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SOME ASSYRIANS AT SIPPAR IN THE OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD

By CHRISTOPHER WALKER

The trade in tin, textiles, and silver between Ashur and its trading colony Kanesh is by now well known from the partly published archives from Kanesh. While the textiles involved were primarily produced in Ashur itself, a small proportion of them were imported from Babylonia, being described in the texts as "Akkadian textiles".¹ This link in the trading chain is still scarcely documented in the absence of the trading archives which must be presumed to have existed at Ashur, and probably at Sippar. The Babylonians themselves were actively involved in the trade, as is shown by the well-known but still inadequately published letter VAT 9249,² referring to the absence of the Akkadians and their textiles from Ashur because of a revolt in their country.

From its geographical position the city of Sippar must have occupied a focal position in trading relations between Babylonia and the kingdoms to the north and north-west. It naturally figures in the Old Babylonian itinerary from Larsa to Emar.³ Some years ago W. F. Leemans summarised the evidence for trading relations between Sippar and Assyria and the Middle Euphrates⁴ and for Sippar's involvement in the trade in tin in the reverse direction from Ashur to Babylonia.⁵ Some more recently published Old Babylonian letters add further hints of trading ventures from Sippar to the north and north-west.⁶

Conversely we may expect to find Assyrians involved in the trade with Babylonia, especially at Sippar,⁷ and there is a slight body of evidence for this. A few tablets with Old Assyrian features or script are known from Eshnunna (Tell Asmar)⁸ and Nippur.⁹ A tablet in Old Assyrian script and orthography recording a transaction at Ashur was found in excavations at Sippar (Tell ed Der), but was assumed by its editor, D. O. Edzard, to have come originally from Ashur.¹⁰ An Old Babylonian tablet from Sippar in Old Assyrian script has long been known but not recognized for what it is. BM 80271 (*CT* 6, 26a = Bu 91-5-9, 407), an Old Babylonian marriage contract, although undated certainly comes from Sippar and is datable to the earlier part of the First Dynasty of Babylon (Sumulael or Sabium) on account of its style and list of witnesses. The unmistakable Old Assyrian appearance of its script is obscured by Pinches's copy. It also has a notably

¹ M. T. Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-state and its colonies* (Copenhagen, 1976) 87 and 89; K. R. Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian trade and its terminology* (Leiden, 1972) 98-103 and 158-159.

² Larsen, op. cit. 87 n. 8; Veenhof, op. cit. 98.

³ A. Goetze, 'An Old Babylonian itinerary', *JCS* 7 (1953) 51-72; W. W. Hallo, "The road to Emar", *JCS* 18 (1964), 57-88.

⁴ W. F. Leemans, *Foreign trade in the Old Babylonian period* (Leiden, 1960) 98-110 (also p. 96-98, *CT* 6 19b).

⁵ W. F. Leemans, *JESHO* 11 (1968) 201-214.

⁶ F. R. Kraus, *AbB VII* (Leiden, 1977) nos. 1 (Halab), 11 and 15 (Ekallatum), 76 (Ashur), 145 (Emar). See also S. M. Dalley, *The Old Babylonian tablets from Tell Rimah* (London, 1976) no. 134 (Karana).

⁷ In this article I do not distinguish between Abu Habbah (Sippar proper) and Tell ed-Der (one of its suburbs).

⁸ I. J. Gelb, "A tablet of unusual type from Tell Asmar", *JNES* 1 (1942) 219-226.

⁹ Larsen, op. cit. 47 n. 76; V. Donbaz in *Florilegium Anatolicum* (E. Laroche Festschrift, Paris, 1979) 106. Ni 395 has now been published in transliteration by F. R. Kraus, *AbB V* (Leiden, 1972) no. 156. He comments on its possible origin in Ashur and its Old Assyrian form of address, with some reservations about its writing and grammar. *PBS* 1/2 1, which forms part of the same correspondence, also has an Old Assyrian form of address; its envelope, *PBS* 7 1, is sealed with a seal of peripheral Old Babylonian style (see *PBS* 7 pl. XCVII) in some respects comparable to seals on Old Assyrian tablets (e.g. *CC* VI pl. 54 no. 54), and its inscription dub PN *a-na* PN differs from the normal Old Babylonian envelope (only *a-na* PN), although *AbB* II 160, *a-na* PN dub PN, is comparable.

