

UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO

MESOPOTAMIA

RIVISTA DI ARCHEOLOGIA, EPIGRAFIA E
STORIA ORIENTALE ANTICA

LV

2020



apice libri

Rivista fondata da Giorgio Gullini.

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«Mesopotamia» is an International Peer Reviewed Journal.

Proprietà letteraria riservata

Iscritta al Tribunale di Torino n. 1886 del 20/6/67.

Si prega di indirizzare la corrispondenza diretta alla Redazione e i manoscritti a: Carlo Lippolis, Redazione di Mesopotamia, Dipartimento di Studi Storici - Università degli Studi di Torino, Via Sant'Ottavio 20, 10124 Torino.

ISSN: 0076-6615

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EIN REGENT FÜR KARDUNIAŠ IN EINEM BRIEF TUKULTĪ-NINURTAS I. AUS DŪR-KATLIMMU?

Konrad Volk zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet

ABSTRACT

The article offers a new interpretation of Tukultī-Ninurta's Middle Assyrian letter excavated at Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu (BATSH 4, 1 No. 9). The authors raise the question if a certain Adāju, mentioned in the text several times, may be identified with one of the contemporary Kassite kings bearing Adad-...-names. Furthermore, the implications of this proposal for the Assyrian eponym sequence are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Assyrian regents in Babylonia, Kassite kings, Assyrian Eponyms

E. Cancik-Kirschbaum hat mit ihrer 1996 im Druck erschienenen Dissertation, einer Edition der mittelas-syrischen (mA) Briefe aus Tell Šēḫ-Ḥamad / Dūr-Katlimmu, ein einzigartiges Textkorpus erschlossen. Schon zu jener Zeit war indessen abzusehen, dass die schwierige Materie manche Informationen erst im Ergebnis weiterer Forschungen preisgeben wird. Inzwischen scheint namentlich eine Passage des Königsbriefes (Z. 36-46), der ebd. als Nr. 9 bearbeitet vorliegt, eine neue Sicht zu eröffnen. Eine selten belegte Wortbedeutung (*šapālu* D) gestattet eine weiterführende Interpretation.

Mit Ausnahme des betreffenden Abschnitts orientiert sich der hier mit einigen Abweichungen nochmals gebotene Text unter Einbeziehung inzwischen erschienener Literatur an der Transliteration und der Übersetzung der Erstbearbeitung. Erwähnt sei, dass die Vfn. in ihrem Resümee der speziellen Passage auf deren gehobenen Stil hinweist. Auch hebt sie die Kritik des Königs an seinem Großwesir Aššur-iddin hervor und geht aufgrund der Nennung des Landes Karduniaš zu Recht davon aus, dass ein "Zusammenhang mit dem Konflikt zwischen Tukultī-Ninurta I. und Kaštiliaš IV." angedeutet sei. Mit Gewissheit ist aber inzwischen zu korrigieren, dass dieser Teil des Briefes "mit den eingangs behandelten administrativen Angelegenheiten"¹ nichts zu tun habe.

Nach der einleitenden Briefformel betreffen die ersten drei Abschnitte eine Person namens Adāju, an die ein Brief gerichtet werden soll. Auf diesen Brief wird man eine Antwort erwarten. Mit Ausnahme des Auftrages, eine Opferschau durchführen zu lassen und deren Ergebnis mitzuteilen (Z. 17-21), befasst sich dieser Teil ausschließlich mit der Behandlung und der zuverlässigen Zustellung der Briefsendungen.

CANCIK-KIRSCHBAUM 1996, Nr. 9 (S. 140-147), Autographie: Tafel 11f.; Foto: Tafel 34.

Umschrift

Vs.

- 1) *a-na* ^{1d}*a-šur-i-din*
 - 2) *qí-bi-ma*
 - 3) *um-ma* LUGAL EN-*ka-ma*
-
- 4) *na-áš-pér¹-ta a-na* UGU ¹*a-da-je al-t[a-pár]*
 - 5) ¹*ma-ak-na¹-ak-ta* ù *tup-pa* ^{NA4}KIŠIB^{MEŠ}-*ja*
 - 6) ¹*ak-ta¹-na-ak* ^{1d}*a-šur-tap-pu-ti ul-te-bi¹-lak¹-ku*
 - 7) ^{1d}XXX-ŠEŠ-SUM -*na* DUMU *ša-da-li*
 - 8) ¹*ki¹-i* DUMU^{MEŠ} ¹*ši¹-ip-ru-ut-te a-na* UGU ¹*a-da-je*
 - 9) *a¹-na¹ ša-pa¹-ri¹ al-tap-ra-ak-ku*
 - 10) ¹*tup¹-pa ša* ¹*a-da-je a-na pa-ni-ka*
 - 11) [*li-i*]p-te-ú li-is₅-si-ú
 - 12) [*mi-im(?)*-m]a *ša lib-bi-ka ša še-lu-i-ka še-li*
 - 13) [*ù š*]a *še-ru-di-ka še¹-ri¹-id*

* Independent Scholar, Schwielowsee. [#] Institut für Altertumswissenschaften, Universität Mainz.

¹ CANCIK-KIRSCHBAUM 1996, 146.

- 14) [tup-pa q]i-ri-^ˈim^ˈ ma-ak-na-^ˈak^ˈ-tu
 15) [i+na pi-i]t-tu-^ˈka-ma šu^ˈ-ga-ar-ri-ir
 16) [^{1d}XX]X-šEŠ-SUM-na še-bi-il
-
- 17) [^{1d}UTU-MU -l]e-šir^{LÜ}HAL al-tap-ra-ak-ku
 18) [ba-ri-(ú)]-ut-ta lu-up-pi-iš
 19) [ba]-ri-ú-ut-te áš-šúm^{1d}DI-ma-nu-mu-šab-ši
 20) []x ú-up-pi-šu-ú-ni
 21) [li]-id-bu-ba-ak-ku
-
- 22) [na-áš-p]ér-ta ša iš-tu pi-it-ti¹a-da-je
 23) [il-l]a-ka-an-ni pi-te si-si
 24) [a-na] UGU-ja še-bi-la
 25) [x x] x [š]a pi-i DUMU ši-ip-^ˈru-ut-te^ˈ
 26) [x x na-áš-p]ér-te-ma x[...]
 Rd.
 27) [x x x] x-ka x[...]
 28) [x x x x] x-un-ni [...]
 29) [ma-ak-n]a-ak-ta i+na pi-it-t[u-ka x x]
 Rs.
 30) [DUMU ši-ip-ru-u]t-te ša ki-i-mu m[aḥ[?]-re-e(?)]
 31) [x x iš]-pu-ru-ú-ni i+na lib-be-ku-nu x [x]
 32) [x x-i]l tu-ú-ur^{1d}XXX-šEŠ-SUM-na-ma
 33) [ki-i DUMU š]i-ip-ru-ut-te šu-pu-ur
 34) [iq-ti-bi-á]š-šu ma-a a-na kal-le-e
 35) [a-na x x x] at-ta-la-ak at-tu-ra
-
- 36) [la-a tu]-ul-[t]a-na-aḥ-ra-ar iš-tu lib-bi-ka
 37) [ta-ad]-da-na-^ˈab^ˈ-bu-ub i+na tu-ša-aḥ-ru-ri¹-ma a-di
 38) [ša[?] p]ár-ši-ka ta-ša-al-li ù mi-im-ma
 39) [la-a] te-ep-pa-áš i+na lib-bi-ka-a ša-ak-na-ta
 40) ma-a ú-šap-pu-lu-uš a-je-e-ša ú-šap-pu-lu-uš
 41) ma-a^{KUR}kar-^ˈdu^ˈ-ni-^ˈáš^ˈ gab-bu ki-i pa-ši-ri tu-še¹-ša¹-ar²¹
 42) LÜ ša še-zu-^ˈub^ˈ ra-mi-šu la-a i-da-gal
 43) a-na šap-p[u-l]i-šu a-na-ku ḥa-di-a-ku
 44) ḥ[u-r]a-[d]u a-na ka-a-ri la-a i-ka-áš-ša-ad
 45) a-na šu-a-šu na-aš-šu-uš a-na UGU-ja
 46) ú-ub-bu-lu-né-eš-šu
-
- 47) ^{ITU.d}XXX U₄ 5.KÁM li-mu¹i+n[a-^da-šur-MU-aš-bat]

Übersetzung

Vs.

- 1) Zu Aššur-iddin
 - 2) sprich!
 - 3) Folgendermaßen (spricht) der König, dein Herr:
-
- 4) Ich habe einen Brief an Adāju ges[chrieben].
 - 5) Die Fläche der Siegelung und die Tafel habe ich (mit) meinen Siegeln
 - 6) gesiegelt. (Durch) Aššur-tappūti habe ich (ihn) dir bringen lassen.
 - 7) Sîn-aḥa-iddina, den Sohn des Šadalu,
 - 8) habe ich als Boten, um (ihn) zu Adāju
 - 9) zu bringen, zu dir gesandt.
 - 10) Die Tafel des (= für) Adāju sollen sie vor dir
 - 11) [öff]nen und (vor)lesen.
 - 12) [All]es, was du nach deiner Meinung (über)nehmen möchtest, (über)nimm,

ELEONORA QUIRICO*

INVESTIGATING THE MESOPOTAMIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSE: ALTERNATIVE TOOLS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

ABSTRACT

A significant paucity of data often hinders the architectural reconstruction of Mesopotamian residential structures; indeed, the limited or insufficient preservation of architectural remains due to the perishable nature of most of the available building materials, complicates the understanding of plans and three-dimensional forms of houses. Therefore, an in-depth archaeological analysis requires further tools and bases on which to found the interpretation of the complex dimension of Mesopotamian domestic architecture.

In this study, an introductory comparison between the information provided by specific categories of finds (terracotta models, Neo-Assyrian stone reliefs and clay tablets) and the main archaeological evidence from sites excavated in Mesopotamia is presented with the aim of highlighting objective architectural similarities as well as major differences and incongruences.

KEYWORDS

Residential architecture; inner plans; three-dimensional reconstruction; *maquettes architecturales*; Neo-Assyrian stone reliefs; clay tablets.

Introduction

The architectural reconstruction of the Mesopotamian domestic background and an in-depth understanding of the social, economic and cultural implications of the diachronic evolution of Mesopotamian building practices are hindered by a significant paucity of data. The most remarkable lack of information concerns the plan and the three-dimensional form of houses and is primarily connected to the limited or insufficient preservation of architectural remains owing to both the perishable nature of building materials, less durable compared to those employed in official architecture, and a lower accuracy in construction techniques. Moreover, due to a quite recent interest in the Mesopotamian private world, the number of explored housing units and residential districts is much higher for certain historical periods and geographical areas, while it is very low for others. A further aspect to take into consideration is that the social and cultural dimension of domestic dwellings is more

elusive than that of public architecture owing to the limited and sporadic support of epigraphic sources.¹ Finally, the multifunctional character of most domestic spaces, frequently characterised by overlapping functions, complicates a distinction between areas destined for household and work-related activities, as well as a confident identification of the specific purposes of individual rooms.²

In the last decades, archaeological investigations have intensively focused on the analysis of large residential areas or individual housing units. The long evolution of Mesopotamian dwellings – from the different prehistoric and protohistoric modules to the more standardised courtyard house with its many variants, which progressively gained ground during the 3rd millennium BC and definitively became the typical domestic building during the following periods – has been revealed by archaeological data from a number of sites. Starting with the early evidence from sites like Umm Dabaghiyah,³ Tell es-Sawwan,⁴ Tell Abada⁵ and Habuba Kabira,⁶ and encompassing the 3rd-millennium residential structures exposed, for example, in Abu Salabikh,⁷ Khafajah,⁸ Tell Asmar,⁹ Fara¹⁰ and Tell Taya,¹¹ and the significant architec-

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¹ An important exception is the substantial archive from the house of Ur-Utu in Sippar/Tell ed-Dēr (JANSSEN, GASCHE, TANNER 1994).

² As correctly stated by H. Limet, “Il est à première vue paradoxal que nous soyons relativement bien informés sur les sociétés antiques, leur histoire, leur institutions, leur conceptions religieuses, leur littérature, et que nous sachions si peu sur ce que Daniel Roche appelle “les choses banales” de la vie” (LIMET 2006, 477).

³ See, for example, KIRKBRIDE 1972; 1973; 1974; 1975.

