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CÉCILE MICHEL

The Alāhum and Aššur-taklāku archives found in 1993 at Kültepe Kaniš

Abstract

Based on a concise description of the commercial life of the Old Assyrian merchants and their centre, the “House of the *kārum*” (*bēt Kārim*) in Kaneš, it is suggested that the merchants must have been able to perform a considerable degree of mathematical calculating. A brief sketch of the process of attending a scribal school in Ancient Mesopotamia and the existence and nature of school tablets is followed by a broader look at the corresponding Old Assyrian material (school texts, literature, etc). Texts that are obviously calculating exercises are studied in detail, and the question of the existence of a calculating machine is raised.

Kültepe is one of the most productive sites of the ancient Near East, with a total of 22,460 tablets discovered, mainly in the *kārum* area.¹ Since the beginning of official excavations at Kültepe in 1948, under the direction of T. Özgüç, assisted by K. Emre – undertaken since 2006 by F. Kulakoğlu –, almost 17,700 tablets have been found. Their publication started in the 1990s. The Ankara University colleagues published four volumes in the *AKT* collection, editing a group of 326 tablets;² the last two contain some of the texts found respectively in 1970 (Kt v/k) and 1963 (Kt o/k). Since the end of the 1980s, a few foreign researchers have been invited to undertake the publication of several Kültepe archives. Karl Hecker was the first to work in the Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, and deciphered 850 tablets discovered during three excavation years: 1959 (Kt k/k), 1961 (Kt m/k) and 1987. He was followed by Klaas Veenhof, who deciphered about 660 tablets found in 1986, 1991 and 1992 (first part), those of the last two years concerning the merchant Elamma and the messenger Kuliya. Mogens Larsen is in charge of Šalim-Aššur’s family archives, which contain about 950 tablets discovered in 1994,³ and Jan Gerrit Dercksen is studying the first 870 tablets found in 1950 (Kt c/k) and belonging to Alāhum. Since 1991, I have deciphered 1,170 tablets found during the excavation years 1951 (Kt d/k), 1975, 1993 and at the beginning of

¹ For the Old Assyrian sources, see C. Michel, *OAAS* 1 and the supplement, C. Michel, *OAB* 1. I address my warmest thanks to Benjamin Foster for correcting the English text.

² *AKT* 1 was published by E. Bilgiç, H. Sever, C. Günbattı, S. Bayram, see *OAAS* 1, 38–40, 60–66, 97, 116, *AKT* 2 by E. Bilgiç, S. Bayram, see *OAAS* 1, 83–87, *AKT* 3 by E. Bilgiç, C. Günbattı, see *OAAS* 1, 93–97 and *AKT* 4 by İ. Albayrak, *OAB* 1, 440–441.

³ See Larsen (in press).

1994, and together with Paul Garelli 240 tablets found in Šumī-abiya's house excavated in 1990, which we published as *TPAK 1* in 1997. All these archives, and several others studied by Turkish colleagues, are currently being prepared for publication. Beside the five volumes of Kültepe tablets housed in Ankara, many texts have also been published in numerous articles scattered in journals and books.⁴ In all, among the 17,700 tablets excavated since 1948, only 1,000 have been published, but about 8,000 more tablets have been deciphered.

Twenty years ago, working on Innaya archives, mostly excavated before 1948, I had to carry out a very tedious task of reconstructing private archives scattered among many different collections of texts preserved in occidental museums and collections.⁵ Today, thanks to the directors of Kültepe excavations, Old Assyrian specialists have the unique opportunity to work on intact archives. It is a great pleasure to offer to Karl Hecker, a hospitable friend who has generously shared his unpublished transcriptions with his colleagues, a first presentation of the large archive discovered during the 1993 excavations at the *kārum* Kaniš.

1. The 1993 archives

1.1. The archaeological data

The 1993 season at Kültepe was very rich in epigraphical discoveries. In fact, archaeologists unearthed 891 tablets, envelopes and fragments⁶, and 37 bullae published in 2001 by N. Özgüç and Ö. Tunca.⁷ Hence, this campaign is one of the most productive since the beginning of the excavations.⁸

According to the data given by T. Özgüç,⁹ the tablets discovered during the 1993 season belong mainly to three different groups, the last one comprising only twenty documents. The main archaeological groups, almost equal in number of documents, were found inside two neighbouring houses, badly destroyed, located in grid LVII/127 and LVIII/127–128.¹⁰ The new director of the excavations, F. Kulakoğlu, produced a map of the area and gave more details about the location of each group of tablets.¹¹

⁴ These tablets amount to about 430 documents published till 2006.

⁵ *Innaya* published in 1991.

⁶ This number, given by the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, does not correspond to the total published in *OAAS* 1, 111, because fragments of the same documents have been given two numbers. Since the publication of *OAAS* 1 in 2003, I have made more joins (see below).

⁷ See *KK Bullae*, 229–238, 342–345.

⁸ The Kültepe excavations years which yielded the biggest lots of tablets are 1962 (Kt n/k: 2158), 1950 (Kt c/k: 1608), 1994 (1532), 1948 (Kt a/k: 1497), 1988 (995), 1993 (891), 1992 (863), 1949 (Kt b/k: 839), 1958 (Kt j/k: 764), 1987 (542) ...

