

## TWO NEW TABLETS THROWING LIGHT ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ANATOLIAN KINGS AND ASSYRIAN MERCHANTS IN THE PERIOD OF THE ASSYRIAN COLONIES\*

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We do not have detailed knowledge of the formal or informal relations of the Assyrian merchants with the kings or outstanding natives in Anatolia, because an important part of the tablets found at Kültepe deals mostly with the private affairs of these merchants. The scanty material related to the subject has been scattered over various tablets in accordance with the merchants' interest, and in most cases it is worded so shortly and with so unintelligible phrases that it is almost impossible to get a clear idea what the situation referred to is. This lack of material related to the subject can be explained to some extent by the fact that the Anatolian kings in matters of public importance preferred to deal not with the individual persons, but directly with certain public institutions, the functions of which are still not completely understood, and possibly with the delegations made up of the rich and important merchants. In other words the cause of this lack of information seems to have been mainly to office of *kārum* (*bīt kārim*) and some representative institutions. On the other hand we find some kings correspond with individual merchants and act as if they are businessman. The following letter offers a new and good example of this kind.

### No.1

Excavation Inv. no. Kt. 85/k 27

This latter is addressed by the *rubā'um* (king) of *Tuhpia* to a merchant called *Itūr-ilī*.

The king in return for two pieces of cloth, one *kutānum* and the other *kusitum*, which he had received from *Itūr-ilī*, has entrusted to *Amunani* 80

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minas of good quality copper to give to *Itūr-ilī* (L. 3-7). He also seems to have paid to both *Ennum-Aššur* and *Šū-Laban* 50 minas of good quality copper each for the pieces of *kutānum*- cloth which he received as *erbum* (L. 8-15). The king again in return for the *erbum* he has received from *Itūr-ilī* entrusts to *Amunani* also two skins of wine of which he speaks as “my *erbum*” (L. 16-20).

Starting from the line 21, there seems to be a disagreement between the king and the person called *Išme-Aššur*, perhaps a representative of *Itur-ili*, about the amount to be paid for the *erbum*. As understood from the letter *Išme-Aššur* brings to the king a certain amount of *amūtum* and at the same time a piece of *kutānum*-cloth as *erbum*. The king gives him 100 <minas> of *Tuhpia*-copper in return for the *erbum*. But *Išme-Aššur* possibly judging the amount of copper he has been offered less than what he thinks he deserves, refuses to accept it. Then the *rubā'um* leaves the amount of copper he has offered in trust at the house of a person called *Zumea* and after sometime by giving to *Šu-Bēlum* who has come to *Tuhpia*, an additional amount of 50 minas of *Tuhpia*-copper, 30 minas of good quality copper and two jars of oil, to be handed over to *Išme-Aššur* the king tries to satisfy him.

- Obv. 1.        um-ma ru-b[a-um]-ma ša Tū-ùh -pī-a-ma  
               a-na I- [tur<sub>4</sub>] -DINGIR qī-bi-ma  
               1 TÚG ku-ta-nam <ù> 1 TÚG ku-sí-tám  
               tū-šé <bi<sub>4</sub>> -lam / ší-im-šu-nu
5.            a-dí-ni / lá a-dí-na-kum  
               80 ma-na URUDU SIG<sub>5</sub> ší-im  
               TÚG A-mu-na-ni na-áš-a-kum  
               1 TÚG ku-ta-nam En-um-A-šur  
               a-na er-bi<sub>4</sub>-im i-ší-a-am
10.          1 TÚG ku-ta-nam Šu-Lá-ba-an  
               a-na er-bi<sub>4</sub>-im i-ší-a-am  
               50 ma-na URUDU SIG<sub>5</sub> a-na  
               En-um-A-šur a-dí-in  
               50 ma-na URUDU SIG<sub>5</sub> a-na

