

NORTH OR SOUTH? A NOTE ON THE PROVENANCE OF EA 220

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The letter designated as EA 220 is at present housed in the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo² and belongs among the subset of Amarna documents that did not go through the recent petrographic and interrelated analyses carried out by Yuval Goren, Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman.³ Hence, its origin remains in some sort of “fuzzy” state.

With respect to the contents of the letter, it does not in any significant way differ from the majority of the other so-called vassal letters. The author of the message, a local ruler otherwise unattested in the Amarna material, declares his loyalty to the king of Egypt by repeating his promises to listen to the words of the Egyptian king and to fulfil his duties first and foremost to guard the city of the king. He mentions that he is going to guard the city only until the Pharaoh's commissioner and, although it is not stated literally, it can be added, fairly for certain, “and the troops” arrive. The political situation and safety in the relevant region is not good—the city is under pressure—it was raided and the sender's predecessor, his “father”, was “defeated”. The author now guards the king's city and the arrival of the king's commissioner is tensely awaited since the latter will surely recognize the desperate situation of the city and its ruler.

The tablet itself is in a relatively good state of preservation and its text consists of 31 lines written on both sides of the tablet; the first part (nine lines) represents an opening passage consisting of the heading and salutations (in the form of a prostration formula), and beginning in the middle of line 9 the body of the letter starts. There are no traces of a division line visible between the two separate parts of the document.

The letter does not offer much information for the determination of its provenance. Unluckily the address—the always recurring part of any opening passage and containing the identification of both the sender and the addressee—is partly damaged and a clear reading of the sender's name as well as the name of his city is not possible, c.f. line 3: *um-ma* ^mKÚR-*ur-tu-ya* L[Ú] [u] [z] u-n[u], i.e. “Message of KUR²tuya, ruler of Zu²nu”.⁴ Knudtzon's reading of the sender's name is Nukurtuwa,⁵ modified by Rainey as Nukurtuya.⁶ The same reading is suggested by Hess⁷ who interprets the name as Akkadian, consisting of a single element – *nukurtu* “the enemy”⁸ with a hypocoristic suffix, *-ya*, c.f. ^mKÚR-*ur-tu-ya*. Moran⁹ reads the name as Kurtuya with a possible reference to a personal name attested in Ugaritic texts as *krty*¹⁰ (with a question mark). On the other hand, Liverani¹¹ prefers the reading Kur-

¹ Charles University in Prag. This article represents an updated version of the paper entitled “The Unprovenanced Letter EA 220. A Proposal for Its Origin”, presented at the 52^e *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* held in Münster (July 17–21, 2006). The tablet was collated on March 5 and 21, 2007. It was written within the Programme for the Development of Fields of Study at Charles University, No. P14 “Archaeology of non-European Regions”, project “Research of the ancient Egyptian civilisation. Cultural and political adaptation of the North African civilisations in ancient history (5,000 B.C. – 1,000 A.D.)”. I would like to express my gratitude to Elena Devecchi and Filip Coppens for their suggestions. Needless to say, all errors are mine.

² Originally belonging to the dossier of tablets seized in Giza (*Journal d'entrée* IV: 344–345; MYNÁŘOVÁ 2007, 27), according to KNUDTZON 1915, I, 7 n. 1, it came from an antiq-

uities dealer, Farag Ismaïl. The tablet is identified in the sources of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo as CG 4785; J.28179 and SR 4/12226/0. For its copy, see WINCKLER 1890, II, Nr. 150.

³ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA'AMAN 2004.

⁴ There is a hieratic docket written in black ink over the signs *tu* and *ya* with its upper part expanding into an empty space in line 2.

⁵ KNUDTZON 1915, I, 757.

⁶ RAINEY 1975, 405.

⁷ HESS 1993, 120–121.

⁸ KNUDTZON 1915, II, 1486.

⁹ MORAN 1992, 382.

¹⁰ Of unknown etymology, cf. DEL OLMO LETE – SANMARTÍN 2003, 458 with further references.

¹¹ LIVERANI 1998, 112.

tuwa without offering any comment on the subject. Liverani, as well as Weber and Ebeling,¹² also follows the early identification of the city–Zu²nu–suggested by Dhorme¹³ with the biblical Zanoah (mod. Zânû‘a) and assigns the letter to a *dossier* from southern Palestine. He includes the document among a subset of letters designated as “Varie dalla Palestina meridionale” that he defines by style, epithets and/or contents.¹⁴ Moran,¹⁵ on the other hand, proposes without further discussion a northern origin of the document, assuming KURtuya’s role as a mayor in the region of Syria. His suggestion is followed by a deliberate question mark. In light of this, the provenance of the document designated as EA 220 (or LA 65 by Liverani) remains open to further discussions.

