-
RE+MI-*ta-ra+a-nu*
8. | *wa/i-za* | *ā-pi* | *a-za₅-za-ha* | *ha-tu+ra/i-’* ||
9. *ni-pa-wa/i-na* | *ā-mu* | REL-*za* | *i-zi-ia-wa/i* | *ā-mi-na* |
za-na | *ha-tu+ra/i-na*
10. | (COR)*na-hu-ti-zi-wa/i-mu* | *za-zi* | INFANS-*ni-zi* | REL-*i*
| (“*460”) *ā-sa-ta-ri+i* | (“COR”) *ta-wa/i-sà-ta-ti-ha*
| *su-ti-ri+i-ti* | *ha+ra/i-ta-ti-ha* | PRAE-*na* | ARHA-’ |
(MORI) *wa/i-wa/i-ri+i-ta-ti*
11. REL-*i-sà-wa/i-sa* | *ā-mi-sa* | *ha-tu-(ra+)a-sa*

Say to Pihami, Harnawiza *speaks*: (May) you (be) in peace! Usatamuti (is) *in health*.⁹³ And as for us, are we (are) in health? We are not in health with respect to any (kind of) well-being.

You are in health/well-being. May you *therefore*(?) *observe* (your) health / *hear* (your) blessing. As for us, we (are) in health/well-being, or as long as I *fix/take care of* it, this health/well-being of mine.

When/because these *nahu(n)ti*⁹⁴ children are *ill*(?)⁹⁵ before me from *spells*(?) and from the *sutiri* of the eyes and *harata*.⁹⁶ What (is) it, my health/well-being?⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Note that §§ 4–5 in letter *e* are almost identical. The only difference is that here we find NEG₂-’ | REL-*i-ha* | *ha-tu+ra/i-na* (see below).

⁹⁰ See Hawkins (1975, 139–140; 2000, 546 with references).

⁹¹ Thus also Payne (2014, 148) who analyses *na k/hwihan* as neg.+adv. meaning ‘not at all’. The translation ‘in no way’ seems fitting for the two attestations of the expression NEG₂-’ REL-*ha-na* in the BOHÇA inscription of Kurtis, where it is followed by a sentence introduced by REL-*i*: (§ 6) And (those) who were my fathers and grandfathers (§ 7) REL-*pa-wa/i* (DEUS)TONITRUS-*hu-za-sa* | NEG₂ | REL-*ha-na* | *wa/i+ra/i-ia-ia* (§ 8) *ā-mu-wa/i* | REL+*ra/i* | *wa/i+ra/i-ia-ia* – ‘Indeed, Tarhunzas did (lit.: does) not help in any way like (REL+*ra/i*) he helps me’ and § 10–12: (10) And when my fathers and grandfathers went to ride on a horse, (11) REL-*pa-wa/i* (DEUS)CERVUS-*ti-ia-(sā?)* [|?] NEG₂-’ [|?] | REL-*ha-na* [|?] *wa/i+ra/i-ia-ia*-*ta* (12) [|?] *ā-mu-wa/i* | REL+*ra/i* | *wa/i+ra/i-ia-ia* – Indeed, Runtiyas did not help in any way, like (REL+*ra/i*) he helps me’.

⁹² The difficulties presented by these lines (and the almost identical ones in letter *e* below) warrant a closer study of the use of NEG₂.

⁹³ Or: ‘And (do/may) you *ustamu* for /in health(?)’.

⁹⁴ ACLT translates: ‘cursed’, Payne (2012, 116): ‘worrisome(?)’.

⁹⁵ Thus ACLT, Payne (2012, 116): ‘are dying’.

⁹⁶ ACLT translates *harata* as ‘offences’.