⁹ Personal communication, given during my stay in Ankara in May 1996 and 1997. I would like to address my warmest thanks to the Director of the Museum, the members of the tablet seksyonu and all the museum staff for their welcome each year.

¹⁰ According to T. Özgüç, the two groups of documents were both found in two sub-groups as follows: house 1: Kt 93/k 50 to 170 and Kt 93/k 171 to 420; house 2: Kt 93/k 421 to 608 and Kt 93/k 609 to 954. The tablets numbered Kt 93/k 955 to 974 have no links with the main archive of 1993.

¹¹ Personal communication, given during my stay in Ankara in May 2007. I wish to thank both directors of Kültepe excavations, and K. Emre, for their kindness and for the archaeological information about the tablets' findspots.



Plan of the area excavated during the 1993 season.

To the second main group of documents discovered in the second house one must add 61 texts unearthed in grid LVIII/128 during the 1994 excavations and belonging to the same archive.¹² Thus, according to the texts' inventory numbers, 868 documents were found in the two houses excavated in 1993,¹³ plus 61 texts discovered in 1994 to be added to the second house; for a total of 929 documents.

1.2. *Joining fragments, bringing together tablets and envelopes*

The 1993 archives consist of very well-preserved texts and of small fragments of tablets and envelopes. A dozen joins could be made, half of them reuniting two pieces of a tablet, the other half two pieces of an envelope.¹⁴ The envelope fragments are, for the most part, not inscribed; but they present broken impressions of cylinder seals. In some instances, the interior of an envelope shows traces of signs from a tablet. During the past years, I have made impressions or digital photos of the inside of these envelopes in order to find the corresponding tablet; this method was quite successful since, thusfar, nineteen tablets have recovered pieces of their original envelopes:¹⁵

¹² According to F. Kulakoğlu, house 1 contained a first group of texts, Kt 93/k 50–142, found in LVIII/126–127, a second group, Kt 93/k 143–170, found in LVII/127, south of a street paved with stones, and a third group, Kt 93/k 171–420 in the same area. House 2, excavated also in 1993, contained group A, Kt 93/k 421–616, found in LVIII/127–128, and group B, Kt 93/k 617–954; tablets Kt 93/k 971–974 come from a last clearing of the area. A last group of documents (C) excavated in 1994, Kt 94/k 185–245, belong to the same house. I could decipher these texts in May 2007. The tablets numbered Kt 93/k 955 to 970 were found clearing nearby areas in LV/125 and LVII/126.

¹³ Some fragments of different tablets were numbered together.

¹⁴ The following fragments have been joined; tablets: Kt 93/k 346 + 353, 386 + 387, 534 + 536, 573 + 578, 584 + 597, 786 + 909; envelopes: Kt 93/k 114 + 116, 120 + 831, 134 + 216, 136 + 220, 372 + 380, 376 + 381, 824 + 828.

¹⁵ This work is still in progress.



Join of a tablet (Kt 93/k 232) and two pieces of its envelope (Kt 93(k 136 + 220))

tablet	corresponding envelope	tablet	corresponding envelope
93/k 55 (2 nd page)	93/k 120 + 831	93/k 335	93/k 559
93/k 62	93/k 108	93/k 673	93/k 852
93/k 76	93/k 111	93/k 674	93/k 870
93/k 92	93/k 101	93/k 694	93/k 839
93/k 94	93/k 102	93/k 697	93/k 827
93/k 201	93/k 376 + 381	93/k 716	93/k 836
93/k 232	93/k 136 + 220	93/k 886	93/k 857
93/k 238	93/k 229	93/k 753	94/k 222
93/k 239	93/k 217	93/k 730	94/k 226
93/k 251	93/k 134 + 216		

The last two connexions reported in the table are of great importance, since they confirm that the 60 documents found in 1994 in grid LVIII/128 belong to the same archive as the texts discovered during the 1993 season in house 2.

1.3. Types of documents

According to the number of actual documents, 926 pieces and fragments were found in the two houses dug in 1993, among them 177 envelopes.

Letters are the most numerous: 377 letters and letters envelopes. The legal documents consist mainly of 101 loan contracts written down for the creditor. These documents are usually dated. There are also 82 contracts. The legal proceedings represent 62 documents.

The third category of texts includes 137 anonymous personal accounts, often written by the owner of the archives.

Finally, there are 48 fragments of tablets and 119 fragments of envelopes that have not been identified.

These data are presented in the table below:

Type of text	Tab.	Env.	total	% of total
Letters	329	48	377	40
Loan contracts	98	3	101	11
Contracts	78	4	82	9
Legal proceedings	59	3	62	7
Personal accounts	137	–	137	15
Not identified doc.	48	119	167	18

The frequency of the different text types varies according to the archaeological groups of documents. The first house contains a majority of letters and a strong proportion of envelopes. The first group of tablets discovered in the second house has a lot of loan contracts, while the second group of documents from the same house has many more of the other contracts. The personal memoranda form the great majority of the tablets numbered between 610 and 650, and finally, the last group of twenty documents comprises mostly fragments of envelopes.