15. Šu-Lá-ba-an a-dí-in  
 Edge a-ta er-ba-am tù-šé-bi<sub>4</sub>-lam  
 a-na er-bi<sub>4</sub>-im ša tù-šé-bi-lá-ni  
 Rev. 2 zi-qú-qá!-tim ša DUG!  
 ki-ra-na-am er-bi<sub>4</sub>
20. A-mu-na-ni na-ás-a-kum  
 Iš-ma-A-šur a-mu-tám ub-lam-ma  
 1 TÚG ku-ta-nam er-ba-am  
 i-šfí-a-am / a-na er-bi<sub>4</sub>-šu  
 1 me-at <ma-na> URUDU ša Tù-ùh-pì-a
25. a-dí-šu-um-ma / lá-qá-am  
 lá i-mu-a-ma / É Zu-me-a  
 e-zi-ib-šu-ma / Šu-Be-lúm i-li-kam-ma  
 50 ma-na URUDU sa Tù-ùh-pì-a  
 30 ma-na URUDU SIG<sub>5</sub> <ù> 2 kà-ar-pá-tim
30. ša ša-am-ni-im a-dí-šu-um  
 ša er-bi<sub>4</sub>-im ša Iš-ma-A-šur  
 lu er!-ba-am lu ša ha-bu-lá-ku-ni  
 ša-bu-a-tí / mì-ma  
 i-na É.GAL<sup>lim</sup> lá tí-šu

### Translation:

(1-2) “Thus (says) the *rubā’um* of *Tuḫpia*: “Speak to *Itūr-ilī*: (3-5) You sent me a piece of *kutānum*-cloth (and) *kusītum*-cloth, (but) I have not paid you their cost by now. (6,7) *Amunani* is bringing to you 80 minas of good quality copper in payment for the cloth. (8-9) *Ennum-Aššur* had brought me as *erbum* a piece of *kutānum*-cloth. (10-11) *Šu-Lāban* had brought me as *erbum* a piece of *kutānum*-cloth. (12-13) I gave 50 minas of good quality copper to *Ennum-Aššur*. (14-15) I gave 50 minas of good quality copper to *Sū-Lāban*. (16) You sent me an *erbum*.

(17-20) In return for the *erbum* you sent me *Amunani* is bringing to you two skins! of wine (as) my *erbum*'(s cost). (21-23) *Išme-Aššur* brought me the *amūtum* and (also) brought a piece of *kutānum*-cloth to me as *erbum*. (23-27) In return for his *erbum* I gave him 100 <minas> of *Tuhpia* copper but he refused to accept it and so I left it (copper) in *Zumea*'s house. (27-31) *Sū-Bēlum* came here and in return for *Išme-Aššur*'s *erbum* I gave him 50 minas of *Tuhpia* copper, 30 minas of good quality copper (and) 2 jars of oil. (32-33) Both the price of *erbum* and my debt to you (for all other things) have been paid completely. (33-34) The palace owes you nothing (you have nothing to claim in the palace)".

### Notes:

L.1: *Tuhpia*, known to us a center of *wabartum* and famous for its copper mines (K. Nashef, RGTC IV, p.122-123), is localized with general acceptance somewhere in between Boğazköy and Merzifon<sup>1</sup>.

*Tuhpia* in a letter of the *karum Kaniš* (Kt. 92/k 203, 4-6), which has not been published yet, is listed together with *karums Turhumit*, *Hattuš* and *Tamnia*. Probably *Tuhpia* was a center of both *wabartum* and *kārum*.

L.2: We do not have detailed information about commercial activities of *Itūr-ilī* the addressee in the *rubā'um*'s letter. But as understood from the letter, he is a reputable merchant who has close relations with the king.

In a tablet containing judicial record which has not been published yet (Kt. j/k 80) there seems to be dispute between *Hanu* the son of *Itūr-ilī* and the person called *Šu-Lāban*. In the course of the case *Hanu* speaks to *Šu-Lāban* thus:

(4)..... 40 TÚG ku-ta-nu (5) ša qá-tim 2 TÚG a-bar-ni-e ša a-bi<sub>4</sub>-ni  
(6) a-na ru-ba-im Tū-ùh-pi-a-i-im (7) a-dí-na-kum

"I gave you 40 (pieces of) *kutānum*- cloth of the normal quality (and) 2 (pieces of) *abarnium*-cloth which belonged to our father to deliver the *Tuhpian rubā'um*."

It is easy to understand the pieces of cloth mentioned here belong to *Itur-ilī*.