⁹⁷ Translation CHLI, 535: ‘Say to Pihamis, Harnawizas *speaks*: Peace (be) to you! And do you *usatamu*- to/for a letter/writing? (Are) we ourselves to write again? We (are) to write no letter, (it is) you yourselves (who) are to write! Hear your sort of letter back! (Are) we ourselves again to write, or why do I make it, this letter of mine? For me these *nahu(n)ti* children – they shall *paran arha wawarita*- (them?) by *asata*- and *sutiri*- of the eyes(?) and *harata*. What (is) it, my letter?’

Commentary

This passage is difficult to grasp, but the new interpretation does to some extent elucidate its meaning. In § 3, Usatamuti could be taken as a personal name (thus Meriggi 1962, 141, cf. Hawkins 2000, 541), referring to a mutual acquaintance who is in good health.⁹⁸ Paragraphs 4–5 have been discussed above in the commentary of letter *d*, which has two almost identical lines; the only difference is that here in letter *e* we find the form REL-*i-ha*.⁹⁹ Lines 6–7 may be interpreted as a friendly admonition to the addressees to take good care of their health, so that they will stay healthy.¹⁰⁰ Alternatively, depending on the meaning of the verb, Pihami is asked to hear the wishes of well-being addressed to him and his relatives. It is of interest that in § 6 the verb ‘to be’ is expressed, presumably to contrast the current situation of the addressee to that of the sender (unlike us, you *are* in health). In § 10 there seems to be mention of children, who are ill. The next line is probably best interpreted as a rhetorical question; the senders’ well-being obviously leaves something to be desired, because of the aforementioned sick children. The letter continues with urgent demands, and in § 14 the sender dramatically asks not to let him die. The last part of the letter contains further requests for goods and for the sending of a child. Much remains unclear, but considering the likely mention of illness and the request not to let the sender perish, it is understandable that the sender is very much concerned with the issue of ‘health’.¹⁰¹ In any case, this translation makes much better sense than the translation ‘letter’ which is entirely out of place here.

⁹⁸ For comparable examples in which the health of third parties (persons or animals) is discussed in the greeting formulae in Old Babylonian letters, see Sallaberger (1999, 99).

⁹⁹ Following Hawkins (2000, 546) the form REL-*i-ha* is to be understood as an acc. sg. (*kwi(n)ha*), belonging to *ha-tu+ra/i-na* (‘not any kind of health’).

¹⁰⁰ See Sallaberger (1999, 104, no. 75b) for an example of similar advice in an Old Babylonian letter.

¹⁰¹ The topic of illness is a frequently recurring topic in many letters (e.g. Sallaberger 1999, 97 and Hackl [e.a.], 101–102), though, as observed by Charpin (2010, 128) it could be considered bad taste to write about one’s illness. He quotes a letter of Hammurabi (ARM 10, 169) who writes: ‘I acquainted myself with the tablet from you that you sent me. In it you wrote me: “Why did you not write me about your illness?” There are some for whom illness is a subject of correspondence with their brother(s). As for me, I write happy news: “I was ill, now I am healthy”.’

8.6 Assur-letter f+g § 1–13

1. | *á-sa₅-za* | *i-ia-mi* | *ma-mu-ti-ha* | *ta-ka-sa-la-sa-wa/iⁱ* |
| *ma-mu-sa-ha* | (“LOQUI”) *ha-ti-i-ti*
2. | *sa-pi-su+ra/iⁱ-wa/i-ma-za*
3. | *a-za₅-a-za-ha-wa/i-za* | *á-pi* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
4. | *a-wa/i* | (“COR”) *na-hi-zi* (“COR”) *la+ra/i-hi-ri+i-ia-zi-ha*
| PRAE-*i* | (PONERE) *sà-ti-nuⁱ*
5. | *wa/i-zaⁱ* | *na-a-pa* | *a-su-nu*
6. | “*474”(-) *hi-sà-wa/i* | (BRACCHIUM) *hu-mi+ra/i-ha* |
| *zi-ku-na-ti* | ARHA | *wa/i-la-mi-naⁱ* PUGNUS.PUG-
NUS-*nu*
7. | “*476”-*wa/i-pa-wa/i* (“*476.*311”) *hi-ru-ra+a-tiⁱ* | ARHA
| *wa/i-la-u-ta* ||
8. | *su-ti-ri+i-na-wa/iⁱ* | *ha+ra/i-ta-ha* | PRAE-*i* (PONERE)
sà-ti-nuⁱ
9. | REL-*sàⁱ-wa/i-saⁱ* | *a-zi-sa* | *ha-tu-ra+a-sa*
10. | *u-nu-pa-wa/i-za* | NEG₂-*i* | *tu-wa/i-ri+i* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
11. | *wa/i-ri+iⁱ* | *ku-ma-na* | *ha-tu-ra+a*
12. | *wa/i-za* | *ni-iⁱ* | *ma-nu-ha* | ARHA-*i* | (“*69”) *sa-siⁱ*
13. *ni-pa-wa/i-mu* | (“SIGILLUM”) *HWI-pa-sa-nu*