	House 1		House 2	
Letters	151	: 43.5%	178	: 30.5%
Loan contracts	29	: 8.5%	69	: 12%
Contracts	20	: 6%	58	: 10%
Legal proceedings	21	: 6%	38	: 6.5%
Personal accounts	35	: 10%	102	: 18%
Unidentified doc.	8	: 2%	40	: 7%
Envelopes (total amount)	84	: 24%	93	: 16%

These observations invite consideration of a typology of the tablets according to the houses they were found in. The inscriptions on the *bullæ* – 20 pieces found in house 1 and 17 pieces in house 2 – do not help much in this respect, because the texts they bear are mostly brief, and there are no obvious links between the texts of *bullæ* and tablets found in 1993, with a few exceptions.¹⁶ Nevertheless, some of these *bullæ*, according to their inscription, must have been used to label tablet containers; others were applied to doors or packages of merchandise.¹⁷ Anyway, it seems quite clear that the tablets were ordered not only by their type but also by the affair at issue.

2. The owners of the archives

Whatever way they are classified, the main links among all these tablets are their owners. We may posit that groups of tablets found together may have belonged to the same merchant. Among the numerous recipients of the letters discovered during the 1993 ex-

¹⁶ The *bullæ* Kt 93/k 271 mentions a message from Hinnāya dealing with the donkey of Elamma and Laqēpum; this recalls the letter Kt 93/k 331 sent to both and mentioning a donkey, or the letter Kt 93/k 299 written by Hinnāya and dealing with mules.

¹⁷ For the use of the *bullæ* at Kültepe and Acemhöyük, see Veenhof (1993).

cavations in the *kārum* Kaniš, three merchants are often mentioned: Alāhum, Aššur-taklāku and Iddin-Sîn, and also a woman called Tariša.

2.1. Iddin-Sîn

Iddin-Sîn is the recipient of 40 letters, among which 10 are preserved only by a fragment of their envelopes; he is the sender of only 3. The great majority of the letters sent to Iddin-Sîn were discovered in the first group of tablets found in the first house.¹⁸ He might therefore have been an inhabitant of this house where he left his correspondence. None of his loan contracts has been found, and only two lawsuits pertain to him.¹⁹ The many fragments of letter envelopes sent to Iddin-Sîn give his patronymic: Aššur-nimri.²⁰ But one of these envelopes mentions the name of Iddin-Sîn, son of Kukkulānum, as a recipient. We must also note that the very few letters sent by Iddin-Sîn do not seem to belong to the same person but to another of the same name, perhaps of the same family.

According to the letters he receives, Iddin-Sîn lives in Kaniš, but also travels to places east of Kaniš, such as Luhusaddiya and Šamuha.²¹ He is involved in the wool and *pirikan-num* textiles trade inside Anatolia.

2.2. Alāhum

Alāhum is the recipient of 31 letters and the author of 17 others, one known only by its envelope.²² He is also the owner of 11 loan contracts and he is involved in several lawsuits and other juridical documents. His archives are present in the two houses excavated in 1993. According to two letter headings, Alāhum is the son of Iddin-Sîn.²³ The existence of few letters sent by Alāhum may be explained by the fact that these messages could have been sent during his travels to members of his family living in the houses excavated in 1993. In fact, he wrote more than 10 letters to his son Aššur-taklāku from another place in Anatolia. Several tablets mention the house of Alāhum in Burušhattum, and he also might have a house in Aššur, where he borrowed big amounts of silver. The 1993 archives contain 11 loan contracts in which Alāhum appears as creditor; these documents were preserved in both houses. A dozen of legal procedures and judgments mention Alāhum's name. The total number of texts belonging to Alāhum in the houses excavated in 1993 is not so substantial: this may be explained by the distribution of his archives in different houses in Burušhattum and Aššur.

¹⁸ The great majority of the letters sent to Iddin-Sîn are numbered Kt 93/k 50 to 253; three others are Kt 93/k 709, 769 and 833.

¹⁹ Kt 93/k 334 and 706.

²⁰ Iddin-Sîn, son of Aššur-nimri: Kt 93/k 98, 101, 102, 105, 114, 116, 120, 134, 139 et 142. Iddin-Sîn, son of Kukkulānum: Kt 93/k 108, 3; and there is also an Iddin-Sîn, son of Ikūnum: Kt 93/k 156, 4'.

²¹ Michel (in press).

²² Kt 93/k 144.

²³ Kt 93/k 144 and 196. Alāhum, son of Iddin-Sîn, occurs also in the following documents: Kt 93/k, 71, 201 and 306. A homonym, Alāhum, son of Inah-ilī, appears several times in the corpus (Kt 93/k 128, 5 or 305, 15).

According to his letters, Alāhum spent some time in Kaniš and Aššur and also somewhere else in Anatolia, certainly Buruṣhattum; some of the letters addressed to Alāhum in Aššur were found in Kaniš. When Alāhum was in Aššur, he organized shipments of merchandise, tin and textiles, some belonging to his daughter Tariša. When he was staying in Kaniš, Alāhum received consignments of merchandise from Aššur, some containing important quantities of lapis-lazuli.²⁴ When Alāhum died, he left an enormous number of debts to his children.