¹⁰ IM 49309: D. O. Edzard, *TIM* 7 (Wiesbaden, 1971) no. 190, and *Tell ed-Der* (Munich, 1970) 187-188 no. 190. See previously W. F. Leemans, *Foreign Trade* 101-102.

convex left edge. The man who is party to the contract as husband is named Sukalliya, a name also known from the Kanesh texts, but he is not necessarily an Assyrian since the name is known from other Sippar texts. At any rate the tablet indicates the temporary activity at Sippar of a scribe trained in an Old Assyrian school.

The Old Babylonian letter *CT* 29, 24¹¹ probably found at Sippar (Tell ed Der), is written by two Assyrians, Ashur-asû and Shâlim-pûti, to Warad-Sin. It includes an invocation to Ashur in the greetings formula and concerns letters brought or soon to be brought from “the city”, i.e. Ashur. The letter is evidently not written from Ashur itself, but may have come from elsewhere in Babylonia, being written in a good Babylonian ductus of about the time of Hammurabi or a little earlier. So also is the letter *PBS* 7, 49 which forms part of the same correspondence.¹²

Lu-Dingir-mah, the writer of the letters *AbB* I 105 and 130 to Amat-Shamash at Sippar, was assumed by Leemans¹³ to have been an Assyrian since the greeting in *AbB* I 130 invokes Shamash and Ashur. However apart from the fact that the name Lu-Dingir-mah is much more likely to belong to a Babylonian than to an Assyrian, the recent publication of further correspondence between Lu-Dingir-mah and Amat-Shamash¹⁴ shows him invoking Shamash and “your lord” or Shamash and Aya *kallatum*. So it is best not to draw conclusions from the invocation of Ashur.

Two Assyrians are known from published economic texts from Sippar: Ashur-emûqi, named in a ration-list¹⁵ of a time somewhat earlier than Hammurabi, and Ashur-iddinam, witness to two contracts¹⁶ in the reign of Sin-muballit.

The name Kanishitum (“the girl from Kanesh”) appears in two Sippar texts, *CT* 8, 32b, 2 (Samsuiluna year 21) and *CT* 2, 23, 23 (undated, but possibly also of the time of Samsuiluna); it is a slave-name.

Altogether more significant than these stray references is the occurrence of a number of Assyrian names in an Old Babylonian tablet listing in summary form several loans of silver. BM 97188 (1902–10–11, 242) comes from a large collection of tablets acquired by purchase.¹⁷ At least part of the collection supposedly comes from Sippar. This provenance cannot necessarily be presumed for this tablet, although at present there seems to be nothing against it; it will eventually be proved or disproved by study of the personal names. The tablet is written in a clear Babylonian script of about the time of Hammurabi, so perhaps contemporary with level Ib at Kultepe (Kanesh). The only date recorded, an Assyrian *limu*, Hâbil-kînu son of Šilli-Ishtar (lines 47–48), is new and cannot yet be placed in chronological sequence among the *limu*-names known so far.

The tablet lists fourteen separate loans, here identified for convenience as A–N. All the loans are of silver except for I (vegetables). In three cases (A, B, N) the borrower also receives a *tadmiqtum* (apparently a term for interest-free trading stock)¹⁸ in the form of additional silver, textiles or a slave-girl. Only two loans (A, C) refer to the purpose of the loan; in A it is for a trading partnership, in C for the payment of a ransom. In C the borrower receives an extra ten and a half shekels of silver for an unspecified purpose. Only four loans refer to the payment of interest (B, F, G, N). The statement of the receipt of the loan in

¹¹ BM 97050 = 1902–10–11, 104 = R. Frankena, *AbB* II (Leiden, 1966) no. 155.

¹² Kindly checked for me by Professor E. Leichty. Cf. W. F. Leemans, op. cit. 100–101.

¹³ *JESHO* 11 (1968) 179–180 and 199.

¹⁴ F. R. Kraus, *AbB* VII nos. 12–16.

¹⁵ D. O. Edzard, *Tell ed-Der* no. 152, 9.

¹⁶ *CT* 8, 1a, 22 and 4a, 23.

¹⁷ Some Old Babylonian letters from this collection are published in *CT* 29 and 33 (and R. Frankena, *AbB* II), numbered between 97031 and 97816.

¹⁸ For previous discussion of the term see F. R. Kraus, *Ein Edikt des Königs Ammīšaduqa* (Leiden, 1958) 63 n. 1, D. O. Edzard, *Tell ed-Der* 147, and K. R. Veenhof, op. cit. 111.

A-H takes the alternative forms PN šu ba-an-ti (= *imtaḥar*) or šu-ti-a (= *namḥarti*) PN;¹⁹ there is no apparent reason for this alternation. In I it takes the form ki PN. The remaining loans (J-N) give only the borrower's name; the fact that they are loans may be concluded from their association with the other loans on the tablet and from the fact that N has an abbreviated reference to the payment of interest.