Say to Iyami and *partner*, Taksala and *partner speak*: (May) you (be) in peace! As for us, we are in health/well-being. Cause to *put*(?)¹⁰² forth *nah*i’s and *lahahiriya*’s,¹⁰³ cause us to .. *napa*, cause to *live*(?)¹⁰⁴ the **wasinas-ahi*(?)¹⁰⁵ and the *humira dead* from *zikuna* – ... they *died* from the oath – cause to *put*(?) forth *sutiri* and *harata*. What (is/ will) it (be), our health/well-being? Now, we are not in health/well-being because of you/ your (doing). Since you are in health/well-being, by no means abandon us, nor cause me harm.¹⁰⁶

Commentary

Similar to the previous letter, much is uncertain, but it is clear that the translation ‘health’ gives a much more

¹⁰² ACLT translates this verb as ‘to extinguish’.

¹⁰³ ACLT translates *nah*i and *lahahiriya* as ‘fear’ and ‘anxiety’.

¹⁰⁴ ACLT translates this verb as ‘to uphold’.

¹⁰⁵ ALCT translates this as ‘retinue’. Payne (2012, 116) suggests ‘eunuchs (?)’.

¹⁰⁶ Translation CHLI, 536: ‘Say to Iyamis and *partner*, Taksalas and *partner speak*: Peace be to you! (Are) we ourselves to write back? Cause to *put*(?) forth *nah*i’s and *lahahiriya*’s, cause us good *napa*, cause to *live*(?) the **wasinas-ahi*(?) and the *humira dead* from *zikuna* – ... they *died* from the oath – cause to *put*(?) forth *sutiri* and *harata*. What (is) it, our letter? Now we are (not) to write by *your* (letter). Since you are to write, by no means abandon us, nor cause me harm.’

coherent narrative than the previous translation ‘letter’. In §§ 6–8 there is mention of people dying and the senders implore the addressee not to abandon them (§ 12). Further on, they state that they have nothing, and that all the donkeys have died (§§ 20–21). The senders seem anxious for the delivery of all kinds of goods and in § 48 it appears that they have no bread. Considering these dire conditions, it is only to be expected that much emphasis is laid on the health of the senders and that of the addressee, who is apparently better off, and therefore urged to lend his support.

8.7 The Kırşehir letter

Finally, we may briefly look at the *incipit* of the Kırşehir-letter for comparison:

Kırşehir letter § 1–5

1. *á-sa₅-za-a-wa/i* DOMINUS-[ni-i] *á-mi-i tu-wa/i-ti-ia* SERVUS-*la/i-ti-sa-wa/i tu-wa/i-sá* [m] *mu-wa/i-ta-li-i-sá* | (LOQUI) *ha+ra/i-i-ti*
2. *ha-IUDEX+ra/i-wa/i* DOMINUS-*ni-i-sá á-mi-sá tu-wa/i-ti-i-sá*
3. (BONUS) *sa-na-wa/i-ha-wa/i+ra/i* PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*i*
4. *ma-tu-ni-sa-ha-wa/i* | REL-*i-’ PES-wa/i-ti*
5. *ha-IUDEX+ra/i-ti-’-wa/i-mu-u* SCUTUM-*wa/i*[... t] *a-[x]-na-i i-sa-wa/i-i*

Speak to my Lord Tuwati, your servant Muwatali says: My Lord Tuwati (is) in life and may you *guard* yourself well!