⁴ See, for example, AL-WAILLY, AL-SOOF 1965; AL-SOOF 1968; YASIN 1970; BRENIQUET 1992; YOKHANNA 1997.

⁵ See, for example, JASIM 1983.

⁶ See, for example, STROMMINGER 1980; KOHLMAYER 1996; VALLET 1996; 1997.

⁷ See, for example, POSTGATE 1978; 1984; 1990.

⁸ See DELOUGAZ, HILL, LLOYD 1967.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ See, for example, HEINRICH, ANDRAE 1931; MARTIN 1972; 1988; STARZMANN 2005.

¹¹ See, for example, READE 1968; 1971; 1973.

tural remains investigated in Nippur,¹² Larsa,¹³ Ur,¹⁴ Sippar,¹⁵ Tell Harmal¹⁶ and Nuzi,¹⁷ the available information on Mesopotamian domestic customs and their distribution has gradually increased, supporting a more conscious reconstruction of Mesopotamian society.

This process has at times been enhanced by ethnoarchaeological studies, which often represent an appropriate reference for reconstructing various aspects of ancient societies and understanding the relationships between material culture and historical and cultural phenomena;¹⁸ for example, they can assist in the study of ancient crafts and key technological innovations through the observation of contemporary traditional societies.¹⁹ Similar comparisons can be proposed in relation to construction materials and techniques and to the plan and the internal spatial organisation of domestic buildings. In the Near East, the construction of traditional dwellings has always relied on the use of clay, which, owing to its widespread availability, can be considered as the building material *par excellence*.²⁰ Modern rural residential units are frequently organised around open courtyards, which are, as in ancient Mesopotamian houses, their true core; indeed, besides providing a private space for household and work-related activities and hosting *tannours* and fireplaces for baking bread and cooking food, animal pens and storage areas for the preservation of foodstuffs, they ensure the penetration of natural lighting to the surrounding rooms and enhance ventilation and thermoregulation.

Due to the perishable nature of most of the building materials available in Mesopotamia, an in-depth archaeological analysis requires further tools and bases on which to found the interpretation of the complex Mesopotamian domestic dimension. These can be useful for the reconstruction of plans and spatial organisation, whose understanding is often hampered by the incompleteness of the excavated residential buildings, as well as for the visualisation of their vertical dimension, which represents the greatest gap in the current knowledge of domestic architecture.

In this study, an introductory comparison between the information provided by specific categories of finds (Fig. 1) and the main archaeological evidence from excavated areas is presented with the aim of highlighting objective similarities as well as differences and incongruences.

Several academic publications, which are mentioned below, have dealt with the technical, morphological and functional investigation of relevant classes of materials, providing essential foundations for the interpretative hypotheses discussed herein.

Although a certain degree of caution is required in their interpretation, the artefacts in question can be assumed to indirectly reflect the shape and the volume of Mesopotamian dwellings. For example, this is the case for the terracotta *maquettes architecturales*, pos-

sibly connected to specific ritual functions, and the propagandistic representations on Neo-Assyrian stone reliefs, which display a few depictions of houses. However, their production and their decoration are not completely anchored in realistic representations and, for this reason, correlations and comparisons need to be carefully evaluated. In addition to these objects, images of buildings are a recurrent figurative feature in glyptics; nevertheless, the small dimensions of the represented subjects and their style, frequently linear and geometric, often prevent a reliable assessment of architectural types, *de facto* limiting the amount and the value of the data they provide. Lastly, some clay tablets reporting incised house plans were included among the classes of materials selected for the purposes of this study; the comparison with the architectural plans exposed by archaeological excavations is particularly interesting with regard to the identification of the specific function of these tablets and the evaluation of the degree of realism of their figurative details.

Each artefact was selected on the basis of its readability. In the case of the terracotta models, comparisons are mostly hypothetical, as an objective identification is complicated by fragmentation issues as well as by the presence of several features that are distant from a faithful architectural description and more strictly connected to functional and symbolic needs.

¹² See, for example, McCOWN 1952; GIBSON 1976; GIBSON *et alii* 1978; STONE 1987.

¹³ See, for example, HUOT, ROUGEULLE, SUIRE 1989; CALVET 1995; 1996; 2003; BATTINI, CALVET 2003; HUOT 2003; FEUERHERM 2007.

¹⁴ See, for example, WOOLLEY, MALLOWAN 1976; VAN DE MIEROOP 1992a-b.

¹⁵ On Tell ed-Dēr see, for example, DE MEYER, GASCHÉ, PAEPE 1971; DE MEYER 1978. On Abu Habbah see, for example, SCHEIL 1902; AL-JADIR 1986.

¹⁶ See, for example, HUSSEIN, MIGLUS 1998; 1999-2000.

¹⁷ See, for example, STARR 1939; NOVAK 1994; DOSCH 1996; DEZZI-BARDESCHI 1998a-b.

¹⁸ As expressed by V. Roux, "Ethnoarchaeology appears nowadays as a poorly formulated field. However, it could become a real science of reference for interpreting the past if it was focused upon well-founded cross-cultural correlates, linking material culture with static and dynamic phenomena" (ROUX 2007, 153; see also DAVID, KRAMER 2001, 2). For a general overview of ethnoarchaeological research and some of its most important results in the Near Eastern area, see, for example, KRAMER 1979; WATSON 1979.

¹⁹ See, for example, BROMBERGER 1974; OCHSENSCHLAGER 1974; BALFET 1980; FIORINA 1985; KAMP 2000.

²⁰ Technical developments in Mesopotamian architecture were strongly conditioned by the available resources and technologies. For a general analysis of building materials and the influence of external factors on their use in preindustrial cultures, see RAPAPORT 1969, 18-45, 104-125. For an overview of Mesopotamian architectural techniques and materials, see, for example, AURENCHÉ 1981; DEZZI-BARDESCHI 1998a, 263-315; SAUVAGE 1998; MOOREY 1999; ANASTASIO 2011.

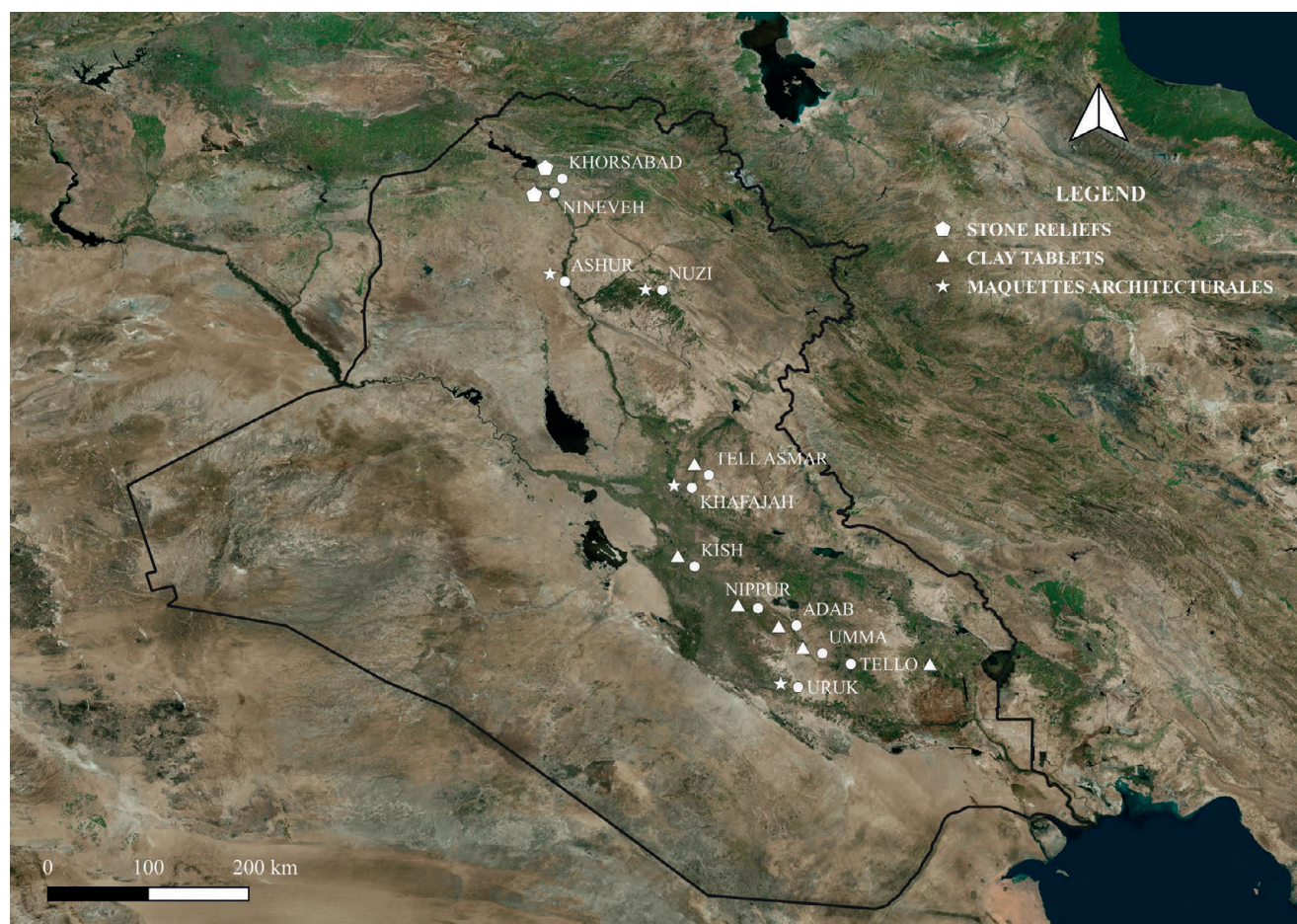


Fig. 1 - Geographical distribution of the archaeological finds included in the analysis.

Concerning the clay tablets, the majority of them are slightly or very fragmentary, affecting potential interpretations of the represented architectural typologies. The analysis is easier for the Neo-Assyrian palatial reliefs, especially in the case of representations of small domestic units, while the reading of elite dwellings is more complex due to the iconographic traits they share with palatial architecture and to their frequent proximity to public buildings, elements that often undermine a confident identification.

Archaeological materials

Catalogue

The archaeological materials considered in this reconstructive analysis of Mesopotamian residential architecture are listed in Tab. 1. In order to simplify references to different finds within the text, each object is indicated with a progressive number that follows the alphabetic identifier of the relevant category: “M.” for *maquettes*, “R.” for stone reliefs and “T.” for clay tablets. When hypothetical, chronological indications are followed by a question mark.

Maquettes architecturales

This class of artefacts, represented by architectural “models”, is characterised by a wide geographical diffusion (the whole ancient Near Eastern area) and a considerable morphological diversification. It includes models with variable dimensions,²¹ typically made of terracotta and representing “miniaturised” architectural units.²² They come from various archaeological contexts, mainly temples, private dwellings and burials,²³ and their broad geographical distribution encompasses Palestine, Mesopotamia, Iran and Anatolia, with a more substantial concentration in the Syrian area.²⁴

²¹ The average height of the specimens included in the analysis ranges between 30 cm (M.8, Fig. 4) and 90 cm (M.2, Fig. 2).

²² MULLER 1998, 179.

²³ MASETTI-ROUAULT 2009, 73. The *maquettes* selected for this study originate from religious (M.1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) and residential (M.7, Fig. 3) contexts, but in two cases their exact provenance is unknown; indeed, M.8 (Fig. 4) is a surface find, while M.9 comes from the antiques market.

²⁴ See, for example, MARGUERON 1986; MULLER 1995.

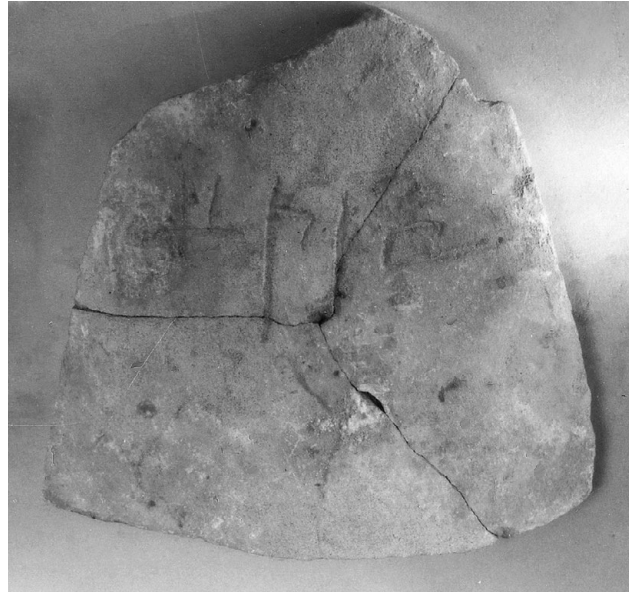
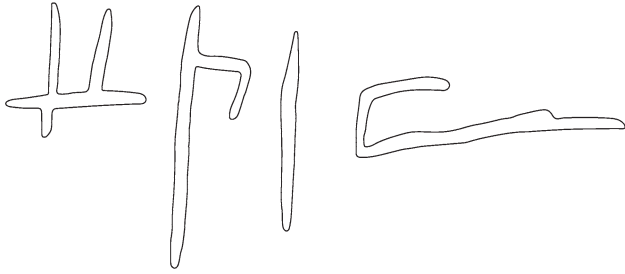
Tab. 1 - Catalogue of archaeological materials considered in the present study.