2.3. *Aššur-taklāku*

The most frequent correspondent in the 1993 letters is Aššur-taklāku: he is the author of 70 letters and the recipient of 70 others. He sent a lot of letters to members of his family living in the second house.²⁵ Since Aššur-taklāku sent as many letters as he received, one must suppose that he travelled a lot, stayed for long periods away from his home, or that all the letters written by him were concentrated in a short interval of time.

The numerous loan contracts where Aššur-taklāku appears as creditor are the best proof that the 1993 archives belong to him. In fact, he is the creditor of 48 loan contracts, which were mainly found in the second house. Finally, about 30 juridical documents witness his lawsuits and disputes with other merchants.

According to several envelope fragments belonging to his correspondence or his loans, Aššur-taklāku is the son of Alāhum.²⁶ The seal of Aššur-taklāku, son of Alāhum, is already well known and can be identified on some of his envelopes.²⁷

Aššur-taklāku is married to Lušitiya, according to a letter sent by Išūhum, a link confirmed by an unpublished tablet discovered in 1994.²⁸ But according to another document, she seems to be designated as the wife of Hanunu, the scribe.²⁹ Either this is an error, or she was married twice. Lušitiya received seven of the letters discovered in 1993, most of them written by Šū-Išhara, Išūhum or Aššur-taklāku. She was responsible for the archives there and had to take out a tablet or keep some documents for her correspondents.

Aššur-taklāku was involved in the textile trade and many documents refer to his dealings with the Anatolian authorities of Tamniya.

²⁴ Kt 93/k 474 and 594.

²⁵ According to the archaeological data, Aššur-taklāku is the recipient of 36 letters and the author of 16 others discovered inside house 1; he is as well recipient of 34 letters found in house 2 but he sent to people living there 54 letters.

²⁶ See the letters Kt 93/k 822, 839, 852, 863 and 866, the loan contracts Kt 93/k 458, 466 and 750, and other texts: Kt 93/k 152, 156, 215, 289 and 432. The corpus of tablets unearthed in 1993 mentions also an Aššur-taklāku, son of Šū-Kūbum, Kt 93/k 146, 25, 294, 9 or 298, 9.

²⁷ B. Tessier, *Sealing*, seal n° 347 and the texts CT MMA 1, 93 a, b (seal 57,4) and ATHE 24a, b (ATHE 25F). The seal bears the following inscription: *A-šūr-ták-lá-ku*, DUMU *hi-im:A-lá*.

²⁸ See Kt 93/k 691. This is confirmed by Kt 94/k 464 (courtesy M. Larsen) where Lušitiya, wife of Aššur-taklāku, is a witness, ll. 12–14.

²⁹ See Kt 93/k 673 and the envelope Kt 93/k 852.

2.4. *Tariša*

Tariša is the recipient of 26 letters found in 1993, and the sender of 7 letters. The letter Kt 93/k 143 gives her patronymic: she is the daughter of Alāhum and thus the sister of Aššur-taklāku. Almost all of the letters received by this lady have been written by her brother,³⁰ and most of them were found in the first group of tablets from the second house; thus she lived there, perhaps with other members of her family. Previously, according to many letters, she stayed a while in Aššur, whence she sent textiles to Anatolia and also wrote to her brother.

Most of the letters of Tariša belong to correspondence exchanged between the brother and the sister and many deal with the affairs following their father's death. In fact, when Alāhum died, he was indebted to the Town Hall and to several colleagues. According to the letter 301, the debts left by Alāhum amounted to 2 talents 30 minas of silver, thus about 75 kilos.

3. The archives of several family members

The majority of the loan contracts and the letters discovered in the two houses excavated in 1993 belong to the archives of different members of one family, of which we already mentioned the grandfather, Iddin-Sîn, the father, Alāhum, and two children, Aššur-taklāku and Tariša.

3.1. *Other members of Aššur-taklāku's family mentioned in the 1993 tablets*

Other individuals mentioned in this corpus also belong to Aššur-taklāku's family. Thus, a sister of Iddin-Sîn, the grandfather, bears the name Lamassātum; she writes three times to her brother and accuses him of neglecting his house.³¹ She sends one of her letters with a young lady called Šāt-Adad. According to the restorations we can make to this text, Šāt-Adad is either the daughter of Iddin-Sîn, or his niece.³²

A legal text mentions someone called Aššur-malik, son of Iddin-Sîn, but his father may also be another person of the same name.³³

A judgment rendered by the *kārum* of Kaniš deals with the impending marriage of Ištitiš, the daughter of Alāhum and thus sister of Aššur-taklāku, either with Aššur-malik, son of Anīnum, or, if he does not come, with an Anatolian called Tišpišu.³⁴

According to a letter mentioning the last will of Alāhum, it seems that Tariša and Aššur-taklāku had a brother, a nephew, and a niece (Kt 93/k 326). The brother could be Aššur-tāb,

³⁰ 23 of the 25 letters sent to Tariša were written by Aššur-taklāku.

³¹ Lamassātum is the sister of Iddin-Sîn according to Kt 93/k 142, 5. See also the letters Kt 93/k 241 and 248.