Also the letter written by *Išme-Aššur* to *Itūr-ilī* (TC I, 39) seems to be closely related to our subject under discussion. It reads thus:

1. L.L. Orlin, ACC, p.38, 86; M.T. Larsen, OACC, p.240; cf. M. Forlanini, Hethitica VI, p.67 (map).

(4) *a-na Tuh-pí-a e-ru-ub-ma* (5) *ur-kà-at<sup>1</sup>-su / a-ma-lá* (6) *tù-ša-hi-zi-ni* (7) *ra-qà-tám ù lu-bu-ša-am* (8) *a-na ru-ba-im / a-ši-ma* (9) *ù a-ha-ma* 10 TUG.HI.A (10) *ù a-ši-a-am ú-šé-li-ma* (11) *a-ši-am ù TUG.HI.A* (12) *ú-ta-e-ra-am-ma* (13) *er-ba-am im-ta-ha-ar* (14) *um-ma šu-ut-m[a] ú-lá* (15) *a-lá-qé a-na er-bi<sub>4</sub>-im* (16) *ša a-št-ú-šu-ni* (17) [x GÚ x] *ma-na URUDU* (18) [*ša Tuh-pí]-a ú-šé-ri-du-nim*

(4-8) "I came to *Tuhpia* and afterwards in accordance with your instructions I took the *raqqatum*- cloth and the dress to the king. (9-10) I also took 10 pieces of cloth and *aši'um*-metal to him. (11-13) He gave me back the *aši'um*-metal and the pieces of cloth, but accepted the *erbum*. (14-15) He said thus: "I will not take (any of those goods you brought except for the one I ordered)". (15-18) In return for the *erbum* I took to him they sent me [x talent x] minas of [*Tuhpi*]a copper."

It is quite obvious that *Išme-Aššur* the writer of this letter (TC 1, 39) is the same person referred to in the 21. and 31. lines of Kt. 85/k 27. So we can say that *Išme-Aššur* is a trustworthy representative of *Itūr-ilī* and he often brings from *Itūr-ilī* to the *rubā'um* of *Tuhpia* goods such as cloth, clothing and precious metals.

L. 3 ff: It is understood that two different kinds of cloth one *kutānum* the other *kusītum* has been brought to the *rubā'um* and it is said that for two pieces of cloth one being *kutānum* and the other *kusītum* a total of 80 minas of good quality copper have been paid, for each piece of *kutānum*-cloth a sum of 50 minas of good quality copper<sup>2</sup>. So we understand that for a piece of *kusītum*- cloth a sum of 30 minas of good quality copper has been paid.

L. 6 ff.: We understand that there was a quite a big difference of quality between URUDU SIG<sub>5</sub> "good quality copper" and URUDU *ša Tuhpia* "*Tuhpia* copper"<sup>3</sup> as we mentioned above, although 50 minas of good quality copper has been paid for each piece of *kutānum*- cloth (L.8-15), the price that is asked for another kind of *kutānum*-cloth is 100 minas of *Tuhpia* copper (L.22-25).

L.7, 20: *Amunani*, the person mentioned here also occurs in Kt. a/k 224, 8.

L.9: The word *erbum* is used nine times in the tablet. CAD gives

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2. We find in the texts different prices paid for the *kutānum*-cloth depending on the quality of it. See K.R. Veenhof, AOATT, p.82 ff.
  3. We read in one of the unpublished tablets (Kt n/k 520, 14-16) the sentence URUDU SIG<sub>5</sub> *Kaki ana Tuhpia ublakkum* "Kaki has brought to *Tuhpia* to you good quality copper".

under *irbu* one of its meanings in Old Assyrian language as “import duty”. K.R. Veenhof suggests that it is “gift” (T. Özgüç Festschrift, p.523); whereas K. Balkan claims that *erbum* is a gift brought to *rubā’um* or *rubā’tum* and it has nothing to do with any kind of trade duty (Kronoloji, p.37).