ID NUMBER (MAQUETTES)	SITE	CHRONOLOGY	REFERENCES
M.1	Khafajah, Sin Temple.	Early Dynastic period	FRANKFORT, JACOBSEN 1935, figs. 48-49; MULLER 2002, fig. 20.
M.2 (Fig. 2)	Ashur, Ishtar Temple (Vorderasiatisches Museum VA 8143).	Akkadian period	ANDRAE 1922, 5-7; MULLER 2002, fig. 2.
M.3	Ashur, Ishtar Temple (Vorderasiatisches Museum VA 8767).	Akkadian period	ANDRAE 1922, 5-7; MULLER 2002, fig. 3.
M.4	Ashur, Ishtar Temple (Vorderasiatisches Museum VA 8806).	Akkadian period	ANDRAE 1922, 5-7; MULLER 2002, fig. 4.
M.5	Ashur, Ishtar Temple (Vorderasiatisches Museum).	Akkadian period	ANDRAE 1922, 5-7; MULLER 2002, fig. 5.
M.6	Ashur, Ishtar Temple (Vorderasiatisches Museum).	Akkadian period?	ANDRAE 1930, pl. IVb; MULLER 2002, fig. 8.
M.7 (Fig. 3)	Nuzi, north-eastern sector, residential context.	Mitanni period	STARR 1939, pl. 113a; MULLER 2002, fig. 27; MULLER 2016, 102, fig. 69.
M.8 (Fig. 4)	Uruk area, site WS 387, surface survey.	2nd millennium BC?	ADAMS, NISSEN 1972, 215, fig. 83; MULLER 2002, fig. 41; MULLER 2016, 103, fig. 70.
M.9	Antiques market (National Museum of Aleppo 1665).	15th-14th century BC?	MULLER 2002, fig. 171; ANASTASIO 2011, 33.
ID NUMBER (STONE RELIEFS)	SITE	CHRONOLOGY	REFERENCES
R.1 (Fig. 7)	Khorsabad, Sargon's Palace, room III, slab 3.	Sargon's reign	BOTTA, FLANDIN 1849, pl. 78; ALBENDA 1986, 142-143, pl. 105.
R.2 (Fig. 8)	Nineveh, South-West Palace, throne room, slabs 1-2.	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 50-51, pl. 31, no. 19.
R.3	Nineveh, South-West Palace, throne room, slab 6.	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 56, pls. 50, 55, no. 50.
R.4 (Fig. 9)	Nineveh, South-West Palace, court VI, slab 62.	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 67, pl. 110, no. 150.
R.5 (Fig. 10)	Nineveh, South-West Palace, room XIV, slabs 9 and 11 (British Museum BM 124785).	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 76-77, pls. 166-167, 170-173, nos. 239, 241.
R.6	Nineveh, South-West Palace, room XVII, slab 7.	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 78-79, pls. 183-184, no. 286.
R.7 (Fig. 11)	Nineveh, South-West Palace, room XLVIII, slabs 11-12.	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT 1975, fig. 153; BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, pl. 410.
R.8	Nineveh, South-West Palace, room III, slab 8.	Sennacherib's reign	BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 54-55, pl. 49, no. 45.
R.9 (Fig. 12)	Nineveh, South-West Palace, room XXXIII, slab 6 (British Museum BM 124802).	Ashurbanipal's reign	BARNETT 1975, pl. 159; BARNETT, BLEIBTREU, TURNER 1998, 96-97, pls. 308-309, 311, no. 386.
R.10	Nineveh, North Palace, room F, slab 14.	Ashurbanipal's reign	BARNETT 1976, 40, pl. XX.
R.11	Nineveh, North Palace, room M (British Museum BM 124945).	Ashurbanipal's reign	BARNETT 1976, pl. XXXV.

*Analysis of the material*⁷

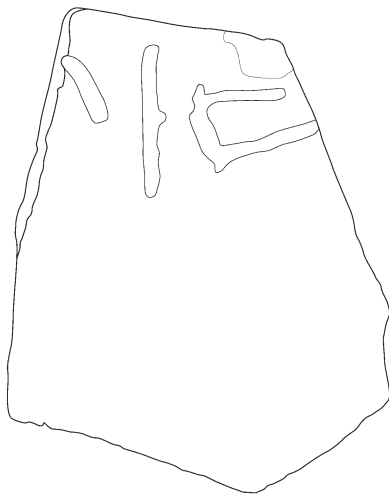
F 1 (excavation no. D 269) graffito

Transcription: *šnt*’ - Translation: the year - Script: Hatran



F 2 (excavation no. D 258) graffito

Transcription: [...] *šn[t]* [...] - Translation: [...] the year [...] - Script: Hatran



⁷ The catalogue presents a first basic overview of the material, with a focus on the typology of the scripts and numbers used on the ostraca. For further reflections on the linguistic features and possible cultural relationships involved in the use of these scripts in Kifrīn, see MORIGGI (in preparation). The numeration of the texts follows the standard set forth by BEYER 2013, 27, where inscriptions from Kifrin are labelled with “F”. In his contribution, Beyer briefly presented only texts F 1-3 and F 12 (= F 11 here). As to the numeration of Hatran Aramaic texts, see now MORIGGI, BUCCI 2019, 3-6, 157 (n. 17). Legenda: [...] one letter/digit missing; [...] two letters/digits missing; [...] three or more letters/digits missing; [x] reconstructed reading; (x) uncertain reading; (...) meaningless sequence; (x?) doubtful translation; x written spelling; x/y alternative readings. Personal names are not vocalised due to the uncertain reconstruction of their real phonetic status. For numerals in Semitic scripts, see LIDZBARSKI 1898, 198-202; 1902; IFRAH 1984, 306-312 (Phoenician and Syriac scripts), 374-382 (Aramaic and Ethiopic scripts); SCHWIDERSKI 2008, XII, XVI (Old and Imperial/Official Aramaic scripts). Pictures are from the Archives of Centro Scavi Torino (CRAST). If not otherwise indicated, their aspect ratio is 1:2. Drawings are by Claudio Fossati.

KEVIN BUTCHER*

SMALL CHANGE AT THE EDGE OF EMPIRE:
THE COIN FINDS FROM KIFRIN

ABSTRACT

This paper publishes and discusses the 65 coins found in the excavations at Kifrin on the Middle Euphrates between 1981 and 1983. It compares these finds with those from other sites in the region and considers the historical implications of the patterns observed.

KEYWORDS

Roman numismatics; coin finds; Kifrin; Hatra; Roman provincial coins; Gordian III; Ardashir I.

Kifrin is an important site on the Middle Euphrates between 'Ana and Haditha in Iraq, the finds from which suggest a substantial advancement of the Roman *limes* for a brief period, probably under the Severan emperors.¹ The end of Roman occupation there is thought to have been connected with the Persian wars of c. AD 244, and the transfer of this part of the frontier to Sasanian control after the failure of the expedition of Gordian III in that year. The coins have been briefly discussed in previous publications² and historians have already cited the coin finds as evidence of the Roman evacuation of the area in 244.³

Sixty-five coins were recovered from the excavations at Kifrin, and most of these are recorded in the registers of finds from 1981 and 1983. The coins were identified by a variety of means. The original specimens were not available for inspection, and instead most were identified from photographs. In other cases the only record was a plaster cast. These constraints mean that it is not always possible to report details for every coin as fully as might have been possible had the original specimens been available, but most of the types and mints were readily identifiable.

The finds are divided as follows: the Latin-legend, Roman imperial coins (silver that circulated widely in the Roman empire) come first, followed by Roman provincial silver (which had much more limited circulation). The copper-alloy coins, which form the bulk of the finds, are then listed by mint, beginning with the Mesopotamian city of Hatra and then continuing with Roman provincial coins from cities in Roman Mesopotamia. There then follows coins of

Syrian cities and other places in the eastern Roman empire. The list ends with the single Sasanian coin found. Some comments about these coinages are incorporated into the list where appropriate, and a more general discussion follows the list.

Most of the abbreviations in the descriptions below are conventional or self-explanatory, although some require elaboration here. The number with the suffix 'h' given after the weight of each piece refers to the die axis of the coin, read as hours of the clock, although in some cases the axis could not be ascertained (reasons are given in the individual coin descriptions).⁴ After this comes the original excavation register number, where available. Then follows the Baghdad museum inventory number, followed by area / locus or ambiente / stratum (again, the amount of detail varies). Thus, for coin no. 1, the museum inventory number is 31788, C is the area, 26 the locus, 34 the stratum. Note, however, that a number of the coins are unstratified.

Coins marked with an asterisk are illustrated.

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¹ INVERNIZZI 1983/4; 1986a; 1986b; 1986c.

² VALTZ 1985; 1987.

³ POTTER 1990, 224, no. 100.

⁴ Die axes of the Hatra coins with the letters SC inverted within a wreath on the reverse depend on which way is read as 'up' on these coins; I have chosen to regard the letters as either inverted or retrograde, with the eagle at the top (see the descriptions in the list).

SILVER

Imperial issues

*1. Trajan, denarius, Rome, c. AD 106-7. Obv: Laureate bust right, drapery on shoulder. IMP TRA- IANO OPTIMO AVG GER DAC P M TR P COS VI P P. Rev: Felicitas standing with caduceus and olive branch. S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI.

2.9g. 7h.

1983 register, no. 2.

31788; C/26/34

BMCRE III, 59, no. 192, *MIR* 213b

*2. Commodus, denarius, Rome, AD 187/8. Obv: Laureate bust right. M COMM ANT – P FEL [AVG BRIT]. Rev: Fortuna seated left, holding in right hand a rudder resting on a globe and in left hand a cornucopia. [P M TR P XI]II IMP VIII COS V P P.

BMCRE IV, 734, no. 244.

3.4g. 1h.

1983 register, no. 7.

31793; unstratified: ‘cimitero dietro casa superfice’

*3. Septimius Severus, denarius, ‘Emesa’, c. AD 194. Obv: Laureate bust right. IMP CAE L SEP SE – V PER AVG COS II. Rev: Victory advancing right, carrying trophy. VI-C-T-AVG.

BMCRE V, 98, no. 393.

2.9g. 1h.

1983 register, no. 3.

31789; C/26/34

‘Emesa’ is the conventional designation for the mint; it may not represent the place where the coin was minted (CRS: 98-108). The coin shares its obverse die with no. 4.

*4. Septimius Severus, denarius, ‘Emesa’, c. AD 194. Obv: Same die as previous coin. Rev: Victory flying left, holding wreath and palm. VICT-A-V-G.

BMCRE V, 98, nos. 395-6.

2.7g. 5h.

1983 register, no. 4.

31790; C/26/34

‘Emesa’ is the conventional designation for the mint; it may not represent the place where the coin was minted (CRS: 98-108). The coin shares its obverse die with no. 3.

*5. Septimius Severus, denarius, Rome, AD 198-200. Obv: Laureate bust right. L SEPT SEV AVG IMP – [XI]PART MAX. Rev: Aequitas standing left, holding cornucopia and scales. AEQVITA-TI AVGG.

BMCRE V, 175, nos. 122-6.

2.7g. 12h.

1983 register, no. 37.

31798; C/ ‘politura M86’

*6. Julia Domna, denarius, ‘Laodicea New Style’, AD 196-202. Obv: Draped bust right. IVLIA – AVGVSTA. Rev: Vesta standing left, holding patera and sceptre. VESTAE – SANCTAE.

BMCRE V, 280, nos. 622-4.

2.1g. 1h.

1983 register, no. 8.

31794; C/71/91

‘Laodicea’ is the conventional designation for the mint; it may not represent the place where the coin was minted (CRS: 98-108).