Liverani, in his commented translations of the Amarna letters, refers to topographical and palaeographical issues to determine to the origin of the document. As far as topography is concerned, one has to be cautious and keep in mind that the only concrete topographical data comes from the partially damaged line 3 and that the reading of the city’s name as well as its modern identification is far from definite. The second of Liverani’s arguments is based on palaeography: Liverani accentuates the similarity between EA 220 (= LA 65) and the letters of a certain Bayawa, in his words “a Palestinian king”, author of two Amarna letters, EA 215 (= LA 56) and EA 216 (= LA 57).

The document EA 215 (now housed in the British Museum; BME 29843) is a rather short message of seventeen lines consisting of the opening passage (lines 1–9) and the letter’s body (lines 9–17). In this letter Bayawa asks for the immediate arrival of Pharaoh’s commissioner Yanḥamu, as without his arrival—he says—the country will be lost to ‘Apiru and therefore he asks for Pharaoh’s help. EA 216, held in the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (CG 4784, J.28179, SR 4/12202/0), is a slightly longer text of twenty lines, but the structure is the same—the opening passage, consisting of the address and the prostration formula, is followed by the body of the letter. In this case Bayawa confirms

the acceptance of Pharaoh’s message pertaining to his duty to prepare everything necessary before the arrival of the king’s troops and states that he stands by all the directives. In this case the person in charge of issuing concrete instructions and commands is referred to as the royal commissioner Maya. Bayawa repeats his plea for archers and favour of the king. Liverani’s palaeographical argument is not completely convincing. The script of the two Bayawa’s letters differs significantly and Moran¹⁶ justly concludes that in between both letters a new scribe must have been employed.¹⁷ In his edition of the Amarna tablets Knudtzon includes Bayawa’s correspondence among the letters of north Canaanite origin. It is Moran¹⁸ who follows Knudtzon’s identification and reckons Bayawa’s sphere to be, probably, some area in the region of Syria. Unfortunately neither EA 215 nor EA 216 states the name of Bayawa’s city.

In both EA 215 and EA 216, the address is represented by a type¹⁹ where the name of the addressee is stated first and only then follows the identification of the sender, i.e. *ana* PN₂ *umma* PN₁ where PN₂ is the addressee and PN₁ is the sender. But the two texts differ by the absence or presence of the injunction to speak, c.f. *a-na* LUGAL-*ri* EN-*ia* ^dUTU-*ia* DINGIR^{mes}-*ia* *um-ma* ^m*ba-ia-wa* ÌR-*ka* (EA 215: 1–4; Type 1) and *a-[n]a* L[UG]AL-*ri* EN-*ia* *q[î]-bi-ma* *um-ma* ^m*b[a]-ia-wa* ÌR-*ka* (EA 216: 1–3; Type 2), respectively. It has been already observed that none of these types of heading, being primary types attested in the Amarna correspondence, bear any geographical connotations.²⁰ In case of EA 215 the message is addressed to “the king, my master, my Sun, my god>s<”, while in EA 216 only “the king, my master” is mentioned. In both texts the identification of the sender consists only of his name followed by a reference to his subordinate status, “your servant”. Unfortunately, the prostration formula itself contributes only little to the discussion about the concrete origin of Bayawa’s letters. In EA 216 we recognize a conventional arrangement of the individual components of the prostration formula consisting of a directional

¹² KNUDTZON 1915, II, 1298.

¹³ DHORME 1908–1909, 516.

¹⁴ LIVERANI 1998, 112.

¹⁵ MORAN 1992, 382.

¹⁶ MORAN 1992, 284.

¹⁷ The surface of EA 216 is badly damaged and certain parts are almost completely worn out.

¹⁸ MORAN 1992, 283–284.

¹⁹ For the typology of the opening passages preserved in the Amarna correspondence consult MYNÁŘOVÁ 2007, 92–114, Tab. 14.