³² Kt 93/k 142, 5: (Iddin-Sîn, son of Aššur-nimri, seal of Lamassātum, his sister, and of) *Ša-at-^dIM me-er-ti-[ša/u]*.

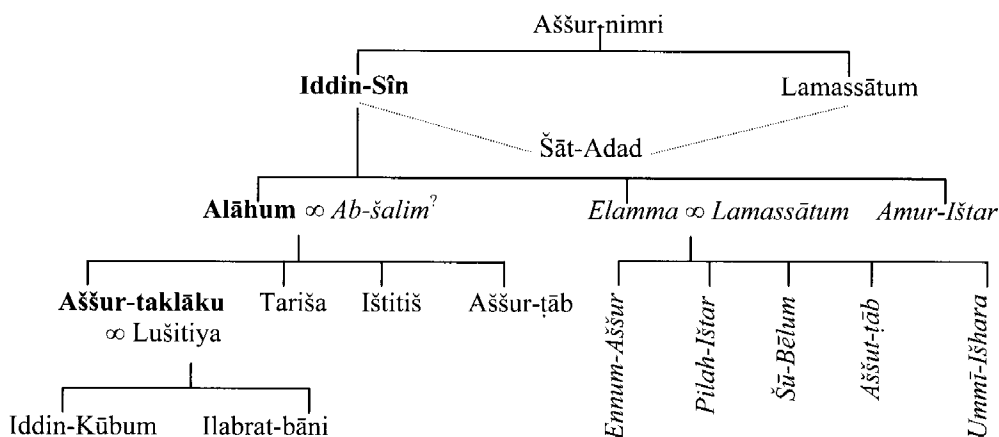
³³ Kt 93/k 894, 1.

³⁴ Kt 93/k 286, 14–15: *Iš-ti-ti-iš, DUMU.MUNUS A-lá-hi-im*.

mentioned several times and known from other documents as being a son of Alāhum³⁵ but it would more likely be Iddin-Sîn, who, following tradition, would then bear the same name as his grandfather.

The archives discovered in 1993 mention as well several children of Aššur-taklāku: Iddin-Kūbum, Ilabrat-bāni and Puzur-Ištar, but it is yet too early to know if they are really grandsons of Alāhum.³⁶

While I was working in Ankara in May 2006 on the 1993 tablets, Klaas Veenhof was studying the 1991 tablets belonging to Elamma's family; exchanging our data we discovered that Alāhum and Elamma were brothers. Thus the family tree of Aššur-taklāku may be completed with the information given by the 1991 archives (in italics).³⁷



3.2. The composition of a family archive

If we do not have too many homonyms, the 1993 archives deal with three, even four (with Aššur-taklāku's children) generations of a merchant's family, which inhabited two neighbouring houses. Naturally, we do not have the complete archives of this family over three generations, but it is quite interesting to examine the texts which were preserved in these houses and the texts that we expect but are lacking.

³⁵ Aššur-ṭāb, son of Alāhum, CCT 2, 9:28; KUG 49:9; TC 2, 13:16; Kt a/k 410:9; Kt c/k 512:1; kt 91/k 292:3; kt 91/k 305:4, 11.

³⁶ For Iddin-Kūbum, see Kt 93/k 231, 5, 8; for Ilabrat-bāni, see Kt 93/k 231, 2–3 and 245, 8'; for Puzur-Ištar, see Kt 93/k 188, 22.

³⁷ Elamma, son of Iddin-Sîn: Kt 91/k 285, 1, 5; Kt 91/k 396, 3; Kt 91/k 488a, 3, 4. Elamma, husband of Lamassātum: Kt 91/k 421, 27; Kt 91/k 438, 5, 11; Kt 91/k 362, 27. Elamma, father of Ennum-Aššur: Kt 91/k 288; Kt 91/k 368, 7, 12; Kt 91/k 389, 4; Kt 91/k 438, 13; Kt 91/k 503, 3; father of Pīlah-Ištar: Kt 91/k 370; Kt 91/k 503, 15; father of Šū-Bēlum: Kt 91/k 420, 15; father of Aššur-ṭāb: Kt 91/k 305, 3, 8, 26; father of Ummī-Išhara, the priestess: Kt 91/k 377, 9. All these data were communicated by Klaas Veenhof whom I thank warmly.

3.2.1. The documents recovered: the case of the envelopes of the Iddin-Sîn letters

The archives of the successive owners of the two houses might have been arranged in different containers, the one of the ancestors separated from the one of the active inhabitants. Thus, the documents belonging to Iddin-Sîn and preserved after his death were arranged in the first house, separated from the other documents. They contain mostly his correspondence and a very few legal texts mentioning action in the court of law. The absence of loan contracts in favour of Iddin-Sîn means that either they all have been repaid and the tablets cancelled, or that new tablets concerning the unpaid debts have been written in favour of his sons. It is interesting to note that the second group of tablets discovered in the first house does not include a single letter addressed to Iddin-Sîn. Moreover, the fact that more than a third of the letters addressed to Iddin-Sîn are known only by their envelopes, preserved together,³⁸ implies that these letters arrived at Kaniš when their owner was away or already dead;³⁹ they have been kept together in the same container and their envelopes broken when the building collapsed.⁴⁰ The other envelopes discovered more dispersed in the different groups of tablets belong for the majority to Aššur-taklāku.⁴¹ As with his grandfather, it is possible that he received his messages while he was away, travelling, or in jail, detained as hostage by the Anatolian authorities.⁴²

3.2.2. The lacking documents: part of Alāhum's archives

Alāhum, who lived there after his father, at least for a while, has, however, fewer letters. He had another house somewhere else in Anatolia and lived there; several documents mention his house in Buruṣhattum,⁴³ and we know that he also had archives there.⁴⁴ It is even possible that Alāhum died in Buruṣhattum, it seems that business stopped for a while.⁴⁵ Thus we have only part of his archives.

