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Women in the Family of Ali-ahum son of Iddin-Suen (1993 Kültepe archive)

*Cécile Michel**

In 1993, the Kültepe archaeological team excavated two neighbouring and badly damaged houses, in the squares LVII/127 and LVIII/127-128. These houses were cleared in 1994. They contained in all 926 tablets, envelopes and fragments belonging to members of a family of Assyrian merchants over three generations.¹ Along with the tablets, 37 bullae were kept in the archive; they have been published by N. Özgüç and Ö. Tunca.² Letters are the best represented text type in this archive, 40% which is letters. The other tablets may be classified according to the following categories: 11% loan contracts, 16% other legal texts, 15% personal accounts; the remainder of the tablets are too broken to be categorized.³

This large archive belonged primarily to Ali-ahum, son of Iddin-Suen, and his son Aššur-taklāku (Fig. 1). About fifty letters form part of the correspondence of Ali-ahum. Most of them were written by him to members of his family living in the house while he was away; among these, ten letters were written to his son Aššur-taklāku. Ali-ahum had a house in Burušhattum and another in Aššur where his wife, Ab-šalim, lived. He thus may have left tablets in each of these houses. When Ali-ahum was in Aššur, he organized shipments of tin and textiles, some textiles belonging to his daughter Tariša. When he was living in Kaneš, he lent silver to various individuals: the archive contains eleven loan contracts in which he appears as creditor – these are dated from REL 80 to 95 (c. 1893-1878) and one is dated to REL 101 (c. 1874).⁴ He was involved as well in several lawsuits. When he was staying in Kaneš, Ali-ahum received consignments of merchandise from Aššur. When he died, he left an enormous number of debts to his wife and his children.

Ali-ahum's son, Aššur-taklāku, appears to be the main owner of the 1993 archive. He received some seventy letters and sent another seventy to members of his family living in the houses excavated in 1993. He travelled a lot and stayed for some time away from Kaneš. While he was living in Kaneš, he lent silver:

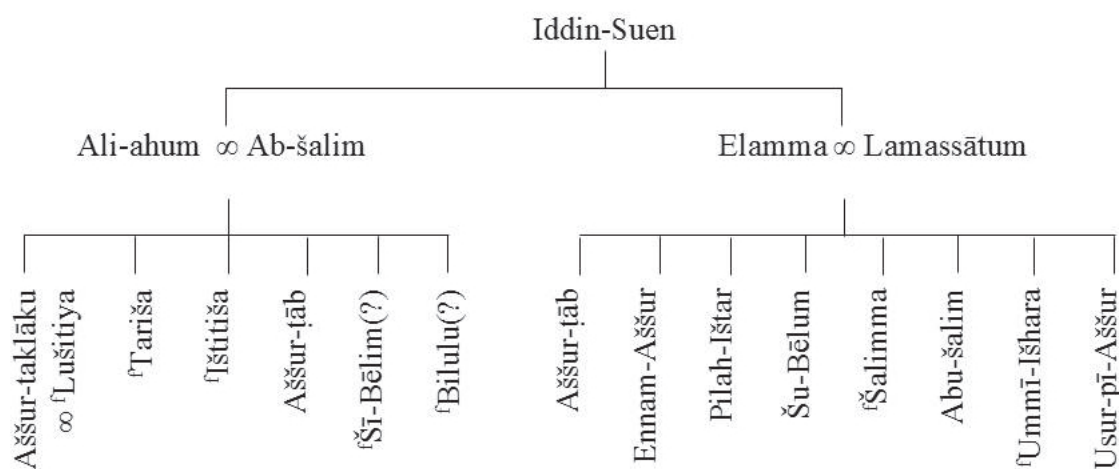


Fig. 1: Family tree of Iddin-Suen and his sons Ali-ahum and Elamma.

The archives of the sons were excavated respectively in 1993 and 1991 (studied by K. R. Veenhof).

* CNRS, ArScAn – HAROC, Nanterre; cecile.michel@mae.cnrs.fr. I address my warmest thanks to Benjamin Foster who kindly corrected the English of this paper. The name Ali-ahum used to be written Alāhum in previous publications.

¹ Kt 93/k 50-957, 963-965, 971-974, Kt 94/k 185-245. Tablets were distributed in different groups inside the two houses; however, the specific location of the tablets is unknown. The buildings were so badly destroyed that we do not have a complete plan. It is not impossible that they constituted at some point parts of a large house.