²⁰ MYNÁŘOVÁ 2007, 116–118, 122–124. The situation however differs with respect to the connection between the political situation and geography; see especially MORRIS 2006, 181.

phrase followed by a number and a verbal form (Type 6),²¹ c.f. *a-na ĠIR^{meš} LUGAL-ri E[N-i]a^dU[T]U-[i]a 7 ù 7-[t]a-an a[m]-qut*, “At the feet of the king, my master, my Sun, 7 (times) and 7 times, I fall” (EA 216: 4–6). On the other hand in EA 215 a completely unique combination is preserved in the sequence of the element of manner (i.e. “belly & back” and the number), followed by a directional phrase and a verbal form (Type 22),²² c.f. *ka-ba-tum-ma ù ša-ša-lu-ma 7 ù šī-ib-e-ta-an a-na ĠIR^{meš} LUGAL-ri be-li-ia^dUTU-ia DINGIR^{meš}-ia am-qú-ut*, “on the belly and on the back, 7 (times) and seven times at the feet of my king, my master, my Sun, my god>s<, I fall” (EA 215: 4–9). Unfortunately, based on the type of prostration formula, neither in this case can any geographical information be obtained from the two passages mentioned above.

With respect to EA 216 and EA 215 we may thus conclude the following: the prostration formula attested in EA 216 belongs to the largest set preserved in the Amarna corpus and its usage bears no apparent geographical context, and in case of EA 215 the position of the element of manner in a form of the phrase “on the belly and on the back”, occupying the very first position within the sequence, makes it (EA 215) a unique document among the whole Amarna corpus. Although it may only reflect a departure from a more standardized sequence employed elsewhere within the corpus.

Otherwise the “belly & back” phrase itself is well-documented and attested widely within the vassal correspondence. If we use only those texts where the opening passage is complete, almost complete or the reconstruction is possible with a high degree of certainty,²³ we can find the phrase, either as “on the belly and on the back”²⁴ or less often as “on the back and on the belly”²⁵ in the following texts: EA 64 and EA 65 (by Abdiaštarti),²⁶ EA 211 and 213 (by Zitriyara), EA 215 (by Bayawa), EA 232–234 (by Surata and Satatna), EA 282, 284

and 366 (by Šuwardata), EA 298, 299 and 378 (by Yapa^cu), EA 301, 303–306 (by Šubandu), EA 314 and EA 315 (by PU-ba^cla), EA 319 (by Šurašar), EA 320 and 322–326 (by Yidya), and EA 328 and EA 331 (by Yabni’ilu and Šipti^cla). The usage of the phrase would suggest a southern origin of the letter EA 215, with the closest parallel in EA 211 with preferred writing (^{uz})ša-ša-lu-ma “on the back” instead of the more widely used *še-ru-ma/šú-uḥ-ru-ma* (c.f. Table 1).

It is interesting to observe that the “southern tradition” of this particular phrase is moreover confirmed by the petrographic analysis²⁷—of these 30 letters only seven documents²⁸ were not petrographically analyzed, and of the remaining 23 documents eight were in fact sent from the south Palestinian coast, probably the Egyptian centre in Gaza (EA 211, EA 213, EA 215, EA 298, EA 299, EA 306, EA 319, EA 378), six belong to the Ashkelon group of documents (EA 303, EA 304, EA 323–326), four originate from the area of Lower Shephelah, probably Tel Šafit (EA 65, EA 282, EA 284 and EA 366), two were written in the Egyptian centre at Beth-Shean (EA 232 and EA 234), one comes from Upper Shephelah, probably Qiltu (EA 64), and one from Yurša²⁹ (EA 315).

Nevertheless, especially due to the script and the contents of the documents, Knudtzon’s original edition assigned EA 215 as well as EA 211 to the northern group of the Amarna documents. As luck would have it both EA 211 and EA 215 were available for petrographic analysis and this confirmed that both documents were written on the south Palestinian coast—with Gaza being the most probable candidate for their place of composition.³⁰

The dyadic structure of the opening passage of KURtuya’s document agrees with other vassal letters, composed of the heading—containing the address—and the expression of the sender’s self-abasement, i.e. the prostration formula.³¹ The identification of the addressee can be restored as ^mLUGAL-ri

²¹ MYNÁROVÁ 2007, 155.

²² MYNÁROVÁ 2007, 162–163.

²³ Therefore EA 281: 7 is not included into the discussion.

²⁴ Or its variant “on the chest and on the back”, see EA 232: 10–11.

²⁵ C.f. EA 211: 5–6; EA 314: 9–10; EA 315: 7; EA 323: 8–9; EA 324: 9; EA 325: 9; EA 326: 7–8.

²⁶ See NA’AMAN 1979, 676ff.; GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 283–285.

²⁷ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, *passim*.