Aššur-taklāku went himself several times to Buruṣhattum; there he had to receive the amount of a loan,⁴⁶ and met his representatives.⁴⁷

3.3. *The main and last owner of the archives*

Aššur-taklāku is the main and last owner of the archives discovered in 1993 at Kültepe: thus most of the letters, loan contracts and legal texts belong to him. When the houses were

³⁸ The 15 letters envelopes sent to Iddin-Sîn are numbered between Kt 93/k 98 to Kt 93/k 142.

³⁹ Envelopes Kt 93/k 98, 101, 102, 105, 108, 110, 114, 116, 120, 121, 126, 134, 139 and 142.

⁴⁰ The envelopes 108, 111, 101 and 102 correspond respectively to the letters 62, 76, 92 and 94 sent to Iddin-Sîn and were found together. The letters 238 and 239, also sent to Iddin-Sîn, and their respective envelopes 229 and 217, were discovered together inside the second group of texts from house 1. But the letter 251 and its envelope 134 were unearthed in the two distinct groups from house 1.

⁴¹ Envelopes Kt 93/k 369, 374, 380, 822, 839, 849, (852, 863) and 866.

⁴² See Michel – Garelli (1996), Günbattı (2001) and Michel (1998), 327.

⁴³ Kt 93/k 636 et 896.

⁴⁴ Kt 93/k 429.

⁴⁵ Kt 93/k 692. There are several texts dealing with the death of Alāhum, among them Kt 93/k 540 and 544.

⁴⁶ Kt 93/k 750.

⁴⁷ Kt 93/k 533.

destroyed, he was the one who had spent the most time and was among the last to occupy them.⁴⁸ His archives may be called “living archives” and the loan contracts were still valid.

However, it seems impossible to say in which of the two houses discovered in 1993 he lived. He may have spent some time in both at different times of his life: at the beginning of his career he was staying with his father, even perhaps with his grandfather, then he must have travelled a lot, was in jail, a period during which his archives might have been stocked somewhere, and then might have moved. However that may be, these two houses, quite damaged, contained most of Aššur-taklāku’s archives.

4. The date of the 1993 archives

Thanks to the Kültepe Eponym List (KEL),⁴⁹ it is now possible to date the Kültepe archives. The only Old Assyrian texts usually dated are the loan contracts. They mostly bear the month and year in which the money has been borrowed, and also the deadline for repayment. The 1993 archives contain 73 dated loans, 7 memoranda of several loans and 9 letters, legal texts or personal notices dealing with dated events; thus about 10% of the 1993 tablets bear one or several dates. Most of the dates belong to the period between month viii KEL 79 and month viii KEL 113, thus a period of 34 years, and they concern almost exclusively Alāhum and his son Aššur-taklāku. Only 4 dates do not belong to this interval; the oldest date, ii KEL 71, is given by a loan contract belonging to an unknown creditor and three dates are much later, from KEL 132 to 134.⁵⁰ As a whole, the dated archives of 1993 cover a period of 64 years.

What can we say about the loan contracts? Normally, when a merchant lends money to a colleague, he keeps with him the loan contract in order to use it later to get back his money. Thus almost all the loans discovered in 1993 belong to the inhabitants of the excavated houses. Five loans in which Alāhum or Aššur-taklāku are creditors are curiously known by two copies each. If the original text belongs to the creditor, it is thus difficult to explain the existence of copies. Some were perhaps to be given to a witness, who was member of the family. The repayment of the debt implied the destruction of the original loan and of its copies, or a written receipt given to the debtor.

Other copies or abstracts of loans can be found in eight long memoranda from the 1993 archives. They list 2 to 10 different loans, arranged in a non-chronological order. Each of them records loans made by the same creditor or members of the same family. The longest tablet, Kt 93/k 546, gathers over 60 lines of debts in silver and copper dated to an interval of 12 years between KEL 87 and KEL 98. About 80 % of the loans recorded on these memoranda are known by their original contract. It is possible that these memoranda gather loans still to be paid.

⁴⁸ He may have not been the last inhabitant of the house since some loan contracts are dated to eponyms of the last years of *kārum* II; they perhaps belong to his children.

⁴⁹ KEL was first published by K. R. Veenhof in *OALÉ*. For further references see *OAAS* 1, 135–136, 150, *OAB* 1, 445 and *OAAS* 2. See also Veenhof (2007) and Günbattı (in press).

