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 kārum) 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 kusītum, which he had received from Itūr-ilī, has entrusted to Amunani 80

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minas of good quality copper to give to Itur-illi (L. 3-7). He also seems to have paid to both Ennum-Aššur and Šu-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 Itur-illi 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-illi, 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 ruba’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 Tû-ûh -pl-a-ma
a-na l- "tur₄" -DINGIR qi-bi-ma
1 TUGE ku-ta-nam <ù> 1 TUGE ku-sf-tám
tû-šé <bi₃> -lam / šf-im-šu-nu
5.  
a-di-ni / lâ a-di-na-kum
80 ma-na URUDU SIG₃, šf-im
TUGE A-mu-na-ni na-āš-a-kum
1 TUGE ku-ta-nam En-um-A-šur
a-na er-bi₄-im i-šf-a-am
10.  
1 TUGE ku-ta-nam Šu-Lá-ba-an
a-na er-bi₄-im i-šf-a-am
50 ma-na URUDU SIG₃ a-na
En-um-A-šur a-di-in
50 ma-na URUDU SIG₃ a-na
15. Šu-Lá-ba-an a-df-in
   Edge a-ta er-ba-am tù-šé-bi₄-lam
   a-na er-bi₄-im ša tù-šé-bi-lá-ni

Rev. 2 zi-qṕ-qṕ!-tim ša DUG!
   ki-ra-na-am er-bi₄

20. A-mu-na-ni na-ás-a-kum
   Iš-ma-Ašur a-mu-tám ub-lam-ma
   1 TŪG ku-ta-nam er-ba-am
   i-šf-a-am / a-na er-bi₄-šu
   1 me-at <ma-na> URUDU ša Tù-ûh-pi-a

25. a-df-šu-um-ma / lá-qá-am
   lá i-mu-a-ma / Ŝu-Be-lám i-li-kam-ma
   e-zi-ib-šu-ma / Šu-Be-lám i-li-kam-ma
   50 ma-na URUDU sa Tù-ûh-pi-a
   30 ma-na URUDU SIG₅ <û> 2 kâ-ar-pá-tim

30. ša ša-am-ni-im a-df-šu-um
   ša er-bi₄-im ša Iš-ma-Ašur
   lu er-ba-am lu ša ha-bu-lá-ku-ni
   ša-bu-a-tf / mì-ma
   i-na É.GAL₃im lá ti-šu

Translation:

(1-2) “Thus (says) the rubâ'um of Tuhpia: “Speak to Itûr-ili: (3-5) You sent me a piece of kutânum-cloth (and) kusîtum-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-Ašur had brought me as erbum a piece of kutânum-cloth. (10-11) Šu-Lâban had brought me as erbum a piece of kutânum-cloth. (12-13) I gave 50 minas of good quality copper to Ennum-Ašur. (14-15) I gave 50 minas of good quality copper to Šu-Lâban. (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) İşme-ᾲşur brought me the *āmuṭum* 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) Sü-Bē lum came here and in return for İşme-ᾲşur'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 it's copper mines (K. Nashef, RGTC IV, p.122-123), is localized with general acceptance somewhere in between Boğazköy and Merzifon'.

Tuhpia in a letter of the karum Kaniş (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 İtūr-īlī the addressee in the rubāʿum'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 İtūr-īlī and the person called Šu-Lāban. In the course of the case Hanu speaks to Šu-Lāban thus:

(4)........ 40 TŪG ku-ta-nu (5) ša qā-tum 2 TŪG a-bar-ni-e ša a-bi₄-ni (6) a-na ru-ba-im Tū-uh-pi-a-i-im (7) a-di-na-kum

"I gave you 40 (pieces of) kutānum- cloth of the normal quality (and) 2 (pieces of) abarnūm-cloth which belonged to our father to deliver the Tuhpian rubāʿum."

It is easy to understand the pieces of cloth mentioned here belong to İtūr-īlī.

Also the letter written by İşme-ᾲşur to İtūr-īlī (TC I, 39) seems to be closely related to our subject under discussion. It reads thus:

(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 asī’um-metal to him. (11-13) He gave me back the asī’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 Tuhpia copper.”

It is quite obvious that Išme-Assšur 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-Assšur is a trustworthy representative of Itur-ili and he often brings from Itur-ili 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 kustium has been brought to the rubā’um and it is said that for two pieces of cloth one being kutānum and the other kustium 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 copper². So we understand that for a piece of kustium-cloth a sum of 30 minas of good quality copper has been paid.

L. 6 ff.: We understand that there was quite a big difference of quality between URUDU SIG₃ “good quality copper” and URUDU ša Tuhpia “Tuhpia copper”³ 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

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 SIG₃ Kaki ana Tuhpia ublakum “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. Özguç Festschrift. p.523); whereas K. Balkan claims that *erbum* is a gift brought to *rubāʿum* or *rubāʿatum* 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 *Tuḫpia* copper for the *ktānum*-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 *Tuḫpia* 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-qāšt-im* 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 *ktānum*-cloth which the queen ordered.