It is quite clear that *erbum* in the context in which it has been used here in this tablet has a different meaning than those that we have mentioned above. For it is the king not the merchant who is paying for the *erbum*. So it is not plausible to think that the king should pay to the merchant tax for the goods the latter has brought to him. It can not be considered to mean present either as long as it is paid for. It seems quite obvious that the king’s payment to the merchant is not due to his feeling of gratitude or kindness. Although he wants to pay 100 minas of *Tuhpia* copper for the *kutānum*-cloth *Išme-Aššur* has brought to him, the merchant refuses to accept that sum hopping more. So the king is obliged to pay 50 minas of *Tuhpia* copper, 30 minas of good quality copper and additional 2 jars of oil.

Taking into consideration the contexts in which the word *erbum* has been used and what has been said about it, we may say that *erbum* is a collective name for the goods that have been ordered by the palace, and their price has to be paid.

L. 18: The word *zi-qū-qā<sup>1</sup>-tim* which has not been found in Old Assyrian tablets until now is possibly the plural form of *ziqqu* “wine skin” (CAD *ziqqu* B).

## No.2

Excavation inv. no. Kt. n/k 388.

The main theme of the letter written by *Ah-šalim* addressing to four persons at the same time is probably the *erbum* taken to the king of *Tamnia* and the oath which the king says that he has received in *Karahna*. *Ah-šalim* is informing his colleagues of these topics. Also he tells them to send him a white dress and a piece of fine *kutānum*- cloth which the queen ordered..

Obv. 1.     um-ma Ah-ša-lim-ma a-na  
               Šu-Ištar Ū-šur-ša-Ištar I-dí-ku-bi<sub>4</sub>  
               ú <sup>4</sup>En-líl-ba-ni qí-bi<sub>4</sub>-ma  
               a-na ru-ba-im iš-tù sí-kà-tim

5. i-tù-a-ri-šu i-bá-tí-šu  
 am-hu-ur-šu-ma er-ba-am  
 a-ru-ba-im ú me-er-i-su Ta-am-ni-a-i-im  
 a-šf-i-ma um-ma šu-ut-ma  
 ma-mì-tám a-šu-mì-ku-nu-ma
10. a-Kà-ra-ah-na al-qí a-df-i  
 KÙ. BABBAR<sup>pi</sup>-ku-nu lá ha-lá-qí-im  
 i-ša-am-ší tup-pá-am  
 ú-lá-pf-ta-ku-nu-ni i-ša-nim  
 u<sub>4</sub>-mì-im ma-mì-tám
- Edge ša Kà-ra-ah-na  
 ú-bu-lu-[nim]-ma za- 𐎠ku-sá<sup>1</sup>
- Rev. i-qá-bi-a-[ma] a-ša-pá-ra-ku-nu-tí  
 ki-ma tup-pí-i kà-ru-um  
 iš-me-ú kà-ra-am mu-ùh-ra-ma
20. té-er-ta-áš-nu li-li-kam-ma  
 ma-lá KÙ. BABBAR<sup>pi</sup>-ku-nu  
 ša-lá-hi-im lc-pu-uš  
 a-wi-lúm a-na er-bi-im  
 i-da-gal 1 TÚG lu-bu-ša-am
25. pá-šf-a-am ù TÚG ku-ta-nam  
 qá-at-num ru-ba-tum  
 té-ri-ša-ni šé-bi<sub>4</sub>-lá-nim  
 šu-ma i-na Kà-ra-ah-na  
 gam-ra-am i-ga-mu-ru-ma
30. KÙ. BABBAR i-ša-lu-hu  
 té-er-ták-nu li-li-kam-ma