⁵⁰ The last loans of house 1 are dated to KEL 132, 133 and 134; the first one, Kt 93/k 231 concerns Iddin-Kūbum, son of Aššur-taklāku; the two other are respectively Kt 93/k 232 and 236.

4.1. *Alāhum and Aššur-taklāku loans*

The chronology of these loans is quite interesting. All the loans dated between KEL 79 and KEL 94, a 15-year interval, belong to Alāhum (plus one in KEL 100), while all the loans belonging to his son, Aššur-taklāku, are dated between KEL 95 and KEL 113, an interval of 20 years. Alāhum loans are less numerous because most of them have been repaid and the tablets cancelled. Moreover, some others might have been preserved in Alāhum's house in Buruṣhattum.⁵¹ This very clear distribution of the loans between the father and the son is disturbed by just one loan dated to the end of KEL 100, in which Alāhum is the creditor.

Thus, Alāhum's death comes after KEL 100. In fact, he appears as the guarantor of a debt of a colleague to *limum* Buzutāya (KEL 101), and Alāhum himself has a debt dated to KEL 104, but according to the author of the document, he dies soon after (Kt 93/k 481). So Alāhum had been living in the houses unearthed during the 1993 excavations for twelve years, then, around KEL 94, he left Kaniš for Buruṣhattum or for Aššur, where he is attested in KEL 96. He died at the end of KEL 104. Almost all the correspondence exchanged between Tariša and her brother Aššur-taklāku is dated after KEL 104, since it deals with Alāhum's succession.

Aššur-taklāku's loans are mostly dated between KEL 95 and 101, then KEL 104 to 109. There are almost no loans in KEL 102 and 103 and between ix 109 and ii 111, and after KEL 113 he has no more loans. We have to imagine that the lack of activity during these short periods corresponds to travels of Aššur-taklāku outside Kaniš. One of his absences is very well documented by many letters and legal texts. Aššur-taklāku has been accused by the rulers of a locality to have transported documents and merchandise for their enemy, the prince of Tamniya, and to have collaborated with him.⁵² The Anatolian authorities arrest him and agree to release him in exchange for the real guilty, or the payment of a high ransom, amounting to one talent of silver. While he is in jail, Aššur-taklāku business was neglected and he suffered commercial damages among which are moth damage to his textiles.⁵³ This affair was still going on in KEL 108 and it could well have brought about the end of Aššur-taklāku twenty-year long activities in Kaniš. His last loan is dated to KEL 113. After this date, either he left Kaniš, or he had died.

4.2. *Other dated events*

A judgment offers a date for a family event concerning another daughter of Alāhum, called Ištitiš.⁵⁴ She may have been younger than her brother and sister and had been promised to Aššur-malik, son of Anīnum. But the wedding could not take place since the young man was away; to avoid celibacy for the girl, a judgment was rendered by the *kārum* to fix an ultimatum for the *fiancé*, who has to come and marry the girl within six weeks. After this

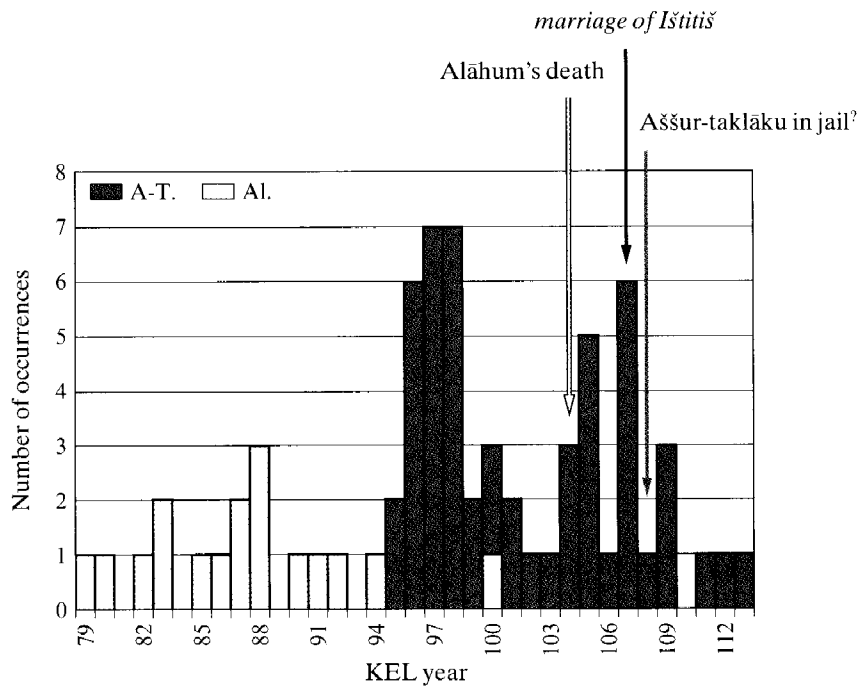
⁵¹ See Michel (1995).

⁵² See Michel – Garelli (1996) and Günbattu (2001).

⁵³ Kt 93/k 542 and Michel (1998).

