

# The first chapter of the Cortona inscription

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From an analysis of the technical terms used in the famous *Tabula Cortonensis*, it is obvious to me that it is a juridical document, comparable in part to the *Cippus Perusinus*. The text presents a contract between two parties concerning the sale, the acquisition or concession of certain goods.<sup>1</sup> Groups of persons are listed as being opponents, interested parties or perhaps witnesses of the transaction. Scholars debate the function of the lists of persons as well as the interpretation of terms such as *cenu*, *nuθanatur* and *êprus*.

According to Agostiniani & Nicosia, the editors of the *editio princeps* of the inscription, the first chapter of the text describes the selling or letting of property by Petru Shcevas and the Cushu brothers to small farmers. This distribution of property fits in with the social situation in Etruria after the Punic Wars.<sup>2</sup> The transaction itself is expressed by the passive verb form *cenu*, which is accompanied by an ablative indicating the agent *pêtruis ocêvês*.<sup>3</sup> The relevant lines are cited below.

*et pêtruis ocêvês êliunts vinac restmc cenu têtθur sar cuouθuras  
larisal[i]ovla peoc opante têtθur σα sran sarc clθil têtθona θui spanθi  
mlesiêθic rasna ΣIIIC*

In chapter one the emphasis is on the verb form *cenu*. Thus far, two interpretations have been given, one by Facchetti (2000), another by Maggiani (2002).<sup>4</sup>

An important problem for the interpretation of this passage is the fact that *cuouθuras* is inflected for a different case than *pêtruis ocêvês*, which indicates that they assume different syntactic functions within the clause. Taking into account the functional differences between the two names, Facchetti has, in my opinion, provided an accurate analysis of the text and has made a profoundly significant comparison with the *Cippus Perusinus* (Pe 8.4). The verb *cenu* appears in clause III:

*aulesi velθinas arznal clensi θii θil scuna cenu eplc felic larθals afunes*

His conclusion is that *cenu* must mean '(is) obtained' in both texts and that both texts deal with the acquisition of the right of access to or the use of property belonging to a second party. The first clause of the *Tabula Cortonensis* therefore contains the description of a legal agreement between Petru Shcevas (who obtains property) and the Cushu brothers.<sup>5</sup> Facchetti believes that this agreement is expressed by the term *peσ*, which refers, again according to Facchetti, to a long term rental agreement concerning property whose dimensions are set forth in the text.<sup>6</sup>

According to the interpretation of Maggiani, *cenu* should be translated as '(is) ceded'. Maggiani argues that clause I of the *Tabula Cortonensis*, clause III of the *Cippus Perusinus*, and the inscription on the Arringatore statue (Pe 3.3: *aulesi metelis ve veσial clensi cen fleres tece σansl tenine tuθines χiσvlics*) have the same syntactic structure: a passive verb form (*cenu*, *cenu*, *tenine*), an indirect object (*cuσuθuras*, *aulesi*, *aulesi*), an agent or actor (*pêtruis σcêvês*, *larθals afunes*, *tuθines*), and a subject (*vinac restmc*, *θil scuna*, *cen*).<sup>7</sup> In the first clause of the *Tabula Cortonensis* there is also a second subject parallel to *vinac restmc*. According to Maggiani, the subject is *peσ* (very likely to be understood as *fundus*, based on the fact that it is located in the plain, *σpante*). This land is to be ceded to the Cushu. Maggiani concludes that the property, which in the first place may have belonged to the Cushu, but had temporarily been in possession of Petru Shcevas, now returns to the Cushu, thanks to a legal decision.<sup>8</sup> In Maggiani's view it is even possible that Petru Shcevas and his wife have to return certain (rented) pieces of property, but also have to pay a penalty (*peσ*, *traula*, *pava*), which would explain why the *fundus* had to be measured.

So, given the two interpretations, the question remains: Does *cenu* mean 'obtain' or 'cede'?

In my opinion, Facchetti deserves credit for having shown that the text on the *Cippus Perusinus* not only deals with the division of property between two families, the Afuna and the Velthina families, but also contains a clause with information about the right to use water from another's land, the so-called *aquae haustus*.<sup>9</sup> Facchetti believes that this idea is expressed by the term *θil*, which he analyzes as *θi-il*, 'the action (-il) of the water'. According to Facchetti, Velthina has to cede this *aquae haustus*, an action expressed by the verb *scuna*. With respect to the form *scuna*, which follows *θil*, I believe that Maggiani's analysis is more appropriate. Rather than being interpreted as a verb form ('cede'), it is to be analyzed as a substantive (*scun-na*), as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> In fact, *scuna* may well be derived from the verb *scune* that appears in the *Cippus Perusinus* in the formula *acilune turune scune*. This formula is parallel to Latin *facere*, *dare*, *praestare*.<sup>11</sup> As a substantive, *scuna* must be interpreted as 'achievement, use,

concession'.<sup>12</sup> It is delimited by the genitive *θil*<sup>13</sup> so that the phrase *θil scuna* means 'the use of the water' and is thus roughly equivalent to the Latin phrase *aquae haustus*.