²⁸ EA 233, EA 301, EA 305, EA 314, EA 320, EA 322, EA 328 and EA 331.

²⁹ For the identification with Tell Jemmeh c.f. GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 300.

³⁰ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 306–308.

³¹ Consult MYNÁROVÁ 2007, 105–106; Type 12A and MORRIS 2006.

EA Text	Sender	Element of manner (“belly & back”)
EA 64: 7	Abdiaštarti	<i>ka-ba-tu-ma ù šú-uh-ru-ma</i>
EA 65: 5	Abdiaštarti	<i>ka-ba-tu-ma ù šú-uh-ru-ma</i>
EA 211: 5–6	Zitriyara	^{uzi} <i>ša-ša-lu-ma ù</i> ^{uzi} ĤAR
EA 213: 9	Zitriyara	<i>ka-ba-tu-ma ù še-ru-[m]a</i>
EA 215: 4–5	Bayawa	<i>ka-ba-tum-ma ù ša-ša-lu-ma</i>
EA 232: 10–11	Surata	<i>i-na pa-an-te-e \ ba-aṭ-nu-ma ù še-ru-ma \ šú-uh-ru-ma</i>
EA 233: 14–15	Satatna	<i>ka-ba-tu-ma ù še-ru-ma</i>
EA 234: 9	Satatna	<i>ka-bat-tu-ma ù še-ru-ma</i>
EA 282: 6–7	Šuwardata	<i>ka-ba-tu-ma ù ṛšú^ṛ-uh-ru-[m]a</i>
EA 284: 5	Šuwardata	<i>ka-ba-tu-ma ṛù šú-uh^ṛ-ru-m[a]</i>
EA 298: 13–14	Yapa ^c u	<i>ka-bat-tum-ma u še-ru-ma</i>
EA 299: 11	Yapa ^c u	<i>ka-bat-tum u še-ru-ma</i>
EA 301:10–11	Šubandu	<i>ka-bat-tum-ma ù še-ru-[m]a</i>
EA 303: 11–12	Šubandu	^{uzi} <i>ka-bat-tu-ma ù</i> ^{uzi} <i>še-ru-ma</i>
EA 304: 13–14	Šubandu	^{uzi} <i>[ka-b]at-tum-ma ù</i> ^{uzi} <i>š[e]-ru-ma</i>
EA 305: 13–14	Šubandu	^{uzi} <i>ka-bat-tum-ma ù</i> ^{uzi} <i>še-ru-ma</i>
EA 306: 10–11	Šubandu	^{uzi} <i>ka-bat-tum-[m]a ù</i> ^{uzi} <i>š[ú]-u[ḥ]-r[u-ma]</i>
EA 314: 9–10	PU-ba ^c la	<i>še-ru-ma ù ka-ba-tu-ma</i>
EA 315: 7	PU-ba ^c la	<i>še-ru-ma u ka-ba-[tu]-m[a]</i>
EA 319: 14	Šurašar	<i>ka-bat-[um-ma³ u/ù] še-ru-ma</i>
EA 320: 14–15	Yidya	<i>ka-b[a]t-tum-ma u [š]e-ru-ma</i>
EA 322: 13–14	Yidya	^{uzi} <i>ka-bat-tum-ma u</i> ^{uzi} <i>še-ru-ma</i>
EA 323: 8–9	Yidya	<i>še-ru-ma u ka-ba-tu-ma</i>
EA 324: 9	Yidya	<i>še-ru-ma ù ka-ba-tu-ma</i>
EA 325: 9	Yidya	<i>še-ru-ma ù ka-ba-tu-ma</i>
EA 326: 7–8	Yidya	<i>š[e-ru-m]a u ka-ba-tu-ma</i>
EA 328: 15–16	Yabni ^c ilu	^[u] ^{zu} <i>ka-bat-tum-ma [ù]</i> ^[u] ^{zu} <i>še-ru-ma</i>
EA 331: 11–12	Šiptiba ^c la	<i>ka-b[at-t]u-m[a] ù še-r[u]-ma</i>
EA 366: 10	Šuwardata	^{uzi} <i>ka-bat-tu-ma ù <še>-ru-ma</i>
EA 378: 9–10	Yapa ^c u	^{uzi} <i>ka-bat-tum-ma u</i> ^{uzi} <i>še-ru-ma</i>