² N. Özgüç – Tunca 2001, 229–238, 342–345.

³ Michel 2008.

⁴ REL = Revised Eponym List; dates according to Barjamovic *et al.* 2012.

he appears as creditor in almost fifty loan contracts preserved in his archives; they are dated from REL 96 to 114 (c. 1877-1859). He kept as well some thirty legal texts documenting his lawsuits and disputes with other merchants. Aššur-taklāku was married to Lušitia, according to a letter sent by Išūhum (Kt 93/k 691), a link confirmed by an unpublished tablet discovered in 1994 in the house of Šalim-Aššur in 1994 in which she appears as witness (Kt 94/k 464:12-14, courtesy M. Larsen). Aššur-taklāku was active in the textile trade, and many tablets refer to his dealings with the Anatolian authorities of Tawinia. He was certainly involved in an affair opposing the Anatolian authorities of Tawinia to those of an unnamed town, and in which a merchant named Qatimum also took part. Aššur-taklāku was accused by the prince and the princess of this town of having transported tablets and merchandise for their enemy, the prince of Tawinia. He was thrown in jail, and the royal couple agreed to free him only if the Assyrian authorities delivered the guilty merchant or paid a ransom of one mina of iron or ten minas of gold.⁵

The activities of the main male members of the family are thus very well documented. This is less true for the female family members. However, we can get a good picture of the main concerns of several of these women, especially those who had close family ties to Ali-ahum and his son Aššur-taklāku.

1. The wives of the main archive owners

1.1 Ab-šalim, wife of Ali-ahum

Ab-šalim is usually a feminine name; however, it has been sometimes confused with the masculine name Abu-šalim. Among the homonyms named Ab-šalim are presumably two consecrated women:

- The first one, daughter of Amur-Ištar and sister of Suen-rē'ī, Ilī-bāni, Aššur-nīšu and Šū-Labān occurs in the legal text relating the lawsuit between her family and the one of Pūšu-kēn (ATHE 24).
- The second one inherits from her father Agūa, together with her mother and brothers.⁶

Other women named Ab-šalim are the following:

- Ab-šalim, daughter of Aššur-rēši, witnessed a loan taken by an Anatolian woman from an Anatolian couple (I 584).
- Ab-šalim, daughter of Iddin-Aššur is sold by her father to Lamassātum for a year for 13 shekels of silver.⁷
- The best well-known lady called Ab-šalim is living in Kaneš. She married a member of Enlil-bāni's family, possibly him, or his brother Aššur-lamassī;⁸ she had a servant called Šikri-elka.⁹

The wife of Ali-ahum is another homonym. She occurs in a text found in the archives of his brother, Elamma, excavated in 1991, and studied by K. R. Veenhof (Kt 91/k 495). In this text, Ištar-palil, son of Šū-Kūbum, Ab-šalim, wife of Ali-ahum, and her sons, have a debt of 21 ½ minas of refined silver to an anonymous Assyrian creditor.¹⁰ This text is dated to REL 116 (c. 1857), some ten years after Ali-ahum's death (REL 105; c. 1868), but the debt was among those left by her husband Ali-ahum:

Seal of Ištar-pālil son of Šū-Kubum, seal of Aššuriš-tikal son of Hinnaya, seal of Ali-ahum, son of Susaya, seal of Puzur-Ištar son of Šū-Kubum, seal of Bēlum-bāni son of Gazia, seal of Ab-šalim, wife of Ali-ahum. ½ mina of refined silver Ištar-pālil, Ab-šalim, wife of Ali-ahum, and the sons of Ali-ahum owe to the creditor. From the week of Hanaya, month ix, they will add 1 ½ shekel as interest per mina (and) per month. The silver is bound to the person of whichever of them is solvent and available. Eponymy of Hannanārum. Bēlum-bāni, son of Gazia,

⁵ Michel – Garelli 1996; Günbattı 2001.

⁶ Kt o/k 196c, see Michel forthcoming, no. 54. The contract KTS 1, 50a (Michel forthcoming, no. 224), which records the delivery of silver to Ab-šalim and other women in Aššur, could belong to one of these two consecrated women.

⁷ Kt 94/k 127.