*7. Elagabalus, denarius, Rome, AD 219-220. Obv: Laureate, draped, cuirassed bust right. IMP ANTON- INVS AVG. Rev: Felicitas standing facing, head left, holding cornucopia and caduceus. TEMPORVM FELICITAS.

BMCRE V, 553, no. 167.

3.2g. 5h.

1983 register, no. 40.

31801; C/30/43

*8. Severus Alexander, denarius, Rome, AD 223. Obv: Laureate, draped, cuirassed bust right. IMP C M AVR SEV ALEXAND AVG. Salus seated left, feeding serpent arising from altar. P M TR P – II COS P P.

BMCRE VI, 125, nos. 118-121.

3g. 5h.

1983 register, no. 6.

31792; ‘fuori mura in strada’

*9. Severus Alexander, denarius, Rome, AD 229. Obv: Laureate bust right, drapery on shoulder. IMP SEV ALE – XAND AVG. Rev: Liberalitas standing left, holding coin-distributor and cornucopia. LIBERALI – TAS AVG IIII.

BMCRE VI, 169, no. 558 variety (no drapery on bust).

1981 register.

C/M3/unstratified

No weight or die axis available; identified from photograph 2KL 21.

*10. Gordian III, radiate, Antioch, AD 242-244. Obv: Radiate, draped, cuirassed bust right. IMP GORDIANVS PIVS AVG. Rev: Fortuna seated left, holding rudder and cornucopia. FORTVNA REDUX.

RIC IV.3, 37, no. 210.

2.5g. 6h.

1983 register, no. 5.

31791; C/66/84

11. Gordian III, radiate, Rome, AD 243-4. Obv: Radiate, draped, cuirassed bust right. IMP [...]DIANVS PIVS FEL AVG. Felicitas standing facing, head left, holding cornucopia and caduceus. FELICITAS



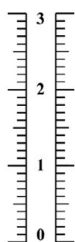
1.



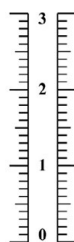
2.



3.



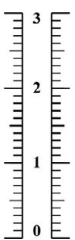
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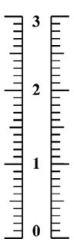
5.



6.



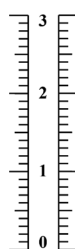
7.



8.



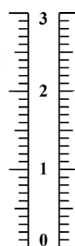
9.



10.



12.



13.



14.

AMER AHMAD*

THE REGION OF TELL BRAK
DURING THE CONTROL OF EXTREMIST GROUPS#

ABSTRACT

In its northern expansion in the Jezirah region on Syria, ISIS came to have control of major archaeological sites, including Tell Brak, Tell Hamidiya, Tell Barri, Tell Khazna. This article describes the situation in the field as it could be documented after the retreat of the jihadists, with a first hand account and with pictures that detail the situation in these and other sites in the region.

KEYWORDS

Tell Brak, Tell Hamidiya, Tell Barri, Tell Khazna, heritage, Syria, ISIS

In the province of Hasakah in northeastern of Syria, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, there is an area consisting of a fertile plain surrounded by three mountain ranges. On the northern side there is the Tur-Abdin plateau of Anatolia, and on the southern side there are the Abdul Aziz and the Sinjar mountains. This area is known as the Upper Khabur Basin which contained several water sources: in addition to

* Mozan/Urkesh Archaeological Project and IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies.

Photos: Muntaser Qasem



Fig. 1 - Central Mound of Tell Seker al-Aheimar, north-western side.



Fig. 2 - The excavation in Tell Seker al-Aheimar, western side.



Fig. 3 - The central mound of Tell Brak, northern side.



Fig. 4 - The Dig House, southeastern side.

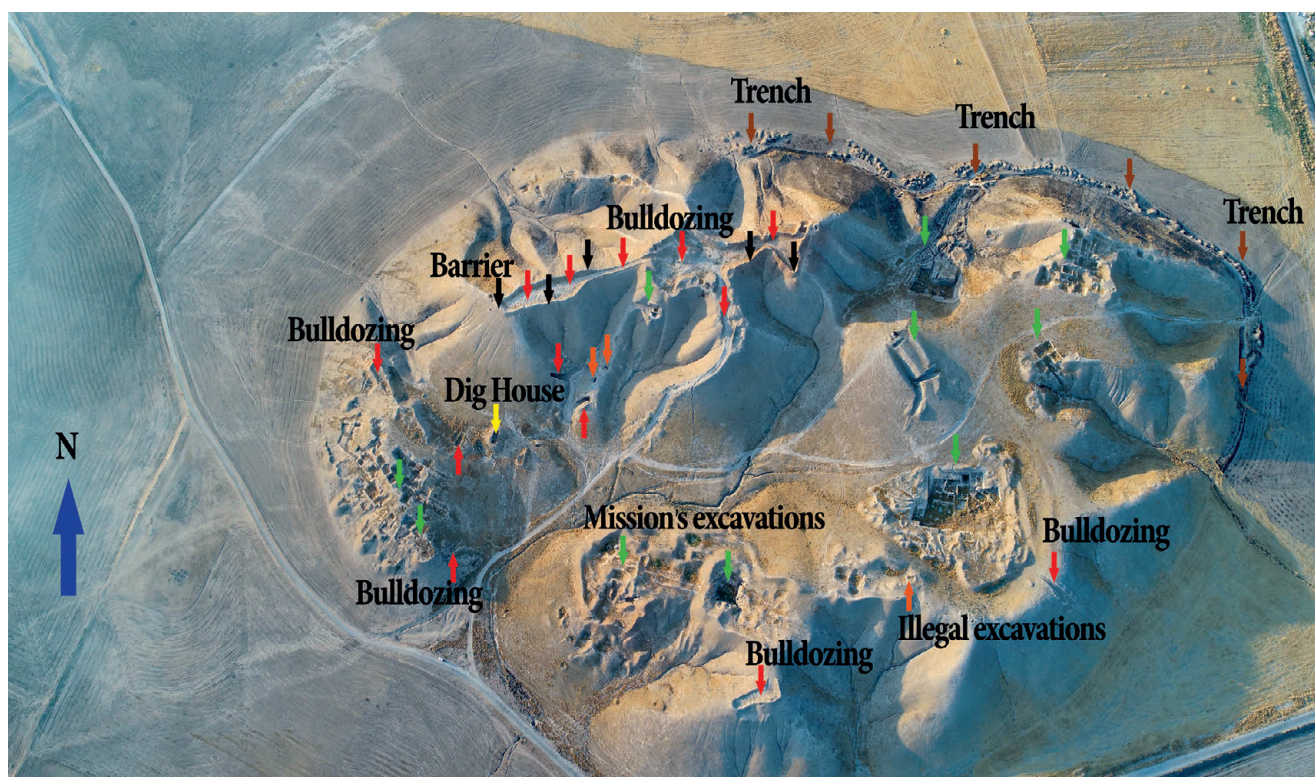


Fig. 5 - The aerial photo of Tell Brak illustrating its situation: the red arrows indicate to bulldozing; the black arrows indicate to barriers; the green arrows indicate to mission's excavations; the orange arrows indicate to illegal excavations; the yellow arrow indicates to the Dig House; the brown arrows indicate to the trenches.

the Khabur River itself, there is the Jaghjagh River valley and several other valleys which have provided suitable circumstances for human settlement since prehistoric times. This area became one of the most important communication hubs of the ancient trade routes. It witnessed the emergence of the first agricultural communities due to its fertile lands and the abundance of its agricultural resources. The excavations by the Japanese Mission (University of Tokyo) at Tell Seker al-Aheimar (Figs. 1-2) on the right bank of the Khabur River, 7 km west of Tell Tamer town, have given the tangible evidence of the beginnings of settlement in this plain since the pre-pottery Neolithic period (PPNB) between 7600 and 6000 BC.

The Upper Khabur Basin is also known for its hundreds of archaeological mounds, and some of them belonging to the earliest phases of Mesopotamian urbanism, the most important being Tell Brak, ancient Nagar, 42 km northeast of al-Hasakah (Fig. 3). Tell Brak lies on the right bank of the Jaghjagh River which meets the Khabur river in the city of al-Hasakah, the latter continuing its track to flow into the Euphrates river near the city of al-Busaira 181 km south of al-Hasakah.

Tell Brak

Tell Brak enjoys a very special strategic location controlling as it does one of the major routes from the Tigris valley northwards to metal-rich Anatolia, specifically copper, besides wood and stones, and westwards to the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. The main mound is one of the largest sites in northern Mesopotamia, occupying over than 40 ha and rising over 40 m, dating from 7th millennium BC through the late 2nd millennium BC, while the Outer Town saw variable occupation from the 4th millennium BC through the Abbasid period. Excavations began in 1937 under the direction of Max Mallowan, were resumed in 1976 by David and Joan Oates from Cambridge University, and were continued most recently under the field direction of Augusta McMahon.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, many armed jihadist groups controlled the area around Tell Brak. There were a number of such groups, the last one being ISIS. They controlled the region for about 3 years, and they devastated many sites by bulldozing them or digging trenches and looting everything in the expedition houses. The activity of the

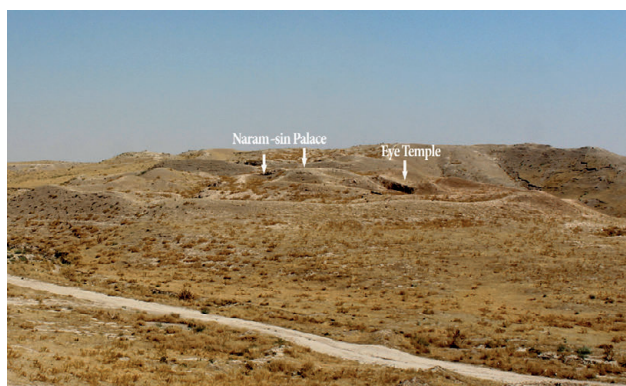


Fig. 6 - The placement of Eye Temple and Naram-sin Palace, western side.



Fig. 7 - The area TW, western side.



Fig. 8 - Threshold of basalt.



Fig. 9 - The area SS, northwestern side.



Fig. 10 - The area FS, southeastern side.



Fig. 11 - The large flat stone throne base in area SS.

guards of the al-Hasakah Department of Antiquities and Museums was paralyzed, nor could we, of the local archaeological community, intervene until the liberation of the region.

We then started to document every violation of archaeological sites in the region and launched an awareness campaign aimed to guide the people to preserve their heritage. Many abuses occurred in Tell Brak during the control of jihadist groups, where the

main mound was bulldozed in several places, such as the area HH, northeast of the dig house and other places. They also dug a trench starting from southeast corner of the mound until the northwest corner in a semicircular shape 900 m in length and between 2-3 m deep. The expedition house it has been destroyed and looted (Fig. 4). As the guard Abdel Aziz Tammi told me: "They destroyed and looted everything in the Dig House, I felt as though I had been killed when

ELENA DEVECCHI* - SUSANNE PAULUS#
KASSITE ADMINISTRATION: TEXTS, SEALS,
AND SEALING PRACTICES

This special section of Mesopotamia LV collects four papers read on the occasion of a workshop on “Kassite Administration: Texts, Seals, and Sealing Practices” we organized during the 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, which took place at Innsbruck in July 2018.¹ The workshop aimed to bring together junior and senior scholars working on topics related to Babylonia’s administration under the rule of the Kassite dynasty (ca. 1550-1150 BCE).

Despite the wealth of surviving cuneiform sources from Kassite Babylonia (especially several thousands of economic texts from the city of Nippur), this remains a largely neglected field of investigation in Ancient Near Eastern studies. The four papers presented here shed light on different aspects of the administration that were so far unclear, often using sealed tablets as a key for better understanding the role of officials, institutional connections, and administrative processes. They also show how sealings can help us to date transactions and, therefore, partially compensate for the lack of a date – a common issue in Kassite economic texts.

In the article “The temporal and geographical distribution of dated economic texts from the Kassite period,” Tim Clayden introduces the available documentary evidence by providing a comprehensive overview of Kassite tablets published after John A. Brinkman’s groundbreaking study *Materials and Studies for the Kassite History 1, A Catalogue of Cuneiform Sources Pertaining to Specific Monarchs of the Kassite Dynasty*, appeared in 1976. Clayden shows that newly published texts add to our understanding of the Early Kassite Period, while the economic tablets are still unevenly distributed. The majority of administrative records do come from the Nippur region and date from Burna-Buriāš II to Kaštiliaš IV, with the highest concentration of texts in the thirty years from 1254 till 1225 BCE. This picture has not changed much with the recent publication of several hundreds of economic records formerly in the Rosen Collection, since these tablets date to the same time range and originate from a town (possibly ancient Dūr-Enlilē) located in the Nippur area and connected to the provincial capital’s economic activities.