Table 1 “Belly & back” phrase attested in the Amarna corpus

EN-*ia* [^dUTU-*ia*] “the king, my master, [my Sun]” (line 1), while the sender identifies himself only by means of his personal name followed by the name of his city. The address in EA 220 has the well-documented form *ana* PN₂ *umma* PN₁ used not only within the Amarna corpus³²—for a communication addressed by a socially subordinate person to his superior, in this case to the Egyptian king. The identification of the addressee is followed by an injunction to speak (with an enclitic particle *-ma*) and the identification of the document’s sender (“KURtuya, ruler of Zu³nu”). The section designated for the sender’s identification further develops his subordinate social as well as political position by the employment of other voluble and apparent expressions of his humble state. KURtuya de-

clares to the king that he is “your servant, the dust (at the) feet of the king, my master, my Sun and the ground you tread on” (EA 220: 4–6, ĪR-*ka* SAḤAR^{meš} *ša* ĠĪR^{meš} LUGAL-*ri* EN-*ia* ^dUTU-*ia* ù *ṭi₄-ṭi ša ka-bá-ši-[k]a₄*).

The distribution of both substantives – “the dust” and “the ground” within the Amarna Archive provides additional information on the provenance of EA 220. The substantive “the dust (at the feet of the king, ...)” as an expression of the sender’s identification is again widely used³³ and no exact geographical distribution can be observed.³⁴ Its manner of writing and employing the plural marker–SAḤAR^{meš}—can however be found only among the letters from Šaruna (EA 241: 5), as well as from sites located further to the north: Akka (c.f. EA 233:

³² C.f. NOUGAYROL 1955, 2–3; for Ugaritic epistolography and the opening passages in particular see most thoroughly HAWLEY 2003 with further literature.

³³ MYNÁŘOVÁ 2007, 139–140, 144.

³⁴ See MORRIS 2006, 182–183.

7; EA 234: 5; EA 235(+):327: 6) and Kumidi (EA 195: 5).

The situation with the second substantive “the ground (you/he tread/s on)” is as follows: it can be written in three different ways: *tītu* (as in EA 220: 6), *qaqqaru* and KI^{mes} (c.f. Table 2). The parallels to EA 220—written as *tītu*—can be recognized in EA 213: 5 (*tī-īṭ ša ka-bá-ši-ka*, from Zitriyara, a ruler of an unknown city and sent from Gaza),³⁵ EA 241:

6 (*tī-ti ša ka-bá-ši-ka*, from Šaruna) and EA 255: 5 (*tī-tù ša ka-bá-ši-ka*, from Piḫilu/Pella). The writing *qaqqaru* is attested in the letters EA 185: 6 (from Ḫasi), EA 198: 7 (from Kumidi), EA 231: 7–8 (probably from Byblos)³⁶ and EA 232: 5 (from Akka), and EA 366: 6 (from Gimtu/Gath). The remaining two attestations are written KI^{mes} , c.f. EA 195: 7 (from Kumidi) and EA 233: 8 and EA 234: 5–6 (from Akka).

“the ground”	EA text	phrase	sender
<i>tītu</i>	EA 213: 5	<i>tī-īṭ ša ka-bá-ši-ka</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	Zitriyara of an unknown city
	EA 220: 6	<i>tī-ti ša ka-bá-ši-[k]a</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	KURtuya of Zu’nu
	EA 241: 6	<i>tī-ti ša ka-bá-ši-ka</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	Ruṣmanya of Šaruna
	EA 255: 5	<i>tī-tù ša ka-bá-ši-ka</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	Mutba’lu of Piḫilu/Pella
<i>Qaqqaru</i>	EA 185: 6	<i>qa-q[a]-r[i] ša k[a]-b[á]-[š]i-š[u]</i> (“the ground he treads on”)	Mayarzana of Ḫasi
	EA 198: 7	<i>qa-qa-ri ka-bá-ši-ka</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	Arašša of Kumidi
	EA 231: 7–8	<i>[qa-qa-ru ša] ka-ba-ši-š[u]</i> (“the ground he treads on”)	unknown of Byblos(?)
	EA 232: 5	<i>qa-qa-ru ša ka-ba-ši-š[u]</i> (“the ground he treads on”)	Surata of Akka
	EA 366: 6	<i>qa-qa-ru ša ka-ba-ši-ka</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	Šuwardata of Gimtu/Gath
KI^{mes}	EA 195: 7	KI^{mes} <i>ša ka-bá-ši-ka</i> (“the ground you tread on”)	Biryawaza of Kumidi
	EA 233: 8	KI^{mes} <i>ša ka-bá-ši-š[u]</i> (“the ground he treads on”)	Satatna of Akka
	EA 234: 5–6	KI^{mes} <i>ša ka-bá-ši-š[u]</i> (“the ground he treads on”)	Satatna of Akka