Four of the loans (C, H, I, N) are made to people with Assyrian names (in N to an Assyrian and two Babylonians). Loan H is dated by an Assyrian *līmu*, and its silver is weighed by the weight-stone of the "city-house", an Assyrian term which taken with the *līmu*-dating indicates that the loan transaction took place in Ashur. The same may be true of loan M, undated and made to two Babylonians, but again involving silver weighed by the weight-stone of the "city-house". The references to trading partnership (A), *tadmīqtum* (A, B, N), and ransom (C: perhaps paid for a merchant distrained by a foreign administration)²⁰ are suggestions of foreign trade. On the other hand there is nothing in loans D, E, F, G, J, K, or L to indicate involvement in foreign trade, and one would not expect a musician (K) to be involved in trade; it may be significant that these loans are generally for smaller amounts than the other loans.

Loan A is issued via Warad-Sin, presumably an official of the institution, whether temple or palace, which makes all the following loans. It would be particularly interesting to know the identity of this institution which apparently has a well organized book-keeping system, is involved in financing foreign trade, making loans to Assyrians and perhaps even having a representative at Ashur. The palace would seem to be the most likely possibility. If the tablet is correctly dated by its script to approximately the time of Hammurabi, it is unfortunate that at present we know almost nothing of Assyria's trade at that period.²¹ The loan (I) of a large quantity of vegetables to an Assyrian, presumably for human consumption, hints at the presence of a large Assyrian family or possibly even a small trading colony at Sippar.

BM 97188 (1902-10-11, 242)

A [x ma.na kù.ba]bbar tab.ba
[x gín] kù.babbar
[ta-a]d-mi-iq-tum
ki ir-^dEN.ZU
5 dumu ì-lí-a.zu-ni
^{1d}nin.gal-e-ri-iš
dumu lugal-^dutu
šu ba.an.ti

B 1 ma.na kù.babbar ṣa-ar-pu
10 máš ^dutu ú-ṣa-ab
17 gín kù.babbar 3 tūg.ḫi.a
ta-ad-mi-iq-tum
¹ma-an-na-šu
dumu ka-lu-mi
15 šu ba.an.ti

¹⁹ On the alternative forms *ilteqe* and *melqet* see D. O. Edzard, op. cit. 29-30 and 149-150.

²⁰ Otherwise for the redemption of property or people held on mortgage or in debt slavery.

²¹ On the Level Ib colony at Kanesh see K. Balkan, *Observations on the chronological problems of the Kārum Kaniš* (Ankara, 1955) 41-43, L. L. Orlin, *Assyrian colonies in Cappadocia* (The Hague, 1970), and M. T. Larsen, op. cit. 52-53.



Fig. 1. BM 97188: obverse.

- C $\frac{1}{2}$ ma.na kù.babbar
 ¹*ip-te₄-er-šu*
 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ gín kù.babbar
 šu.ti.a
 20 ¹*a-šur¹-an.dùl-lí*
- D 6 gín kù.babbar *ša-ar-p[u]*
 ¹*ku-uš-ta-mar*
 dumu ^dEN.ZU-*iš-me-ni*
 ù lú-^dnin.šubur
 25 dumu *ma-an-na-ni*
 šu ba.an.ti.meš
- E $\frac{1}{2}$ ma.na 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ gín kù.babbar
 ¹*ig-mil^d-EN.ZU*
 dumu ^dutu-*ma-gi-ir*
 30 šu ba.an.ti
- F $\frac{1}{3}$ ma.[n]a kù.babbar *ša-ar-pu*
 maš ^dut[u] *ú-ša-ab*
 šu.ti.a
 ¹*dEN.ZU-e-ri-ba*
 35 dumu *ì-lí-a.zu-ni*
- G 5 gín kù.babbar *ša-ar-pu*
 máš ^dutu *ú-ša-ab*
 šu.ti.a
 ¹*ri-iš^d-iškur*
 40 ù ^dEN.ZU-*ì-qí-ša*
 dumu.meš ^dutu-*nu-úr-ma-tim*
- H 1 ma.na kù babbar *ša-ar-pu*
 na₄ é *a-lim*
 šu.ti.a ¹*ku-ra-ra*
 45 d[umu] *a-ia-a-ia* dumu *ku-ra-ra*
 iti *ab šar-ra-nim*
 li-mu ha-bil-ki-nu
 dumu *šil-lí-ištar*
- I 4 ṛgú¹ *ú dam-qú*
 50 ki *en-na^d-EN.ZU*
 dumu ^d*a-šur-mu-ša-lim*
- J 2 gín kù.babbar *ìl-a-ba₄-i-šu-[x]-ni*
 dumu ^d*akšak^{k1}-e-ri-ba*
- K 1 gín kù.babbar
 55 ¹*ib-b[i].^dnin-¹šubur¹ na-ru*
 dumu *ir-iš[tar]*