In his article “Sealing practices in Middle Babylonian administrative transactions,” Nobuaki Murai focuses on the so-called *aklu* texts, a group of accounts of commodities whose standardized and terse formulary hinders the precise understanding of vital

information such as the type and purpose of the transactions. Nobuaki shows that these texts were sealed by a small group of people, whom he identifies as the Nippur province’s highest officials, including the governor (*šandabakku*). He shows that those officials used a group of seals over a relatively long period. Different seals could be utilized for the same purpose, making it likely that seals were connected to offices, rather than individuals. He argues that officials from Nippur did also operate at Dūr-Enlilē. Finally, he shows how a study of sealings and seal captions can suggest a date for undated administrative texts.

Ami Huang treats a similarly terse group of texts in her article “Much cattle, much care: Middle Babylonian herding contracts from Nippur.” While scholarship labeled those texts as herding contracts, they name neither the contractor nor the client. Recently, she argued in her dissertation that the contractor is likely the governor of Nippur, as he did seal the herding contracts. This paper analyzes the herd compositions and the philologically complicated contract stipulations in order to reconstruct the underlying herding strategies. Based on those, she argues that most herds had a mixed purpose, where the client had a strong interest in breeding while the contractor kept an uncommonly large share of secondary products such as wool and ghee.

Finally, Lynn-Salammbô Zimmermann addresses the issue of missing sealed envelopes for the Kassite administrative correspondence found at Nippur in her contribution “The curious case(s) of sealed Kassite letters.” She tackles the problem that the find circumstances and findspots of most economic texts in Nippur were not recorded during the early excavations. Therefore, it is difficult to know whether letters did not have envelopes or whether the envelopes were stored separately or discarded in modern times.

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¹ Further papers read at the workshop were “Towards a diplomatics of Middle Babylonian archival documents” by Elena Devecchi, “Palace or Temple? – Origin and purpose of the ‘granary archive’” by Susanne Paulus, “Seal inscriptions of the Kassite period” by Jonathan Taylor, “Kassitische Siegelungspraxis aus dem Blickwinkel von Babylon” by Leonhard Sassmannshausen, and “Sealing practices in the Kassite and Middle Assyrian periods” by Agnete Wisti Lassen.

Based on her study, she argues that the letters from Kassite Nippur were likely part of dead archives and possibly themselves discarded in antiquity. Furthermore, she discusses several allegedly sealed letters, suggesting that most of them might have instead been legal documents.

Altogether, the presented articles show the potential of a corpus of tablets known since the beginning of the last century but still mostly underexplored, and the promising results that can be reached through a careful combination of philology, prosopographical studies, and information gathered from the sealings.

TIM CLAYDEN*

THE TEMPORAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF DATED ECONOMIC TEXTS OF THE KASSITE PERIOD

ABSTRACT

Building upon Brinkman's 1976 catalogue of dated Kassite period texts, and using his framework of Kassite history (2017) this study focuses on the geographic and temporal distribution of the economic texts of the period. The data that has been excavated or published since 1976 is incorporated. The dominance of the Nippur texts remains, but the new material extends the geographic and temporal range of Kassite period economic texts beyond central Babylonia up the Diyala corridor and into the Gulf, and back to the mid 16th century BCE. The concentration of dated economic texts in the thirty year period 1254-1225 BCE, and the importance of an updated version of Brinkman's 1976 catalogue is highlighted.

KEYWORDS

Kassite texts, Diyala, Gulf, Nippur, Brinkman

*Introduction*¹

This brief study reviews the distribution – temporal and geographical – of the dated economic texts of the Kassite period. As so often in the field of Kassite studies, the doyen of the field, John A. Brinkman has reviewed this matter,² as has Susanne Paulus.³

The objective of this paper is to summarise and amalgamate the data published in Brinkman's invaluable 1976 "Materials and Studies for Kassite History, Volume I" (henceforth MSKH I), with the texts published since 1976. In doing so, it seeks to highlight that the post-1976 material has extended the known geographical and temporal ranges of provenanced Kassite period economic texts into the Diyala corridor and the Gulf, and into the early Kassite period. This post-1976 material goes some way towards balancing the dominance of, and our consequent reliance on, tablets from Nippur in Kassite period studies.

Three important developments relevant to the issue under review have happened since 1976. The first is the publication in 2015 and 2020 of tablets formerly in the Rosen Collection (now returned to Iraq).⁴ These publications have considerably expanded the number of Kassite period tablets of unknown provenance from the small number published over a century ago to over 800 documents, of which over 600 bear dates (see Table III below).⁵ The tablets may have originated at Dūr-Enlilē,⁶ which might be identified with

Umm al-Hafriyat⁷ situated near Nippur. It has been subject to illicit excavations since the 1970s. This means that the ex-Rosen tablets may reinforce the dominance of the Nippur area in the corpus of dated Kassite period texts.

The second is the discovery of dated tablets of the Kassite period on seven previously unexcavated sites (see below). Though the numbers of tablets are not great, they do demonstrate the presence of Kassite period economic activity up the Diyala corridor and into the Gulf. There have also been excavations at Nippur which have produced new, and well provenanced, dated Kassite period economic texts.⁸

There has also been the fuller publication of previously excavated texts from Ur, Nippur and Dūr-Kurigalzu, and of a catalogue of the texts excavated at Babylon.

This paper notes the possibility of suggesting dating for a limited number of tablets found at Nippur. A defined set of dates may be posited (but are not included in this study) for a limited number of tablets by using the shared sealings on some Nippur tablets. This area of study requires considerably more work.

The small number of dated Kassite period tablets from the mid- to late fifteenth century BCE found at Bahrain are included in the study. I argue below that

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¹ The genesis of this paper was a presentation to the 2018 RAI in Innsbruck. I am grateful to a range of colleagues who commented on the paper both at Innsbruck and after the RAI. But I am most grateful to the anonymous reviewer, Elena Devecchi and Susanne Paulus for their comments, suggestions and generous sharing of unpublished material which have considerably enhanced this paper. All errors remain my own. Regnal dates of Kassite kings follow BRINKMAN 2017, 36.

² BRINKMAN 1976, 35-49.

³ PAULUS 2013, 88-91.

⁴ VAN SOLDT 2015; DEVECCHI 2020.

⁵ PEISER 1905, supplemented by texts in the Louvre (TCL IX 47-56; JEAN 1926; see BRINKMAN 1976, 46, fn. 97). There are texts in the British Museum, Free Library of Philadelphia and the Morgan Collection Library (BRINKMAN 1976, 351-353). There are also smaller numbers of tablets that are appearing on the antiquities market or in private collections. An example are the tablets in the Moussaeiff collection, published by LEVAVI 2017, which may have originated at or near Nippur (*Ibidem*, 87).

⁶ VAN SOLDT 2015, 29.

⁷ See DEVECCHI 2020, 18.

⁸ CIVIL 1978; BRINKMAN 1993.

NOBUAKI MURAI*

SEALING PRACTICES IN MIDDLE BABYLONIAN ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSACTIONS

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this article is to demonstrate the usefulness of seals and seal impressions found on cuneiform tablets. Although seals and sealings have been a subject of interest in Assyriology, they are often treated separately from texts, but we can gain further insights by treating them together.

The discussion here mainly concerns the seals and sealing practices found in connection with the *aklu* documents of the Middle Babylonian period excavated at Nippur. We can identify several groups of texts which have the same seal impression. By examining these groups, we find that some officials who sealed *aklu* documents were members of prominent families who were involved in the administration of Nippur and the settlements around it, and we see the importance of distinguishing seal captions from seal impressions.

Finally, wider application of the study of seals and sealing practices to textual studies is suggested.

KEYWORDS

Kassite; Nippur; Dūr-Enlilē; *aklu*; seals; sealing practices.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss the seals and sealing practices found in the *aklu* documents, which are accounts known throughout the Middle Babylonian period involving commodities such as barley, flour, and beer.¹ Elsewhere I have discussed the *aklu* documents and tried to elucidate their meaning.² To do so, I treated the seals and sealing practices associated with their use, which made it apparent that the sealers of the *aklu* documents were officials, some of whom were members of prominent Akkadian families that participated in the administration of Nippur and the settlements around it for generations.

The motive for studying the seals and sealing practices arose from a problem with the Middle Babylonian documents excavated at Nippur, which is that their provenance is not exactly known.³ Therefore, some base for discussion other than provenance was needed. Fortunately, there are many seal impressions on the *aklu* documents, and also prior studies of the seals and seal impressions.⁴ Matthews reconstructed, drew, and numbered the seal impressions found on

the documents excavated at Nippur.⁵ In this work, I will employ his numbering system.

Among the *aklu* documents, there are several groups of texts which have the same seal impression. For example, Matthews no. 148 was used by Enlil-AL.SA₆, the governor of Nippur (several times), by Rīmūtu (many times), and by Ninurta-kīn-pīšu (once) in Nippur and the settlements around

* Independent scholar.

¹ This article is based on a paper presented at a workshop entitled “Kassite Administration: Texts, Seal and Sealing Practices” at the 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Innsbruck in 2018. I would like to thank professors W. H. van Soldt, E. Devecchi, S. Paulus and T. Clayden, who kindly enabled me to attend the conference, as well as colleagues who were kind to me in Innsbruck. Special thanks are due to Dr. F. W. Knobloch, who kindly read the draft several times and provided fruitful comments, also to Dr. D. L. Burke, who read the manuscript and corrected English expressions. An anonymous reviewer, E. Devecchi, and S. Paulus gave me many meaningful comments. Thanks to them I was able to clarify several points in the argument that were ambiguous. I am deeply grateful to them for their cooperation.

² MURAI 2018.

³ CLAY 1906a, 1-2; BRINKMAN 1976, 41-42; PEDERSÉN 1998, 112-116; SASSMANNSHAUSEN 2001, 186-187; TENNEY 2011, 1-2. CLAY 1906a, 1-2 explains the situation of the second Expedition to Nippur of the Babylonian Committee of the University of Pennsylvania in 1889-1890 under the directorship of professor John P. Peters: “The tablets were found quite close to the south-west wall of the palace... This palace was situated in the northern part of the western half of the city.” Regarding the third expedition in 1893-1894 under Dr. John H. Haynes on the same western side, but in the southern part of the city, Clay cited Haynes’ report: “In the spring of 1893 and in the winter and spring of 1895, twenty-five thousand tablets [and fragments] were recovered from the ruins of this mound.” Clay says about the contents of both the volumes as follows: “Although, as stated, most of the tablets of both volumes come from the former find, a goodly number of this volume has come from the latter.” Additionally he implies there are some private tablets “there are some tablets here published which doubtless did not belong to the official archives, discovered in the northern or southern sections of the city, but are of a private character.” Therefore, documents coming from the two main provenances and from other ones may coexist in Clay’s publications. SASSMANNSHAUSEN 2001, 186-187 discusses the provenances of the Middle Babylonian documents excavated at Nippur. According to him, there is an original report by Haynes and also a revised version, which Clay cited. Sassmannshausen referred to the original manuscript partly in his note 3145.

⁴ MATTHEWS 1992; STIEHLER-ALEGRIA 1996.

⁵ MATTHEWS 1992.

it.⁶ Matthews no. 155 was used by Enlil-nīšu once for a transaction involving sheep,⁷ after which it was inherited by his son Ninurta-kīn-pīšu, who used it for *aklu* expenditures many times. Matthews no. 189 was used by Ninurta-nādin-aḥḥē, who was probably Ninurta-kīn-pīšu's son, many times, and by a certain Iqīša-Ninimma several times, mainly for *aklu* expenditures. The legend of this seal refers to the aforementioned Enlil-AL.SA₆, the governor of Nippur, demonstrating a connection between the seal's users and that prominent former official. Matthews no. 149 was used by Amīl-Marduk, the governor of Nippur many times, usually for contracts involving cattle, and is apparently a duplicate of no. 148, indicating a kind of respect for the legitimacy of the pedigree/families.

Thus, a consideration of sealing practices is helpful for reconstructing relationships in the administration, which may be of assistance in understanding the governance of Nippur and related towns. Additionally, this approach of bringing together texts and sealings can be applied to other research questions.