Now that the interpretation of *θil scuna* has been clarified, we have to ask whether the *aquae haustus* is obtained or is ceded by Afuna? I believe that Facchetti's interpretation is correct. Since Afuna on the *Cippus Perusinus* and Petru Shcevas on the *Tabula Cortonensis* are outsiders/non-residents (in Perugia and Cortona), it is more likely for them to obtain property or rights from one of the local aristocracy (Velthina, the Cushu brothers) rather than to cede it. But there is more: The text of *Cippus Perusinus* indicates that members of the Velthina family have possession of 12 *naper* (a measure of surface area) of land (*ipa ama hen naper XII velθinaθuras*). This is followed by the clause that deals with the *aquae haustus*. I conclude then that Afuna obtains the *aquae haustus* on the land of the Velthina. As Facchetti notes, in the interpretation of Maggiani, the repetition of the word for water (*θii, θil*) is unmotivated ('To Aule Velthina, with respect to water, the use of water is ceded'). In support of his analysis of the initial phrase of clause III, Facchetti points to the parallelism of the formulae with locative and pertinentive (which is used as a locative of a genitive): Ta 5.5: *zilci velusi hulχniesi* ('in the zilcship (in that) of Vel Hulchnie'); *Cippus Perusinus: aulesi velθinas arznal clensi θii* ('with respect to the water (with respect to that) of Aule Velthina').

If Velthina possesses property on which there is water, Afuna can obtain use of it, but he cannot cede it. We therefore translate clause III of the *Cippus Perusinus* as: 'With respect to the water of Aule Velthina, son of Arznei, the use of water is obtained<sup>14</sup> *eplc felic* (?) by Larth Afuna.'

I now return to the *Tabula Cortonensis*. We know that pieces of land that belonged to the Cusu brothers have been obtained by Petru Shcevas. The land in the text is called *vinac restmc*. In this case I believe Maggiani<sup>15</sup> is right in arguing that in the first paragraph we find at least two times the same syntactic structure: a nominative subject (*vinac restmc* and *πεσ-c (σpante)*), an indication of measures (*tênθur sar* and *tênθur σα sran sarc*) and a genitive (*cuσουθuras lariσal[i]ovla* and *clθil*). Thus, Petru Shcevas obtains not only a 'vineyard' and a *restm*, but also a *πεσ* (probably a *fundus*, as indicated by Maggiani). All of this property belonged originally to the Cushu brothers. The problem seems to be that the second subject *πεσc* contains the conjunction *-c*, while *têρσna* does not. I believe that *têρσna* could very well be a cover term for the property under discussion. Indeed, in the fourth paragraph, at the point where both parties are named (on the one hand the Cushu brothers, on the other hand Petru Shcevas and his wife), Maggiani<sup>16</sup> wonders why the people (*rasna*) as a third party are not

mentioned. The answer is that *rasna* does not refer to the third party in the legal contract, but specifies as 'Etruscan'<sup>17</sup> a certain monetary value of the property obtained by Petru. Thus the sentence *têrona θui σpanθi mlesiêθic rasna ΣIIIIC* could mean: 'the *têrona* (= all of the property) here in the plain (that is the *peσ*) and in the *mlesia* (these are the vineyard and the *restm*) [costs] 14.5 *rasna*.'

I conclude by presenting a translation of my interpretation of the first clause of the *Tabula Cortonensis*.

*et pêtruis σcêvês êliunts vinac restmc cenu têtθur sar cuσuθuras  
larioal[i]σvla peσc σpanθe têtθur σα sran sarc clθil têtrona θui σpanθi  
mlesiêθic rasna ΣIIIIC inni peσ pêtrus pavac traulac tiur têt[θ]urc têtθa  
zacinat prinisêrac zal*

'So by Petru Shcevas, the *êliun*, a vineyard and a *restm* of 10 *tenθur* are obtained from the Cushu, and (also) a *fundus* in the plain of 4 *tenθur* and 10 *sran* (is obtained) from these same (folks);<sup>18</sup> <the entire property> here in the plain and in the *mlesia* (costs) 14.5 *rasna*. With respect to the *fundus* for Petru the *zacinat prinisherac* has a month to size up the two measures, (these are) the *pava* and the *traula*.' (= *quem fundum Petri mense agrimensor priniserac metiatur mensuras pavac traulac duas*).<sup>19</sup>

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#### NOTES

[Editor's note: In this paper the palatal sibilant /š/ is represented by *σ*, the dental sibilant /s/ is represented by *s*. The *Tabula Cortonensis* is cited from Agostiniani-Nicosia 2000. Other Etruscan texts are cited from Rix, *Etruskische Texte*, (1991). ]