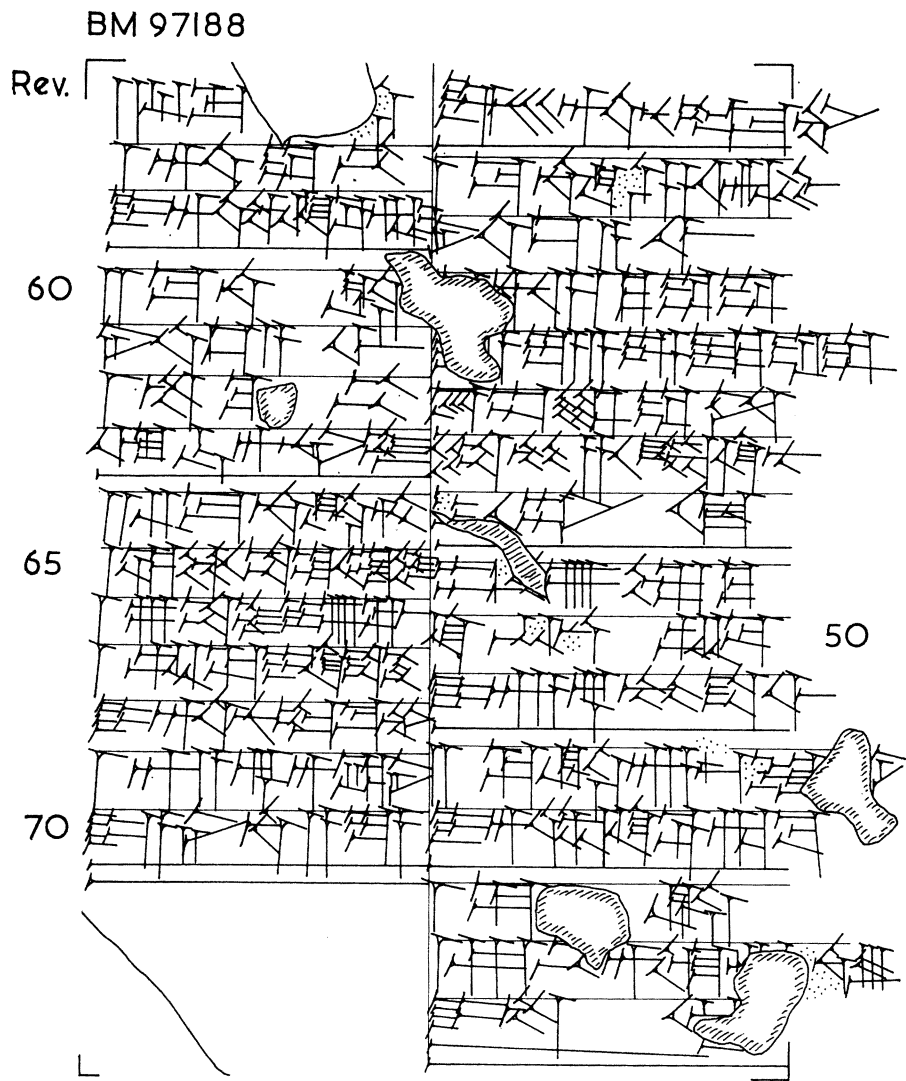


Fig. 2. BM 97188: reverse

L 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ gín [kù.babba]r
¹dutu-ra-bi
 dumu ¹akšak^{k1}-e-ri-ba

M 60 2 ma.na kù.babbar
 na₄ é a-lim
¹ir-ku-bi
 ù SIG-an-nu-ni-tum

N 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ ma.na kù.babbar máš
 65 1 sag gemé ta-ad-mi-iq-tum
¹ú-ta-tum dumu ú-zu-rum
¹dEN.ZU-i-qí-ša-am
 dumu ¹dutu-nu-úr-ma-tim
¹a-šur-an.dùl-lí
 70 dumu a-ni-na-a-ia