Obv. 1. um-ma Ah-ša-lim-ma a-na
Šu-Ištar Ú-šur-ša-Ištar I-dî-ku-bî₄
ú 𝗔ᠡn-Išl-ba-ni ql-bî₄-ma
a-na ru-ba-im iš-tû sf-kâ-tim
5. i-tù-a-ri-šu i-bá-tf-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-šš-i-ma um-ma šu-ut-ma
ma-mi-tám a-šu-mi-ku-nu-ma

10. a-Kà-ra-ah-na al-qí a-dí-i
KÜ. BABBAR₆₄-ku-nu lá ha-lá-qí-im
i-ša-am-ší tup-pá-am
ú-lá-pf-ta-ku-nu-ni i-ša-nim
u₄s-mi-im ma-mi-tám

Edge ša Kà-ra-ah-na
ú-bu-lu-[nim]-ma za- 'ku-sà'

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 KÜ.BABBAR₆₄₅-ku-nu
ša-lá-hi-im le-pu-uš
a-wi-lúm a-na er-bi-im
i-da-gal 1 TÜG lu-bu-ša-am

25. pá-ši-a-am ū TÜG ku-ta-nam
qá-at-num ru-ba-tum
té-ri-ša-ni šé-bi₃₅-lá-nim
šu-ma i-na Kà-ra-ah-na
gam-ra-am i-ga-mu-ru-ma

30. KÜ.BABBAR i-ša-lu-hu
té-er-ták-nu li-li-kam-ma
CAHİT GÜNBAWTI

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-bi₄₄-lá-nim té-er-ták-nu sú⁻¹-ha-ra-am
is-té-en₄ lá ta -be-a-lá luₓ x x am¹
2 ra-dí⁻ú ša Lu'₄⁻ha-i-im iš-tí-a wa⁻ás⁻bu

Translation:

(1-3) "Thus (says) Ah-šalim: ‘Speak to Šu-Ištar, Ušur-ša-Ištar, lđš-Kübi (m) and Enlil-bàni: (4-8) I approached to the rubā’um in his region as he was returning from sikkatóm, 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)⁴ 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 kutànum-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 mamātim sa [ub]lāniatini “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 Uṣur-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 queen⁵.

L. 4-5: The meaning of the sentences such as īštu sikkatim tuāru “to return from sikkatum” and īlina 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 army⁶.

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:

ittel sikkatim weriam ana s a kima kunuti ušašqalma ..... 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 [ūmīl] sikkatum iturrānim atabbiamma atalkam “the sikkatums will return in two days, immediately depart and come here.”

warkisunuma sikkatum [ālā] u mahīrum parrūdmani “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 kutânum-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 kutânum-cloth.

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

Kt. n/k 533, 16-22: šumma TŪG.HI.A lu lubūšam pašium lu abarnium SIG5-tum watrūtim ša šarrūtim išerunikkm 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 abarnium-cloth or royal quality.

Kt. j/k 197, 22-24 (a letter he sends to Uzubīškim): annakam E.GAL-tum ana šubāti ušamūntum “Here the palace has warned me of the pieces of my cloth.

Kt. j/k 121, 18-21 (a letter to Uṣur-ša-Ištar and Uzubīškim): īšteniš 10 TŪG ša Akkidiše 30 TŪG kutāni SIG5 ša kuburri rubā'im šeštium “send here the 10 pieces of Akkadian cloth together with 30 pieces of thick, good quality kutânum-cloth for the king.

ana sikkatim allak ku'um mēr'aka anāku ina šēpija allak..... ana sikkatim larkabna “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 ūsāni latbima latallakma ...

ina tuar sikkatim aw 'ili anahhidma “When you depart for the sikkatum, let me (also) go (there) ...

Today we left Šalatuar for sikkatum.... On return from sikkatum, I shall take care of the men.”

Kt. n/k 16897, 5-16: sikkānum usāma ina mahīrim KŪ.BABBAR u KŪ.GI laššu... sikkatum ana 10 ūnum iturrânnimmā KŪ.GI aša’amma “The sikkatum have gone by and there is not silver and gold in the market.... sikkānum will return about in ten days’ time and I will buy gold.”

Taking these examples into consideration, I am inclined to thinks 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/sikkātim were the leaders of the sikkānum 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 (sikkānum) 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 sources8 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. Örlin (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-sl-im: I do not know how to explain this expression.

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

CCT, 44c is an important source to localize Luḥā. According to this text Luḥā seems to be third station from Abum (Tel Leylan).

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