Edge a-na-kam er-ba-am a-na

a-wi-lim pá-i a-dá-an

5 ma-na AN.NA

Left E. a-na ba-lu-sí-im É kà-ri-im er-ša-ma

šé-bi<sub>4</sub>-lá-nim té-er-ták-nu sú<sup>1</sup>-ha-ra-am

is-té-en<sub>6</sub> lá ta -be-a-lá lu<sup>1</sup> x x x am<sup>1</sup>

2 ra-dí-ú ša Lu<sup>1</sup>-ha-i-im iš-tí-a wa-áš-bu

### Translation:

(1-3) "Thus (says) *Ah-šalim*: 'Speak to *Šu-Ištar*, *Ušur-ša-Ištar*, *Idī-Kūbi* (*m*) and *Enlil-bāni*: (4-8) I approached to the *rubā'um* in his region as he was returning from *sikkatum*, and I offered (brought) an *erbum* to the ruler of *Tamnia* and his son of *Tamnia*.' (8-11) He (the king) said thus: 'The oath on behalf of you, I delivered at *Karahna*, in order that your silver does not get lost'. (12-17) On the second day after you sent me the letter, they sent here (a copy)<sup>4</sup> of the oath (taken in) *Karahna* and they will bring, and I will write you exactly what he says to me. (18-20) As soon as the *kārum* has read my tablet, turn to the *kārum* and let their instructions come to me. (21-22) I will salvage yours silver as well as I can. (23-24) The gentleman (the king) waits for an *erbum*. (24-27) The queen has ordered me a white dress and a piece of *kutānum*-cloth; send (it) to me. (28-31) Let your report come to me (to tell me) whether they have to make expenses in *Karahna* for salvaging the silver. (32-33) Here I am going to promise the gentleman an *erbum*. (34-36) You must ask of the office of *kārum* 5 minas of tin for..... and send it to me. (36-37) As for (getting) your report (delivered), do not spare even one single servant (as messenger). (37-38) ..... Two guides from *Luhajum* are staying with me'.

### Notes:

L.1-2: Among the four people whom *Ah-šalim* addresses there is *Ušur-ša-Ištar*, who is known as a result of the studies on the tablets found at Kültepe (1962-Kt. n/k) to have had one of the biggest of the archives there.

The recent studies shows that a great part of the tablets found in 1958 (Kt. j/k) and in 1962 (Kt. n/k) belongs to the same archive. Among

4. The sentence, *amma mehrat mamūtim sa [ub]lūniatini* "Here is the copy they sent to us" (CCT IV 30 a, 8-9) clarifies the question of (the copy of) oath being sent.



these tablets there are many letters which *Ah-Šalim* had written to *Ušur-ša-Ištar*, his relations and friends. We learn from these letters that *Ah-Šalim* had close relations with the palace and he brought various dresses and pieces of cloth to the king and the queen<sup>5</sup>.

L. 4-5: The meaning of the sentences such as *ištu sikkatim tuāru* “to return from *sikkatum*” and *i/ina tuwār sikkatim* “on the return of *sikkatum*”, which we find in several texts, depends on question what the word *sikkatum* means.

CAD under *sikkatum* B after referring to the meaning of the word as uncertain, goes on to suggest that in meaning it may have something to do with military expedition or army<sup>6</sup>.

It will not be irrelevant to quote here some of the passages in which *sikkatum* is used before we go on to determine its possible meaning in Old Assyrian language.

CAD gives under *sikkatum* B the following quotations:

*ittuwār sikkatim weriam ana ša kīma kunūti ušāšqalma ..... tuwār sikkatim qurub* “On the return of *sikkatum*, I will pay the copper to your representatives and.... the return of the *sikkatum* is imminent” (Also this letter in TC 2, 37 has been written by *Ah-Šalim*).

*adi 2 [ūmī] sikkatum iturrānim atabbiamma atalkam* “the *sikkatums* will return in two days, immediately depart and come here.”

*warkišunuma sikkatum [ū]šī u mahīrum parrudma* “After their departure the *sikkatums* went out and bussiness was unsettled.”

5. The queen is said in the letter (L.24-27) to have ordered a white dress and pieces of fine *kutānum*-cloth for herself. There are some examples of similar expressions in *Ah-Šalim*'s other letters:

Kt. n/k 211, 24-26: He is reporting that the queen has requested for pieces of fine *kutānum*-cloth.

Kt. n/k 419, 20-21 (a letter he sends to *Ušur-ša-Ištar*): *lubūšam pašium šēbilam* “Send the white dress”.

Kt. n/k 533, 16-22: *šumma TUG.HI.A lu lubūšam pašium lu abarnūm SIG5-tim watrūtīm ša šarrūtīm išerunikkum diššim* “If it is convenient for you, give her (L. 11: *awiltum* probably the queen) the piece of cloth for the white dress and the very high quality *abarnūm*-cloth or royal quality.