- A. [x minas(?) of silv]er (as) partnership capital (and) [x shekels(?)] of silver as *tadmiqtum*, via Warad-Sin son of Ili-asûni, Ningal-êriš son of Šarrum-Šamaš has received.
- B. 1 mina of refined silver—he shall pay interest (at the rate fixed by the temple of) Šamaš—(and) 17 shekels of silver (and) 3 textiles as *tadmiqtum* Mannašu son of Kalûmî has received.
- C. $\frac{1}{2}$ mina of silver (as) his ransom (and) 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ shekels of silver received by Aššur-šulûlî.
- D. 6 shekels of refined silver Luštamar son of Sin-išmêni and Awîl-Ilabrat son of Mannani have received.
- E. $\frac{1}{2}$ mina 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ shekels of silver Igmil-Sin son of Šamaš-māgir has received.
- F. $\frac{1}{3}$ mina of refined silver—he shall pay interest (at the rate fixed by the temple of) Šamaš—received by Sin-erîba son of Ili-asûni.
- G. 5 shekels of refined silver—he shall pay interest (at the rate fixed by the temple of) Šamaš—received by Riš-Adad and Sin-iqîša sons of Šamaš-nûr-mātim.
- H. 1 mina of refined silver by the weight-stone of the city-house received by Kurara son of Aya-aya son of Kurara.
- I. 4 talents of good quality vegetables with (i.e. loaned to) Enna-Sin son of Aššur-mušallim.
- J. 2 shekels of silver: Ilaba-išu . . . ni son of Akšak-erîba.
- K. 1 shekel of silver: Ibbi-Ilabrat the musician son of Warad-Ištar.
- L. 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ shekels of silver: Šamaš-rābi son of Akšak-erîba.
- M. 2 minas of silver by the weight-stone of the city-house: Warad-Kubi and Ipiq-Annunîtum.
- N. 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ minas of silver (bearing) interest, (and) one slave-girl as *tadmiqtum*: Utatum son of Ušurum, Sin-iqîšam son of Šamaš-nûr-mātim, (and) Aššur-šulûlî son of Anināya.

Notes

17. *ip-te₄-er-šu*: *iptîrû* is recorded as plurale tantum in *CAD*, but singular forms occur in *ARM* 7, 117, 7 and *JCS* 9, 99: 88, 2 (*AHw* 385) as well as here.
20. Aššur-šulûlî also appears in loan N (line 69). The writing of this and other Assyrian names follows Babylonian orthography. The common Assyrian writings are *a-šur-dûl* and *a-šur-šû-lu-lî*: see H. Hirsch, *Untersuchungen zu altassyrischen Religion* (Graz, 1961) 11.
40. Sin-iqîša son of Šamaš-nûr-mātim also appears in loan N (lines 67–68).
43. na₄ é a-lim: the whole expression was previously known only from Middle Assyrian texts. Old Assyrian texts normally write é a-lim^{k1}.

- 44–45. An unusual case of papponymy. The name Kurara is known from Old Assyrian texts. The name *a-ia-a-ia* is not yet attested elsewhere.
46. *iti ab šar-ra-nim*: in Old Assyrian texts generally written *áb ša-ra-ni*; for variants *áb šar-ra-nim* and *ab ša-ra-ni* see CAD A¹ 2a. The month name is used at Kanesh, but not at Mari, Rimah or Chagar Bazar.
47. *ḥa-bil-ki-nu*: the name is known from Old Babylonian but not Old Assyrian texts.
48. *šil-li-ištar*: normally written *ší-li-ištar* in Old Assyrian texts, but see CCT 6, 8d, 16. The name is common in Babylonia.
49. 4 talents is approximately 115 kg.
50. *ki*: from the apperance of this entry among a list of loans it may be presumed that the vegetables are with (i.e. loaned to) Enna-Sin rather than received from him.
en-na-^dEN.ZU: normally written *e(n)-na-sú-in* in Old Assyrian texts and *en-nam*-^dEN.ZU in Old Babylonian texts.
51. ^d*a-šur-mu-ša-lim*: according to Hirsch, *Untersuchungen*, 9, in Old Assyrian texts the name is only attested in H. Otten, *KBo* 9 no. 20, 8 (from Boghazkoi) written *a-šur-mu-ša-lim*. That tablet would be contemporary with Kultepe Ib.
52. For the reading *il-a-ba*₄ see J. J. M. Roberts, *The earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore, 1972) 34 and 96 n. 236.
64. *máš*: presumably an abbreviation of *máš* ^dutu *ú-ša-ab* as in lines 10, 32 and 37.
- 67–69. Sin-iqīšam son of Šamaš-nūr-mātim and Aššur-šulūli appear in loans G and C above (lines 40–41 and 20).
70. *a-ni-na-a-ia*: normally written *a-ni-na(-a)* in Old Assyrian texts.