⁵⁴ Kt 93/k 286, 3–18: *iš-tù ha-muš-tim, ša A-šur-ma-lik, ITI.KAM ša k[e]-na-tim, li-mu-um, ša qá-tí, En-na-sú-in, šu-ma a-na, 6 ha-muš-tim, A-šur-ma-lik, DUMU A-ni-nim, lá i-tal-kam, Iš'-tí-tí-iš, DUMU.MUNUS' A-lá-hi-im, a-na mu-ut, Tí-iš-pi-šu, ta-lá-ak.*

date, month iii of year KEL 107,⁵⁵ the engagement was broken and Ištitiš was free to marry an Anatolian called Tišpišu. One can imagine that Ištitiš' marriage had been arranged by her father, but since Alāhum died in KEL 104, Aššur-taklāku replaced him and acted in his sister's interest.



4.3. The end of 1993 archives

The last loans are dated to KEL 132, 133 and 134; these three documents were discovered together in the first house excavated during the 1993 season.⁵⁶ One text belongs to a son of Aššur-taklāku called Iddin-Kūbum and it bears the sealing of another son of Aššur-taklāku, named Ilbarat-bāni.⁵⁷ The two other documents⁵⁸ concern unknown merchants. However, the mention of an Iddin-Sîn could refer to a descendant of the same family who, following tradition, would bear the name of the grandfather. Thus, after the death of Aššur-

⁵⁵ Because of the date of the archives, I suppose that this Enna-Sîn was *limum* in KEL 106 and not in KEL 114.

⁵⁶ See Kt 93/k 231, 232 and 236. For the KEL *limū* after no. 129, see C. Michel, review of OALE, *AfO* 51 (2005–2006), 321–324 and Veenhof (2007).

⁵⁷ Kt 93/k 231 concerns a loan of Erišum, son of Mannum-balum-Aššur, in favour of Iddin-Kūbum, son of Aššur-taklāku; a special clause specifies that this tablet must be sent to Aššur, in the name of Iddin-Kūbum and the debt must be paid in this town. Thus, Iddin-Kūbum detains a copy of the loan contract that should be compared to the original at the moment of the payment in Aššur.

⁵⁸ Kt 93/k 232 and 236.

taklāku, the first house could have been inhabited for a while by some of his children before its destruction at the end of the *kārum* II. The second house was abandoned after the middle of KEL 110. This means that the members of the family living there either left Kaniš for another place in Anatolia or returned to Aššur. Whatever they did, they left part of their archives in Kaniš.

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To summarize, the 1993 Kültepe archives are dated to the middle of the second half of *kārum* level II, under the reigns of Sargon I, Puzur-Aššur and Narām-Sîn. According to the middle chronology, the father, Alāhum, was active between 1895 and 1880, and the son, Aššur-taklāku, main owner of the documents, lent money between 1879 and 1861. The death of Alāhum is dated to the beginning of Narām-Sîn reign, and his grandchildren would have left documents in house 1 around 1840. If we do not take into account the very early and very late dates, the loans have been preserved over 35 years and two generations. The archives started long before with Iddin-Sîn's correspondence. The length of Aššur-taklāku's activity in Kaniš, about twenty years, might be similar to that of many of the contemporaneous Assyrian merchants.

The reconstruction of Aššur-taklāku family activities might help us to arrange chronologically several political events mentioned in the tablets. We would like, for example, to know when the king of Hattuš left his country to travel to Kaniš, a period during which the roads were closed or tightly controlled.⁵⁹ Also, a letter sent to Iddin-Sîn mentions the death of a local ruler, perhaps in Ulama, which has the consequences of closing the town to foreigners; another letter sent to his son recalls the lack of ruler in Ulama and the state of anarchy of the country.⁶⁰

Abbreviations and bibliography

The abbreviations used in this article follow:

- OAAS 1 = C. Michel, Old Assyrian Bibliography of Cuneiform Texts, Bullae, Seals and the Results of the Excavations at Assur, Kültepe/Kanis, Acemhöyük, Alishar and Bogazköy, Old Assyrian Archives Studies 1, Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul, vol. XCVII, Leiden, 2003.
- OAB 1 = C. Michel, Old Assyrian Bibliography 1 (February 2003–July 2006), *AfO* 51 (2005–2006), 436–449.
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⁵⁹ Kt 93/k 685 and Michel (in press).

⁶⁰ Kt 93/k 237 and 179; Michel (in press).

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Corrigenda

Abstract of C. Michel AoF 35/1, 2008, p. 53–67.

The abstract published on page 53, written by the editor of the volume, has nothing to do with the paper, but corresponds to C. Michel, «La pratique de l'écriture et du calcul par les marchands assyriens du début du IIe millénaire av. J.-C.», in T. Tarhan, A. Tibet and E. Konyar (eds.), *Muhibbe Darga Armağanı*, Istanbul : Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, p. 345–364.

Abstract

The 891 tablets, envelopes and fragments, and 37 bullae discovered during the 1993 season over Kültepe's site were found in two neighbouring houses. They belong to three or four generations of the same merchant family. The study of this archive, still in progress, allows to reconstruct the family tree, to understand which kind of text was preserved and how the documents were classified. The main owner of the archive, Aššur-taklāku, son of Alāhum, grand-son of Iddin-Sîn, was active during about twenty years in Kaniš. The archives cover the middle of the second half of *kārum* level II and they end before the destruction of this level.