And when Katuni comes, I will buy (a) .. shield(s²) for myself due to (a concern for my²) life.¹⁰⁷

The word *ha-tà+ra/i-* (*ha-IUDEX+ra/i-ti*) is usually interpreted as ‘life’. This would mean that the Kırşehir letter would present a comparable yet slightly different greeting formula: instead of a blessing for health, a blessing for ‘life’ is given, which is quite commonly found in other letters.¹⁰⁸ Alternatively, as suggested by Oreshko (2012, 166) *hatura-* is to be understood as a graphic variation of *ha-tà+ra/i-* (*ha-IUDEX+ra/i-ti*). This would yield the following translation:

Say to my Lord Tuwati, your servant Muwatali speaks: May my Lord Tuwati be *in health* and may you *guard* yourself well! And when Katuni comes, I will buy (a) .. shield(s²) for myself for the sake of (my) wellbeing.

¹⁰⁷ Translation following Weeden (2013, 16).

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., Sallaberger (1999, 78–79) with respect to the Old Babylonian letter corpus.

If Oreshko’s interpretation is correct, the opening lines of the Kırşehir letter would be very similar to those of the Assur letters, suggesting that these greeting formulas were a highly standardized and widely spread phenomenon.¹⁰⁹

9 A new interpretation of *205 *atun(i)-*

In this article, it has been proposed that the Hieroglyphic Luwian word for ‘letter’ is not *hatura-*. As briefly alluded to in § 8.1, there is another noun occurring in the Assur letters that could express this meaning: (*205)*atun(i)-*. The word is attested only twice, in Assur letter a § 7 and f+g § 18.¹¹⁰

Assur letter a § 6–9

Say to Kwipatiwari, Taksala *speaks*: (May) you *guard* yourself well! And as for us, we (are) *in health*. Now, *have I become irrelevant/disappeared* for you *at your place*? You did not *write/wish* me *well-being* at all. Did not Tarpami come from here to there (to you), to Kar(ka)mis?

7. (*205)*á-tu-ni-na-wa/i-mu* | REL-*za* | NEG₂-’ | *ma-nu-ha* | VIA-*wa/i-ni-ta*
8. | *ARHA-ha-wa/i-mu-u* | REL-*ri+i* MORI-*ha-na*
9. | *wa/i-mu-u* | *u-za+ra/i-i* | (“*476.*311”) *a-li-ia-ta*

(So) why did you/he send me *no message* whatsoever? You *ignored/ treated* me *at your place/from your side*, as if I had died.

As discussed in § 8.1, it would make good sense considering the context to translate (*205)*atun(i)-* here as ‘message’, as the sender is complaining about the lack of interest on behalf of the addressee. The translation suggested by Giusfredi (2010, 211 with n. 415) and ACTL ‘provision(s)’ is possible, but less logical, as there is no mention of goods; the sending of provisions is only discussed later on in the letter.¹¹¹ If we translate (*205)*atun(i)-* as ‘letter’, or ‘message’ we would have a normal start of a letter, in which the sender, after the conventional opening formulae, complains about the fact that he has not received a letter (see above § 8.1).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Dillo (2017, 533).

¹¹⁰ ACLT translates this as ‘provisions’, equating (*205)*á-tu-ni-* with PANIS(.PITHOS)-*ni-* (PANIS.PITHOS-*ni-i-na*, Karkamish A1a and PANIS-*ni-na* Kululu 3 § 35). However, except for the fact that they share a stem ending in -*n(i)*, there is no reason to assume we are dealing with the same word here.