Table 2 Sender’s identification—“the ground (you/he tread/s on)”

The binominal combination of “the dust” and “the ground” employed in KURtuya’s letter EA 220 can be identified only in the following documents: EA 195 and EA 198 (from Biryawaza and Arašša of Kumidi), EA 231 (probably from Byblos), EA 232–234 (from Surata and Satatna of Akka), EA 241 (from Ruṣmanya of Šaruna), EA 255 (from Mutba’lu of Piḫilu), EA 366 (from Šuwardata of Gath) and EA 213 (from Zitriyara of an unknown city); with the closest resemblance in EA 213 and 241.

As far as the inner structure of the prostration formula is concerned, in EA 220 it consists of a directional phrase, followed by an element of manner (in a form of a number) and a verbal form, attested in lines 7–9, c.f. *a-na GİR^{mes} LUGAL EN-i[a] 7 UTU-ia 7 ù 7-ta-an am-qut* “At the feet of the king, my master, my Sun, 7 (times) and 7 times, I fall”. It is by far the most often employed sequence of elements, and needless to say, it reflects no clear geographical distribution appearing both among the letter belonging to the “northern” and the “southern” tradition.

In order to give a more specific provenance to EA 220 we have to turn back to Liverani’s argument, which stated that based on the palaeography no similarity existed between EA 220 and EA 215, and the fact that the letter EA 220 should be considered among the southern subset of Amarna documents. Analysing the individual elements employed within the opening passage of the above mentioned letter and comparing the data with other Amarna text we can observe that most of them can be recognized in letters of both the northern and southern tradition. A plausible explanation for such a “schism” does exist. As a starting point we could consider the letter EA 215 sent by a certain Bayawa to the Egyptian king and discussed earlier as a model situation for EA 220. In the case of EA 215 the provenance was also highly insecure—there were very different suggestions regarding to its origin—but the petrographic analyses finally clearly proved that this particular document had been written in Gaza and EA 215 is not the only example. A similar situation appears with many other letters ascribed by earlier authors to the “northern tradition”,

³⁵ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 306–308.

³⁶ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 315.

e.g. letter EA 168 sent by Aziru, the ruler of Amurru,³⁷ EA 97 by Yapaḥadda of Beirut,³⁸ the well-known correspondence of Dagantakala (EA 317 and EA 318)³⁹ or for example a group of documents EA 211–213, EA 215,⁴⁰ EA 217–218⁴¹ and EA 226,⁴² originally considered to be “northern” letters. However, as the provenance study conducted by Y. Goren, I. Finkelstein and N. Na’aman clearly showed, all of these were written in Gaza. Gaza comes to the fore also as the place of origin of several of the Gezer documents sent by its ruler Yapa’u (EA 298, EA 378 and probably also EA 299 and EA 300)⁴³ as well as some of the Ashqelon letters (EA 321 and EA 306, maybe also EA 302)⁴⁴. Even one of the Lachish messages (EA 329)⁴⁵ and the letter from the ruler of Aḥṭiruna (EA 319)⁴⁶ might originate from the same town. And it is impossible to rule out the possibility that Gaza could be identified

as the hometown of several unprovenanced letters where the petrographic analyses clearly proved their southern origin (Gaza – Ashqelon area, c.f. EA 66, EA 307–310 and EA 312).⁴⁷

The originally complicated situation of the provenance of letter EA 220 ascribed both to the northern and to the southern group of letters can be explained. Despite the fact that the script, style and contents rather suggest a northern origin of the document, the letter could still have been composed in the south, as suggested by Liverani. In this particular case the message could have been sent from a ruler of an otherwise unknown city of Zu’nu to the Pharaoh. However, the content of the communication could have been first carried as an oral one and put down in the writing only after reaching the Egyptian administrative centre in southern Canaan, i.e. Gaza.

³⁷ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 112–113.

³⁸ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 161–162.

³⁹ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 309. See especially ARTZI 1968.

⁴⁰ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 306–308.

⁴¹ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 310–311.

⁴² GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 308.

⁴³ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 273–275.

⁴⁴ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 295–298.

⁴⁵ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 288–289.

⁴⁶ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, 302–303.

⁴⁷ GOREN – FINKELSTEIN – NA’AMAN 2004, *passim*.

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