1.2. The sources

1.2.1. Nippur

The primary sources for this study are the Middle Babylonian documents excavated at Nippur,⁸ especially those from the so-called Nippur 1 archive.⁹ The majority of these documents are accounts related to Nippur administration,¹⁰ in which prominent families were engaged, especially that of Enlil-kidinnī, a well-known governor of Nippur whose descendants Enlil-AL.SA₆ and Amīl-Marduk likewise held that position. Judging from the contents of these documents, they are part of the archive or archives of the Nippur governor, particularly documents sealed with Matthews nos. 55, 148, 149, 155, 164, and 189.¹¹

1.2.2. Dūr-Enlilē

Van Soldt published over 450 Middle Babylonian documents that may have come from Dūr-Enlilē.¹² They are mainly administrative accounts, like those from Nippur, concerning commodities such as barley, flour, beer, and sheep.¹³ Here the principal officials were Ninurta-zākir-šumi and his son, Ninurta-kiššat-ilāni, both of whom also sealed *aklu* transactions. As van Soldt has already noted, these two officials are also mentioned in texts excavated at Nippur¹⁴ and are descendants of the Nippur governor, Enlil-kidinnī,¹⁵ suggesting that the same prominent family administered both towns. Van Soldt also observed other connections between the documents.¹⁶ Other individuals also appear in both locations.¹⁷

with no. 148, Tukultī-Ekur and Āl-Irrē are attested. It seems likely that the commodities were consumed at the settlements and that the *aklu* documents were also sealed there. However, the tablets were found at Nippur. Probably the sealed tablets were sent to Nippur. Cf. BRINKMAN 1976 text no. 4, which is a summary of the sealed tablets of the Sealand, meaning that the sealed tablets had been sent from the Sealand to Nippur and their contents were summarized in one document.

⁷ BE 14: 53.

⁸ Published mainly in CLAY 1906a; 1906b; 1912; SASSMANN-SHAUSEN 2001.

⁹ PEDERSÉN 1998, 113-115. See also GIBSON 1975, 4-7, 104-124; GIBSON *et alii* 1978, 53, 66-70.

¹⁰ They cover the period between the 4th year of Burna-Buriaš II (1356 BCE) and the reign of Kadašman-Ḥarbe II (1223 BCE). In this work, I follow the dates of BRINKMAN 1976, 31. The contents include records concerning agricultural commodities (like barley, beer, flour, oil, and emmer), lawsuits, letters, etc.

¹¹ Perhaps nos. 146, 156, and 157 may be added to the seals from the archive(s). Another significant archive of Middle Babylonian documents excavated at Nippur is Nippur 2 (PEDERSÉN 1998, 115). Although some of the *aklu* documents of Nippur 2 were sealed, I will not discuss them in detail here because my focus is on the sealing practices of the officials who were involved in the administration of Nippur and the settlements around it. Regarding the documents purportedly from Nippur 2, see SASSMANN-SHAUSEN 2001, 187-194; MURAI 2018, 149-163.

¹² See VAN SOLDT 2015; for the early Dūr-Enlilē documents, DEVECCHI 2020, which however has not been available to the author yet.

In BE 14: 127, Amīl-Marduk sent a certain Tarību who lived in the new city to Dūr-Enlilē and made him settle there (obv. 2-5: *ina Āl ešši ašbūma Amīl-Marduk Arad-nubatti išpurma ušēlāmma ina Dūr-Enlilē ušēšimma*). Here the verb *elū* "to go up" is used, meaning that Dūr-Enlilē is located in the north of the new city. The location of "the new city" is not known.

In NASHEF 1982, 90, the dam of Dūr-Enlil (in a canal) from the Tigris is noted "*ka-le-e BĀD en-lil ša iš-tu ID IGNA CBS 4742, 55*." See the photo of CBS 4742 (CDLI no. P261011).

In CUSAS 9, DALLEY 2009, 9 fn. 80 comments on Dūr-Enlilē, "According to Nashef 1982 it is distinct from Dūr-Enlil, which George suggests may be a renaming of Dūr-Abi-ešuḥ, on the basis of information from unpublished texts." It is an interesting suggestion, however, here it is not certain whether George intends Dūr-Enlilē or Dūr-Enlil, or whether he means Dūr-Abi-ešuḥ^(canal) or Dūr-Abi-ešuḥ^(Tigris). Regarding the two fortresses which were called Dūr-Abi-ešuḥ, see BOIVIN 2018a, 97-100. In BE 14: 5, we indeed find Dūr-Enlil (obv. 5) and Dūr-Enlilē (obv. 10), but more examples may be required to argue that they are distinct. As to the probable location of Dūr-Enlilē, BOIVIN 2018b, 302 suggested a direction east or south-east of Nippur.

¹³ The documents range in date from the 24th year of Nazi-Maruttaš (1284 BCE) to the 6th year of Meli-ši-ḪU (1181 BCE).

¹⁴ Ninurta-zākir-šumi appears in BE 14: 78, and Ninurta-kiššat-ilāni in BE 14: 118 obv. 12.

¹⁵ VAN SOLDT 2015, 24.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 24, 29-30. The majority of the connections with the Dūr-Enlilē documents can be seen within the Nippur documents apparently coming from Nippur 1. However, the connection regarding Amīlūta, Sarriqu, and Kudurrānu is another case. As we can see in the comment at CUSAS 30: 233, these individuals appear in the Dūr-Enlilē documents (CUSAS 30: 64, 233) and in a Nippur document (MUN 10). But the provenance of MUN 10 is not Nippur 1 but Nippur 5. See PEDERSÉN 1998, 116; SASSMANN-SHAUSEN 2001, 186 fn. 3135; PAULUS 2014, 351, fn. 10; BRINKMAN 2017, 19 fn. 149; MURAI 2018, 31 fn. 104; BOIVIN 2018b, 303 fn. 9.

¹⁷ For identifications of the people in the documents excavated at Nippur and the documents probably coming from Dūr-Enlilē, see VAN SOLDT 2015, 24, 29-30; MURAI 2018, 45-58, 65-69, 116-126; BOIVIN 2018b, 301-305, and below 2.2.2.-2.2.5.

⁶ Among the *aklu* documents sealed by Enlil-AL.SA₆ with no. 148, we can find a few geographical names such as Tukultī-Ekur, Dūr-Enlilē, and Kubarin-Ea. Also among those sealed by Rīmūtu

1.3. The *aklu* documents and their background

The *aklu* documents are accounts concerning commodities such as barley, flour, other cereals, beer, oil, small cattle, etc. The presentation of data is typically terse. The text MUN 244 is an example.

Obverse

1	22 1/2 kaš sag	1	22 1/2 fine beer
2	35 1/2 kaš UŠ	2	35 1/2 ordinary beer
3	1 dug/kùrun ¹⁸	3	1 clay pot/a type of beer
4	0,0.2. báppir	4	2 <i>sūtu</i> ¹⁹ beer bread
5	<i>ak-lu</i> ₄ šu ^m en-š <u>u-nu</u>	5	<i>aklu</i> under the responsibility of Bēlšunu

Reverse

6	ta u ₄ -18- ^r kam ¹ ša ^{iti} ziz	6	from the 18 th day of Šabātu (XI month)
7	en u ₄ -5-kam ša ^{iti} še	7	to the 5 th day of Addaru (XII month)
8	mu-3-kam ^d ku-dúr-ri-L	8	3 rd year of Kudurri-Enlil.
9	^{na} kišib ^{md} nin-urta-sum-ah- <i>he</i>	9	Sealed by Ninura-nādin-ahhē

Here several commodities are treated under the responsibility of a certain Bēlšunu (obv. 1–5) from the 18th day of Šabātu (XI month) until the 5th day of Addaru (XII month) of the 3rd year of Kudurri-Enlil. The account was sealed by Ninurta-nādin-ahhē. We know the names of the two individuals who acted in the *aklu* transaction. One is Bēlšunu, who took responsibility for the transaction, but we do not know what he actually did, because verbs like *imhur* ‘he received’ or *iddin* ‘he gave’ are not written, and because there is no personal information, such as his profession or patronym. The other participant is Ninurta-nādin-ahhē, who sealed the account. He also appears without any personal information.²⁰

To place the *aklu* transactions in a wider context, it is necessary to construct a profile of the individuals appearing in the *aklu* documents to learn more about their functions and professional relationships. As mentioned above, we can group texts that have the same seal impression. Through consideration of the groups, it becomes apparent that an artisan, such as a miller or brewer, prepared commodities like flour or beer for the *aklu* expenditure for purposes including rations, fodder, and offerings. An official supervised the *aklu* expenditure and sealed the related document.²¹ In the text mentioned above, MUN 244, the artisan is the brewer Bēlšunu, and the official is Ninurta-nādin-ahhē.

2. The administration of Nippur and the settlements around it

2.1. Nippur and surrounding settlements

Through the examination of the *aklu* documents according to their seal impressions,²² it is apparent that

Regarding other cases of persons who are found in the Nippur and Dūr-Enlilē documents, see KRAUS 1968, 38; BRINKMAN 1973, 259 fn. 4-7; TENNEY 2011, 102 fn. 63, 127 fn. 199-200, 128 fn. 204; VAN SOLDT 2015, 537 (Ātamar-qāssa, Nippurītu). Here, an unpublished legal text excavated at Nippur (Ni 2885) is treated, in which the girl Ātamar-qāssa appears with Nippurītu. Both names are well known from the Dūr-Enlilē documents.

Also, we should notice other documents which may come from Dūr-Enlilē. In 2017, Y. Levavi published four Middle Babylonian legal documents dated to the reign of Šagarakti-Šuriaš, which are part of 341 documents in the Shlomo and Aliza Moussaieff collection, of which it is not certain the 341 documents are Middle Babylonian documents. According to Levavi, their provenance may be the city of Nippur or its close vicinity. Among them, we find persons who appear in the Dūr-Enlilē documents published by van Soldt in 2015. For example, the four legal documents were written by Mudammiq-Adad, who is a scribe (dub.sar) and a diviner (¹⁰hal). A scribe of the same name is amply attested in the Dūr-Enlilē documents. In CUSAS 30: 2 rev. 14', the scribe (dub.sar) Mudammiq-Adad is referred to as a diviner (¹⁰hal), as in LEVAVI 2017, no. 1 rev. 34. Further, we find Ninurta-kiššat-ilāni and Yā'ūtu, daughter of a leatherworker (dumu.sal ¹⁰ašgab), in LEVAVI 2017, no. 2. Ninurta-kiššat-ilāni is well known as an important official of Dūr-Enlilē. Yā'ūtu, daughter of a leatherworker (dumu.sal ¹⁰ašgab), is attested in CUSAS 30: 321 rev. 29. In LEVAVI 2017, no. 3, Amīl-Marduk entrusted an individual from Hursagkalamma to Arad-nubatti. Levavi (*Ibidem*, 87, 96) has already noted in BE 14: 127, Amīl-Marduk had an individual move to Dūr-Enlilē, and Arad-nubatti was required to manage him. These geographical names, Hursagkalamma and Dūr-Enlilē, are well known in the corpus of VAN SOLDT 2015, 575, who also cited BE 14: 127 as a parallel text (*Ibidem*, 30).

¹⁸ For kùrun ‘a type of beer,’ see DEHESELLE 1994, 36-38 (pointed out to me by S. Paulus).

¹⁹ 0,0.2. means 2 *sūtu*, which is 20 liters if the *sūtu* measure was 10 *qū*.

²⁰ On the problems in understanding the *aklu* documents, and prior attempts to do so, see MURAI 2018, 14-24.

²¹ Note that the term *aklu* can be used for a disbursal of barley for several purposes, including work assignments for artisans (e.g., a brewer or miller). See MURAI 2018, 200.

²² For the details of the approach of making a profile of persons according to their seal impressions, see MURAI 2018, 24-30 (1.6).

AMI HUANG*

MUCH CATTLE, MUCH CARE: MIDDLE BABYLONIAN HERDING CONTRACTS FROM NIPPUR

ABSTRACT

Herding contracts are attested over long stretches of Mesopotamian written history, with records from the Old Babylonian through the Neo-Babylonian periods surviving well into the present day. Drawn up between livestock owners and outside contractors, these contracts can furnish us with important information about the interests of the two parties, as well as livestock management practices in ancient times. In the following article, I discuss a group of Middle Babylonian herding contracts excavated from Nippur and dated to the Kassite period. Despite the prevalence of livestock in the Kassite economy, these contracts have received little critical treatment in the field. The following discussion will therefore provide a more in-depth and extensive introduction to these contracts, touching upon their formal aspects, the listed herd and flock compositions, possible production aims, and the contracts' legal stipulations.