¹¹¹ Note that we may not have to give up the interpretation ‘provision’ completely, as in some languages the word for ‘message’ and ‘provision’ are the same (e.g. Dutch ‘boodschap’).

The translation ‘message’ or ‘letter’ also works well for the second attestation of (*205)*atun(i)-*, whereas the translation ‘provision’ is problematic.

Assur letter f+g § 18–20

18. | *pa+ra/i-la-ri+i-||ha-wa/i-tu-u* | ((*205)*á-tu-na-ri+i* | REL-*na-* | ((*69)*wa/i-za-na* | ((*69)*wa/i-zi-ha-na*

19. | *wa/i-za* | OMNIS-*MI-za* | “VIA”-*wa/i-ni*

20. | *á-pi-wa/i-za-*’ | NEG₂-’ | REL-*ha-na* | *a-sa-ti*

The *request* which I *requested* to you by means of (our) *previous message/letter*: send it (all) to us, *as* to us there is nothing at all.

The meaning of ((*69)*wa/i-za-na* is unknown, but the suggestion of Hawkins to translate this verb as ‘request’ seems plausible here. If it indeed concerns requests, it makes sense that they were made earlier via a letter, and apparently the demanded items have not yet been delivered. Note that the use of the ablative/instrumental finds a parallel in Hittite, where the action of writing/sending a letter can also take the ablative (*tuppiyaz hatrae-*).¹¹² The hapax *pa+ra/i-la-ri+i-*, which is also in the abl./instr., is best understood as an adjective belonging to *atun(i)-*. As it obviously refers to an earlier event, one might tentatively suggest a translation ‘previous’.¹¹³

In sum, the translation ‘letter’ or ‘message’ seems appropriate for both attestations of (*205)*atun(i)-*. A confirmation of this interpretation may be provided by the logogram *205, which accompanies both attestations of *atun(i)-*. The sign is best described as a rectangle with the sign REL (*329) in the middle (see fig. 1). The logogram REL, which has the phonetic value /kwi/ or /kwa/, is, among other, used to spell the Hieroglyphic Luwian verb for ‘to write’, *kwanza-* (REL-*za-*).¹¹⁴ The square of the logogram *205 could thus be interpreted as a writing surface with the sign REL representing the writing on it, which would be a very understandable and recognizable way to depict a letter or written message (see fig. 1).¹¹⁵ A nice parallel hereof is found in the sign for stele (*267), which often has the sign REL in the middle, or on top (see fig. 2a–c). This presumably refers to an inscribed stele – of



Fig. 1: Sign *205 (Laroche 1960b: 112).



Figs. 2a–c: Sign *267 STELE (Laroche 1960b: 138).

which have many examples have survived in the archaeological record. Since there are only two attestations of (*205)*atun(i)-*, and in both cases the context is not completely understood, the here proposed identification has to remain a conjecture for now. The same applies to the interpretation of the hapax *pa+ra/i-la-ri+i*, as ‘previous’. There is a good chance, however, that we have not lost the Hieroglyphic Luwian word for ‘letter’, but that we only temporarily misplaced it.

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¹¹² See Melchert (1977, 362, 395).

¹¹³ One could cautiously consider to link this word to *pari* (PRAE-*i*) and *paran* (PRAE-*na*) ‘before, in front of’, which also seems to be used in a temporal meaning in the Assur letters, see e.g. letter f+g § 30 (PRAE-) and letter e § 30 (PRAE-), as well as -as kindly pointed out to me by Alwin Kloekhorst – in KARATEPE 1 § 27: 138–141 *paran* (PRAE-*na*).

¹¹⁴ For this verb, see Payne (2010, 184–185) and Waal (2014; 2019).

¹¹⁵ Note that this interpretation does exclude the interpretation of *205 as a simplified version of *206 (for this suggestion, see Giusfredi 2010, 212 n. 415).

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