1. Agostiniani-Nicosia 2000: 84-86, Facchetti 2000: 59-88 and Maggiani 2002: 69-70.

2. Agostiniani 2000: 85, 92-93.

3. Agostiniani 2000: 95-96.

4. Agostiniani and Nicosia choose not to express their opinion as to the meaning of *cenu*.

5. Facchetti 2000: 61-65.

6. Facchetti 2000: 74.

7. Maggiani 2002: 71.

8. Maggiani 2002: 74 and 2001: 109.

9. Facchetti 2000: 18-19.

10. Wylin 2000: 240-247 and Wylin 2004: fn. 13. In Ta 0.19 (*m $\lambda$  ca scuna fira hin $\theta$ u*) it seems that *scuna* is modified by an adjective *m $\lambda$*  and a demonstrative pronoun *ca*, while the verb form may well be *fira* (see the forms *firin* and *firi $\theta$ vene* in the *Liber Linteus*). In Ta 1.182 (*camnas lar $\theta$  . . . atrsrce scuna calti ou $\theta$ iti . . .*) I have argued that *scuna* is the direct object of the verb form *atr $\theta$ rce* ('build a scuna'); in Ta 5.6, that *scuna* is preceded by a genitive construction.

11. Manthe 1979: 270-276.

12. The question of whether *scuna* can also be interpreted as a noun in clause VII of the *Cippus Perusinus* (Pe 8.4, 22-24:  *$\chi$ im $\theta$  spel  $\theta$ uta scuna afuna mena hen naper ci cnl hare utuse*) requires some discussion. After the indication that Velthina possesses 12 *naper* of land (clause II), it is said in clause IV that Velthina has another 5 *naper* on the sacred place (*municlet*) and adjacent to those another 6 *naper* (maybe as a *locus purus*). In clause VI we learn that a family tomb also belongs to Velthina (*eca vel $\theta$ ina $\theta$ uras  $\theta$ aura*). Now in clause VII it is said that Afuna should or can make (*mena*) a cavity (*spel*) of 3 *naper* on the 6 *naper* adjacent to the tomb of Velthina. Therefore Velthina has to *dare, facere, praestare* (*acilune, turune, scune*). Manthe (1979: 272-276) has shown that the third verb form, *praestare*, often appears on Roman graves when land has become *locus religiosus* (*spel  $\theta$ uta scuna afuna mena* = 'Afuna has to make the cavity a *locus religiosus*'). It seems very likely that on the *Cippus Perusinus* it is said that Afuna is allowed to make a cavity (a tomb) on the property of the Velthina, and that this land becomes *locus religiosus* (*spel  $\theta$ uta scuna afuna mena* = 'Afuna has

to make the cavity a locus religiosus'). This translation of *scuna* fits in very well with the other texts (Ta 0.19, 5.6, 1.182), all of them tomb inscriptions.

13. I agree that stems ending with a vowel have the genitive I in *-s*, for which, compare Facchetti's objection (2003: 5) to Maggiani's interpretation of *θil* as a genitive II. However, examples exist of nominal forms with both genitive endings, e.g., *rasnal* (Co 8.1) vs. *rasnas* (Ta 1.184); *ouθil* (Co 3.2) vs. *ouθis* (Pe 1.948).

14. In the translation of Facchetti ('with respect to the water of Aule Velthina, (he) has to cede (= *scuna*) the use of water (= *θil*), obtained by Afuna') there is not only the problematic lack of the subject for *scuna*, but also the use of a so-called past participle *cenu* with real participial function. In other texts with verb forms ending in *-u*, such use is not proven. As I have demonstrated in Wylin 2000: 307, verb forms in *-u* are to be considered as modally indifferent forms expressing perfective aspect.

15. Maggiani 2002: 72 and 2001: 99-100. I do not follow Maggiani's interpretation of the sentence *têrona θui opanθi mlesiêθic rasna SIIIC* as a third parallel subject (a *têrona* that should become public (*rasna*)).

16. Maggiani 2002: 7 and 2001: 108.

17. As for the question of *rasna*, I agree completely with the analysis of Facchetti 2000: 30-40.

18. This interpretation is possible if *-l* marks the plural ending of the demonstrative pronouns as argued by Facchetti 2002: 28-35.

19. Another possibility is to consider *pavac traulac* as two adjectives modifying *peσ*. At any rate, it seems to me that *zal* at the end of the clause is strongly emphasized to stress the fact that two measurements have to be taken. Regarding the syntax of the final sentence, in which *tênθur* is treated as the internal object of *tênθa* and *inni* is treated as an adjectival relative pronoun, I refer to the reader to Wylin 2002: 220.

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