Kt. j/k 197, 22-24 (a letter he sends to *Uzubiškim*): *annakam É.GAL-lūm ana subāti ušamūni* “Here the palace has warned me of the pieces of my cloth.

Kt. j/k 121, 18-21 (a letter to *Ušur-ša-Ištar* and *Uzubiškim*): *išteniš 10 TUG ša Akkadié 30 TUG kutāni SIG5 ša kuburri rubā'im šēbilānim* “send here the 10 pieces of Akkadian cloth together with 30 pieces of thick, good quality *kutānum*-cloth for the king.

6. Cf. K.R. Veenhof, AOAT, p.330, n.445; “T. Özgüç'e Armağan” (1989), p.521-522.

*ana sikkatim allak kuāum mēr'aka anāku ina šēpija allak.... ana sikkatim larkabma* "I am going to go to the *sikkatum*, I am your own son, shall I go on foot? Let me ride to the *sikkatum*."

2 *raqqitēn ana sikkatim arrubā'im u PN iddinū* "They gave two fine textiles to the *rubā'um* and to PN for the *sikkatum*."

*ina šamši rubā'um Wa-āš-ha-na-i-um ina sikkatim ituranni* "On the day when ruler of *Wašhania* returned from the *sikkatum*."

Examples from the unpublished texts:

Kt. n/k 128, 5: *sikkatum ruqāma* "*sikkatum* is far away"

Kt. v/k 57, 12-21: *mimma ana sikkatim tūšāni latbima lattallakma ....ūmam išti Salatuar ana sikkatim niṭiṣi.... ina tuār sikkatim awilī anahhidma* "When you depart for the *sikkatum*, let me (also) go (there) ...Today we left *Salatuar* for *sikkatum*.... On return from *sikkatum*, I shall take care of the men."

Kt. n/k 1689<sup>7</sup>, 5-16: *sikkātum ušāma ina mahirim KŪ.BABBAR ū KŪ.GI laššu... sikkatum ana 10 ūmī iturrānimma KŪ.GI āša'amma* "The *sikkātum* have gone by and there is not silver and gold in the market.... *sikkātum* will return about in ten days' time and I will buy gold."

Taking these examples into consideration, I am inclined to think that the word *sikkatum* is used to mean a kind of 'fair' which takes place in a certain time and ground and during which mainly various metals, apart from other things, are sold and bought. *rabi sikkātim/sikkītim* were the leaders of the *sikkātum* officers who were responsible for the organization and administration of it. The quotations from the related texts above and the context in which *sikkatum* is used show that the shortage or abundance of metals in the market and the success of the market in buying and selling are closely related to the question whether they (*sikkātum*) come to the fair or not.

L.9-16: The first thing in the letter that captures our attention is that *rubā'um* is said to have received an oath of loyalty in *Karahna* a center of *wabartum*.

The texts KTP 14 and Kt. f/k 183 are still the most important sources<sup>8</sup> to refer to in the matter of oath. They prove that the kings on

7. S. Çeçen, Doctorate Thesis, text no.50.

8. KTP 14, B has been published by B. Landsberger (TTAED 4, p.26 ff.); Kt. f/k 183 by K. Balkan (Kronoloji, p.36-38). Both texts have been fully discussed by L.L. Orlin (ACC p.114-123).

their accession to the thrones in Anatolia generally received from the Assyrian merchants or their representatives a kind of loyalty the details of which we do not know for certain.

L. 34-35: *AN-NA a-na ba-lu-sí-im*: I do not know how to explain this expression.

L. 38: *Lu-ha-i-im*: *Luhā*, the name of a place, does not occur in the form of *nisbe* in the texts. Some scholars take *Luhā*= *Eluhut*, the *nisbe* of which has not been found yet<sup>9</sup>.

CCT, 44<sup>c</sup> is an important source to localize *Luhā*. According to this text *Luhā* seems to be third station from *Abum* (Tel Leylan).

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9. See K.R. Veenhof, AOATT, p.242, n.375; cf. K. Nashef, RGTC IV, p.38-39.