KEYWORDS

Herding contracts, pastoralism, Middle Babylonian, Kassite period, Nippur, livestock management practices, livestock production aims, sheep, goats, cattle.

1. *Introduction***

Herding contracts are attested over long stretches of Mesopotamian written history, with records from the Old Babylonian through the Neo-Babylonian periods surviving well into the present day.¹ These documents are records of legal arrangements made between livestock owners and outside contractors. They were drawn up upon the consignment of livestock to the contractors, who would then seal the document to mark their receipt of the animals and their acceptance of the contract terms. As such, herding contracts can furnish us with important information about the specific interests of the two parties, as well as livestock management practices in ancient times.

In the following article, I will discuss a little-known group of Middle Babylonian herding contracts excavated from Nippur and dated to the Kassite period (ca. 1595-1155 BCE).² Despite the prevalence of livestock in the Kassite economy, these contracts have received little critical discussion in

the field, in part due to their publication history. Early remarks by Daniel D. Luckenbill and Harry Torczyner are, for instance, restricted to only one published exemplar, BE 14, 137.³ It was only in 2001 that five additional examples of these contracts were published and edited by Leonhard Sassmannshausen in a book-length study on Kassite administration.⁴ Unfortunately, much of Sassmannshausen's work, especially as regards the legal stipulations preserved on the contracts' reverse, has proven to be problematic. Alternate readings of these stipulations were provided in 2004 by John A. Brinkman in a review of Sassmannshausen's book but without much accompanying commentary.⁵ The following discussion will therefore provide a more critical and extensive introduction to these contracts, touching

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** This article is a revision of a paper I presented at the 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. I wish to express my gratitude to the attendees of the talk for their productive comments and to Susanne Paulus, Hervé Reculeau, J. N. Postgate, Elena Devecchi, and the anonymous reviewer for their feedback on a draft of this article. I also wish to extend my thanks to the Penn Museum of the University of Pennsylvania for giving me permission to collate the tablets discussed herein and to J. A. Brinkman for providing me with information on various unpublished tablets relevant to this study. Any mistakes and oversights are, as always, my own.

¹ For an overview of Old Babylonian herding contracts, see KRAUS 1966; FINKELSTEIN 1968; POSTGATE, PAYNE 1975. On Nuzi herding contracts, see MORRISON 1981, 269-273; ABRAHAMI 2014, 284-285. On Neo-Babylonian herding contracts, see von BOLLAKOTEK 1969, 125-129; VAN DRIEL 1993, 223-224 (ovicaprids); 1995, 216 (cattle); KOZUH 2014, 69-75. Herding contracts may have existed prior to the Old Babylonian period. However, their existence can often only be inferred from the surviving documentation; e.g., see comments made by ENGLUND 1995, 388 and *passim* on contracted herders during the Ur III period and POSTGATE 2012, 1-2 on the likelihood of contractual arrangements made during the Middle Assyrian period at Dür-Katlimmu. Whether or not these contracts were ever written down is uncertain.

² For the sake of convenience, dates are given according to the Middle Chronology.

³ LUCKENBILL 1907, 300-301; TORCZYNER 1913, 61. Neither provides a full edition.

⁴ MUN 318, 319, 321, 329, and 330.

⁵ BRINKMAN 2004, 290-291 and 301-302.

upon their formal aspects, herd and flock compositions, possible production aims, and the contracts' legal stipulations.⁶

2. The herding contracts

The contracts under discussion are all housed in the Penn Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. They number eleven in total (Fig. 1), though at least nine more reside in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum.⁷ These contracts are comprised of six cattle and five ovicaprid contracts. All contracts bearing preserved

dates are dated to Years 10, 11, and 12 of the Kassite king Šagarakti-Šuriaš (ŠŠ) and the winter months of Araḥsamnu (Month VIII) or Tebētu (Month X).⁸ All bear the seal impression of Amīl-Marduk, the *šandabakku* of Nippur.⁹

These contracts were no doubt produced by a single administrative office, as they are highly consistent and formulaic in terms of layout and content. The obverse contains a livestock inventory, featuring standard age-sex breakdowns of herds or flocks; calculated quantities of secondary products; and a list of three officials, the herdsman (*nāqīdu*, always written NA.GAD), the mayor (*ḥazannu*), and the “Kassite”

Museum No.	Publication No.	MSKH No.	Date (King M/Y)	Seal	Livestock
CBS 6616	MUN 321	V.2.10.261	ŠŠ 'VIII' [...]	No. 149	Cattle
CBS 10623	-	-	[ŠŠ .../...]	No. 149	Cattle
CBS 10738	-	-	ŠŠ [...]/11	No. 149	Ovicaprids
CBS 10772	MUN 318	V.2.10.185	ŠŠ X/11	No. 149	Cattle
CBS 11060	-	-	ŠŠ 'X'/11	No. 149	Ovicaprids
CBS 11104	MUN 329	V.2.10.34	ŠŠ 'X'/11	No. 149	Ovicaprids
CBS 11105	MUN 330	V.2.10.186	ŠŠ X/11	No. 149	Ovicaprids
CBS 11107	-	V.2.10.224	ŠŠ 'X'/12	No. 149	Ovicaprids
CBS 12910	BE 14, 137	V.2.10.153	ŠŠ VIII/10	No. 149	Cattle
UM 29-13-642	-	-	ŠŠ [...]/11	No. 149	Cattle
UM 29-15-112	MUN 319	V.2.10.191	ŠŠ X/11	No. 149	Cattle

Fig. 1 - Middle Babylonian herding contracts discussed in the following pages.¹⁰

⁶ The identification of the parties of these contracts, especially that of the livestock owner(s), is complicated and lies outside the scope of this article. See HUANG 2020 for more discussion.

⁷ These nine, listed by BRINKMAN 2004, 290, fn. 36, are the following: Ni. 882, Ni. 1548, Ni. 2879, Ni. 6272, Ni. 6916, Ni. 7147, Ni. 7992, Ni. 8236, and Ni. 11502. Judging by Brinkman's remarks, it would seem that these contracts fall into the same category of contracts I discuss in this article. However, as I have not been able to access the tablets, I have chosen to exclude them from the following discussion.

⁸ See BRINKMAN 1976, 398, fn. 3 on the reading of the eighth month as Araḥsamnu or Araḥsamna. It should be noted that the preserved signs in the date formula of MUN 329 do not exclude the possibility that it was drawn up in Month IX (on the variant writing of Month IX with the signs ¹⁰GAN.E₃, see BRINKMAN 1976, 399). However, this possibility strikes me as unlikely given that all the securely dated contracts were drawn up in either Month VIII or X. The dating of these contracts to the autumn/winter months, combined with the presence of growth rate stipulations mandated in the contract terms, may be indicative of an autumn/winter breeding season and a spring lambing season, rather than the usual autumn/winter lambing season and spring/summer breeding season accepted by many Assyriologists (e.g., KRAUS 1966, 51-52; POSTGATE, PAYNE 1975, 13 and *passim*; VAN DE MIEROOP 1993, 163; HEIMPEL 1993, 122 and 143-144; MORRISON 1981, 276-277; KOZUH 2014, 14-15). For additional discussion on why a spring lambing season is likely for primitive sheep, see especially the remarks made by

RYDER 1983, 11-12 and 1993, 18, who notes that both wild and domesticated sheep in the northern hemisphere tend to breed in the autumn/winter and lamb in the spring/summer. The mechanism behind this timing is biological; as days grow shorter, the pineal gland in the brain secretes increasing amounts of melatonin during the night, a process that triggers the beginning of the sheep reproductive cycle (see ROSA, BRYANT 2003, 163-164 and cited literature). While domestication may have influenced the timing of the breeding season, strong and explicit textual evidence for such a claim is difficult to come by. For a more extensive discussion of this issue, see HUANG 2020, 42-57 and also WIDELL 2020. Widell argues for a breeding season between September and October and a lambing season in February and March for sheep and goats during the Ur III period.

⁹ MATTHEWS 1992, 114-115, no. 149. Note that MUN 329 is excluded from Matthews' list despite the explicit seal identification in MUN 329: rev. 30 and the clear remnants of the seal impression on the tablet's left edge.

¹⁰ In addition to the Istanbul tablets listed in fn. 7, the following Middle Babylonian herding contracts are also excluded from the chart (Fig. 1): BE 14, 48, MUN 316, CBS 8872, UM 29-15-691, Ni. 25, and Ni. 421, the last two texts of which were pointed out to me by out to me by Brinkman (personal communications, 7/18/2019 and 11/15/2019). Although many of these contracts are similar to the contracts listed in Fig. 1 – and indeed, are important to the following discussion – they also exhibit significant differences in terms of dating, formal features, and/or content. For a more complete discussion of these excluded herding contracts, see HUANG 2020, 58-103.

THE CURIOUS CASE(S) OF THE SEALED KASSITE LETTERS¹

ABSTRACT

The amount of sealed epistolary material from the Kassite period is extremely small. Whereas it is estimated that ca. 700 Kassite period letters are preserved, G. Stiehler-Alegria Delgado and D.M. Matthews have proposed that only two sealed envelopes and two sealed letters have survived. However, in the following article I will show that the number of preserved sealed Kassite letters and envelopes of Kassite letters is even smaller, by offering a reappraisal of the sealed epistolary material from Kassite Nippur. One sealed Kassite letter can be securely identified (N 1593). One sealed envelope belongs to a letter (BE 17: 24), but may not date to the Kassite period. Neither of the sealed envelopes from Kassite Nippur can be attributed to a Kassite letter without reasonable doubts. Further, two sealed tablets cannot securely be identified as letters. I will discuss, through comparison to the archival practices for other letter corpora, the possible reasons why it is that the Kassite letters have mostly been preserved without their envelopes, and I will present new editions and understandings of the sealed texts.

KEYWORDS

Kassite letters, Kassite Nippur, Kassite seals, sealed letters, sealed envelopes, archiving

1. The Practice of Encasing Letters in Envelopes

The envelope of a letter protects “the text on the inner tablet (which by definition must have undergone transport), conceals the contents of the letter from all but the recipient and guarantees the authorship”.² In general, Mesopotamian letters were enclosed in envelopes, which were almost always sealed.³ The practice of encasing unsealed letters (and legal documents) in sealed clay envelopes became widespread at the beginning of the second millennium BC,⁴ and it is attested for the first time in the Ur III period.⁵ As opposed to legal documents, a Mesopotamian letter generally did not contain the text from the inner tablet on the envelope (for exceptions see Text B in §3.2 below), so the envelope had to be destroyed in order to read the message.⁶

There are, however, also in the Old Babylonian (OB) period a small number of letters where the tablet

of the letter itself is sealed. In the Ur III period, letter orders were sealed and archived because of their legal function.⁷ The sealing of the letter itself happened if the letter functioned in a legal context, e.g. as a debt note.⁸ Similarly, Middle Assyrian (MA) letters were usually encased in a sealed envelope, while the letter itself was not sealed.⁹ Numerous MA envelopes and fragments of envelopes of letters have been found, e.g. in Assur, Dūr-Katlimmu, and Tell Chuera.¹⁰ However, a few MA letters, especially *našpertu* directives, do also bear seal impressions directly on the tablets, because they had a legal function.¹¹

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¹ I would like to thank John A. Brinkman, Jacob L. Dahl, Parsa Daneshmand, Jana Mynářová, and Taha Yurttaş for their help and advice. I wish to thank Leonhard Sassmannshausen for granting me access to his unpublished manuscript. I would also like to thank Elena Devecchi and Susanne Paulus for organising the workshop “Kassite Administration, Texts, Seals and Sealing Practices” at the RAI 2018 in Innsbruck. Errors and conclusions remain my responsibility. The chronological dates in this article are based on BRINKMAN 2017, 36; regarding chronological issues see the overview in *Ibidem*, 28-31.

² POSTGATE 2013, 367.

³ CHARPIN 2013, 47; WALKER 2014, 103.

⁴ No envelopes of letters from the Old Sumerian and Akkad period have been found. However, one Old Sumerian and three Akkad period letters bear seal impressions directly on the tablet (KIENAST, VOLK 1995, 10).

⁵ SALLABERGER 1999, 27. Only three sealed envelopes of letters have been found from the Ur III period (KIENAST, VOLK 1995, 10, 19-20; MVN 6, 175; OWEN 1971, 392-393; 1972, 133-134). The sealed envelope of one Ur III letter order (OWEN 1972, 133-134) contained a sealed confirmation of receipt, while the inner tablet was a letter order. Breaking the envelope functioned as confirmation of receipt and probably also of the carrying out of the letter order (KIENAST, VOLK 1995, 20). Sallaberger deduces from this small amount of sealed letter envelopes from the Ur III period that it was not only common in the OB period that the sender sealed the envelope of the letter, but that this practice already existed in the Ur III period (SALLABERGER 1999, 26-28).

⁶ CANKIK-KIRSCHBAUM 2013, 65; CHARPIN 2007, 407.

⁷ SALLABERGER 2015, 16, 27.

⁸ SALLABERGER 1999, 26-28. It appears that the sender could explicitly refer to this, *tuppi ana šībūtija kīl*, “Keep my tablet as my witness!” (KRAUS 1985, 141-142).

⁹ CANKIK-KIRSCHBAUM 1996, 51.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Regarding the term *našpertu* in the OB, OA, and MA period see JACOB 2009, 23; NEUMANN 2011, 142-143; PETSCHOW 1959, 45, 66; POSTGATE 2013, 67-68; VEENHOF 2003, 88-89.

3. The Alleged Envelopes of Kassite Letters

3.1 Text A: BE 17, 24 (CBS 19793; CDLI no. P270001)⁶⁷

Text A is an *ardu*-letter from the subordinate Kalbu to his superior and was purportedly found with the other Kassite letters published in BE 17/1 in the palace complex of Nippur.⁶⁸ The envelope bears a line containing information about the consignor and an address line. The two lines read:

l. 1 *tup-pi 'Kal-[bi]*
l. 2 *[a]-na be-li-šu*

the tablet of Kal[bu]
[t]o his lord

The seal legend⁶⁹ on the envelope says:

l. 1 *[ZI?/ i-na INIM?/ (personal name)-] 'dAMAR.UTU?*
l. 2 *[NI₃.TUKU]-šu/ [ša-kin/GAR]-šu*
l. 3 *[x x lī?]-bur*
l. 4 *[TIL.A?] 'liš?-bi*

[Through (the word of ...)/ (personal name)-] Marduk
his [wealth / the one equipped with] it (i.e. the seal)
[shall ..., and he shall be in good] health (?)
he shall become sa[tisfied with life (?)]

Tablet (not sealed):

obv. 1 *a-na be-li-ia as-mi lu-ul-li-i NUMUN.TA.AN [...]*
obv. 2 *la-ma-sa-an-ni L^UUR.SAG le-e-i it-pi-'ši'*
obv. 3 *nu-ur ŠEŠ.MEŠ pi-in-de-e na-ma-a-ri*
obv. 4 *qi-ip kab-tu-ti ra-aš ba-nu-ú-ti*
obv. 5 *e-pi-ir um-ma-ni pa-aš-šur ni-ši*
obv. 6 *e-tel ki-na-te-e-šu ša A-nu E-n-lil u E-a*
obv. 7 *ù Be-let-i-lí qí-ib-ti du-um-qí*
obv. 8 *ù mi-iš-re-e iš-ru-ku-ú-ma*
obv. 9 *be-lí-ia qí-bí-ma um-ma 'Kal-bu ep-ru*
obv. 10 *ù ar-du na-ra-am-ka-ma*
obv. 11 *an-nu-um-ma-a šu-ú ki-i ra-ma-ni a-na*
obv. 12 *be-lí-a ap-qí-du-ma 'E-tel-pu DUMU 'Uš-bu-la*
obv. 13 *[(x?) ra]'-man'-šu ù a-na pa-an URU Man'-nu-ge-er-
dISKUR*
obv. 14 *[x-x-x] ša-ab-ta-ku áš-bu A.ŠA₃ ša EN KUR.KUR*
obv. 15 *[x x x] 'x a x'-mi-ia-ma i-na me-e i-di-la-an-ni*
obv. 16 *[URU].DIDLI ša it-ti-ia lu aš-bu-tu*
obv. 17 *lu na-du-tu ša EN KUR.KUR i-na pa-an me-'e'
i-'ha'-bu-bu*

To my lord, the proper, abundant, the seed from
heaven,
the protective spirit, the hero, the skilled one, the wise
one,
the light among his brothers, the red glow of dawn,
the entrusted one of the important ones, the head of
nobility,
the provider for the troops, the table for the people,
the lord among his colleagues, the one upon whom Anu,
Enlil and Ea
and Bēlet-ilī have bestowed (their) trust, good fortune,
and wealth.
Speak (to) my lord: the following (says) Kalbu, the dust
(under your feet),
and your beloved servant:
Now he —after I had entrusted myself
to my lord — Etel-pū, the son of Ušbula,
(he has entrusted?) [him]self (?) (to my lord as well).
And outside of the town Mannu-gēr-Adad
I have been beginning to [...]. They are (?) residing there
(now). The land of the Lord of All Countries
[...] me/my (?) [...], and he has cut me off from the
water!
The [town]s, which are nearby me - whether they are the
inhabited ones,
or whether they are the abandoned ones - (and) those
of the Lord of All Countries are murmuring because of
the water!

⁶⁷ See previous translations of the whole text by HECKER 2006, 115 and OPPENHEIM 1967, 116-117, and of obv. 18-lo.e. 4 in PAULUS 2014, 86-87, 92, 240 266, fn. 426 and VAN SOLDT 1988, 105-120.

⁶⁸ PEDERSEN 1998, 112-116; SASSMANNSHAUSEN 2001, 186-187.

⁶⁹ MATTHEWS 1992, 124-125, no. 167, with possible emendations by me. Cf. LIMET 1971, 93-94, nos. 7.1-7.5, and especially the Kassite cylinder seal Ashm. 562 (LIMET 1971, 94, no. 7.3).

obv. 18	ù ^{URU} <i>Man'-nu-ge-er-^dİŠKUR ša LUGAL ra-in-ga</i>	But the town Mannu-gēr-Adad, which the king, who loves you,
obv. 19	ù <i>be-lí a-na ši-ba-ta-an-nu-ti id-di-na</i>	and my lord, gave to me as a grant,
lo.e. 1	<i>i-na la me-e na-di zu-un-na i-na šá-me-e</i>	has been abandoned due to a lack of water. If only they had given me rain out of heaven
lo.e. 2	ù <i>mi-la i-na naq-bi ki-i i-di-nu-ním</i>	and a flood ⁷⁰ from the spring!
lo.e. 3	URU ^{KI} <i>ša be-lí i-ri-man-ni i-na la-me-e</i>	The town that my lord granted me has, due to the lack of water,
lo.e. 4	<i>na-di a-na ba-la-aṭ a-i-ka-a lul-lik</i>	been abandoned. Where shall I go to live?
rev. 1	ù ABUL URUDU.MEŠ UDU.MEŠ <i>u U₈-MU-2 ša iš-tu GÚ. 'EN' .NA-ti</i>	Also, (what about) the (levy from the) town's gate (which consists) of copper, the sheep, and the two-year old ewes, which since (the time of) the office of the <i>šandabakku</i>
rev. 2	<i>ša ¹Na-zi-^dEn-líl a-bi-ka ù EN u₄-mi</i>	of Nazi-Enlil, your father, and up until today
rev. 3	<i>za-ka-ku ù i-na-an-na be-lí it-ti- 'ka'</i>	I have been exempted from. And now, my lord, together with you,
rev. 4	[x-x-x]- 'ka' -an-ni i-na-an-na ki-i i-li-[ku [?]]	[he has ...] me. And now, after they have co[me]
rev. 5	[ABUL URUDU.MEŠ] UDU.MEŠ U ₈ -MU-2 <i>i-si-ru mi-na- 'a' [x-x-x-x]</i>	(and) after they have demanded the payment of the (levy from the) towns gates(, which consists) of copper, the sheep, and the two-year old ewes - after that, what [...]
rev. 6	[lu-ul]-qa-am-ma lu-ud-di-in ù <i>áš-šu ^dEn' [-líl-x[?]]</i>	[shall I] take and shall I give? And regarding En[líl-... (?)]
rev. 7	EN.NAM <i>a-na ARAD-ka ki-i il-li-ku um-ma-a</i>	the <i>bēl pīhāti</i> : after he came to your servant, he said the following:
rev. 8	ABUL <i>la i-ma-aṭ-ṭi tu-ša-an-na-ma ŠÚM-na</i>	“(That of) the town's gate must not decrease - otherwise you will (have to) double it! Give to me!”
rev. 9	ù <i>¹I-na-Ē-kur-GAL ARAD-ka ša a-na be-lí-ia</i>	As for Ina-Ekur-rabi, your servant, whom I have handed over to my lord,
rev. 10	<i>ap-qí-du áš-šu di-na-[ti]-ia</i>	because of my verdicts
rev. 11	<i>be-lí a-ma-as-<su> li-mur-ma i-na¹ a-ḫi-ti-ia</i>	my lord shall examine his legal case. And I have been left on my own (side).
rev. 12	<i>mu-uš-šu-ra-ku ḫa-am-ṭiš li-ta-al-ka⁷¹</i>	He shall hurry to go there!
rev. 13	ù <i>a-na-ku i-tu be-lí-ia a-na a-la-a-ki</i>	And I – after I had written to the king (that I want) to come to my lord –
rev. 14	<i>a-na LUGAL ki-i aš-[pu]-ru LUGAL ul i-di-na-an-ni</i>	the king did not let me (do so).

obv. 3: Hecker translates *pindē namāri* with “dem [...] leuchtenden Zeichen”;⁷² Oppenheim translates “the shining gem”.⁷³ Both translations are theoretically possible, as *pe/indū* means “birth mark, red mole, blemish” or a “semiprecious stone, flint” used for amulets, cylinder seals and statues (AHw: 854; CAD P: 323-324). CAD P: 324 translates this phrase as “red glow (?) of brightness”. Since *pe/indū* appears to refer to a red discolouration of the skin and/or a red stone, it makes sense to translate it as a reddish change of colour. *namāru* means “to dawn, shine brightly”, especially in relation to heavenly bodies like the sun, i.e. the dawn (AHw: 768-770; CAD N/1: 211-212, s.v. *namāru*). Thus, I decided to translate *pindē namāri* as “the red (i.e. first) glow of dawn”.

obv. 4: Hecker translates *rāš banūti* as “von vornehmen Wesen”.⁷⁴ Oppenheim translates *rāš* as stative of *rašū*, “to acquire, obtain”, i.e. as “endowed with nobility”, although the stative or verbal adjective of *rašū* is *rašī*. Perhaps *rāš* is a status constructus of *rēšu*, “head”. *rāšu* is mostly attested for the Old Akkadian period (AHw: 973-976; CAD R: 282a, s.v. *rēšu*), while *rāšu* is also attested in one NA and in several NB sources (CAD R: 278a, s.v. *rēšu*). See also an inscription from Samsu-iluna containing *ra-si-šu-nu* (CAD R: 282a, s.v. *rēšu*; RIME 4, 382: 62).

obv. 6: Hecker suggests “dem Fürsten sei er Gefährte”,⁷⁵ although *kinattu* (“colleague”, i.e. someone of equal rank, or a “person of servile status” in a household, AHw: 479b-480a; CAD K: 381a-382b) does not stand in the nominative nor stative for a substantive subclause. It should be considered here that the recipient of text A, the *šandabakku* of Nippur, held an elevated status among the other provincial governors.⁷⁶ The mention of *kinattēja* in the *ardu*-letter BE 17, 15: rev. 9 is inconclusive, as the sender mentions other officials who did irrigation work with the *errēšu* farmers, so in rev. 9 he is either promising to send his colleagues or his servants to his lord (*kinattēja ušēlamma*). However, the use of *kinattu* as servant appears to be most common in the Mari texts, while younger sources use the term for equal colleagues (CAD K: 381a-382b). Consequently, a us-

⁷⁰ PAULUS 2014, 240, fn. 209.

⁷¹ For the separative aspect of the Gt-stem, see VON SODEN 1995, 150.

⁷² HECKER 2006, 115.

⁷³ OPPENHEIM 1967, 116.

⁷⁴ HECKER 2006, 115.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, 115.

⁷⁶ BALKAN 1986, 10-11; ZIMMERMANN 2017, 259.

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