⁸ See the following texts: KTS 1, 2a (Michel forthcoming, no. 201); TTC 19 (Michel 2001, no. 338); CCT3 14 (Michel forthcoming, no. 154); BIN 4, 68 (Michel forthcoming, no. 113); HUCA 40 59-60 (Michel forthcoming, no. 114); CCT 4, 13b (Michel forthcoming, no. 218); BIN 6, 69; Or 52, 194-196, no. 1 (Michel forthcoming, no. 150); TPAK 1, 159 (Michel forthcoming, no. 104).

⁹ BIN 6, 5 (Michel forthcoming, no. 156); BIN 6, 6 (Michel 2001, no. 33).

¹⁰ AKT 8, 300 (Kt 91/k 495, courtesy K. R. Veenhof):20-37, KIŠIB *Áb-ša-lim* DAM¹ *A-lá-hi-im*, ½ *ma-na* KÙ.BABBAR *ša-ru-pá-am*, *i-šé-er Ištar-pá-li-il*, *Áb-ša-lim* DAM *A-lá-hi-im*, ù DUMU^e *A-lá-hi-im* DAM.GAR, *i-šu iš-tù ha-mu-<uš>-tim ša Ha-na-/a*, ITI.KAM *Kán-wa[r-ta]* 1 ½ GÍ[N.T]A, *šf-ib-tá[m i-na]* ITI.KAM, *a-na* [1 *ma-na-im ú-šjú-bu*, KÙ.BABBAR [*i-qá-qá-ad šál-m*]i-šu-nu, *ú ke-[ni-šu-nu ra-ki-i]*s, *li-mu-um Ha-[n]a-[n]a-ru-um*, *i-ša-ha-at Áb-ša-lim*, *ú me-er-e A-lá-hi-im Be-lúm-ba-ni*, DUMU *Ga-zi-a i-zi-iz tu-pu-um*, *ša* 24 ½ *ma-na* 5 GÍN AN.NA, *ša* [*šju-mì tám-kà-ri-im [wa-du]*, *a-ša-par-tim na-dí* KÙ.BABBAR *a-num*, *a-šu-mì A-lá-hi-im lá-qé*.

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Ab-šalim	<i>Na</i>	<i>ša</i>	<i>Am</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>lam</i>	<i>kum</i>
Kt 93/k 153						
Kt 93/k 296						
Kt 93/k 325						
Kt 93/k 359						

Fig. 2: Table with a selection of signs from four letters sent by Ab-šalim.

assisted Ab-šalim and the sons of Ali-ahum. A tablet of 24 ½ minas 5 shekels of tin, on the name of the creditor, has been made available as pledge. This silver has been taken in the name of Ali-ahum.

Ab-šalim is mentioned several times in archives excavated in 1993. She was living in Aššur and contributing to the textile trade abroad. A transport contract, certainly authored by the son Aššur-taklāku, mentions the shipment of several amounts of silver for his father and some shekels, weight of a fibula, for Ab-šalim.¹¹

The four letters sent by Ab-šalim to her son Aššur-taklāku were perhaps written after the death of Ali-ahum.¹² According to the shape of the signs *na* and *ma* (with a first vertical wedge that goes below the lower horizontal wedge), texts Kt 93/k 153 and Kt 93/k 325 might have been written by the same scribe (Fig. 2). It is not clear whether the other two letters, Kt 93/k 296 and Kt 93/k 359, were written by one or two other scribes (signs *na* and *ša* look quite different). Thus, Ab-šalim's letters were written by at least two, presumably three different scribes; Ab-šalim could have been one of them.¹³

Ab-šalim is regularly placed after her son in the epistolary formulas. In these letters, she announces the shipment of several textiles that she wove, among which a textile made according to the fashion of Abarna, some textiles cleaned by a specialist, belts, and garments for Aššur-taklāku. She asks her son for the proceeds in silver of her textiles in order to buy wool and grain, arguing that what she already received in gold and silver is not enough to feed the household and to pay the specialist finishing the textiles. Such activities are the most common ones of the Assyrian women living in Aššur, but the content of this small correspondence is more often found in the epistolary exchanges between husband and wife. After the death of her husband in Anatolia, Ab-šalim continued to manage her household in Aššur and relied on her son for the selling of her textiles and the income of silver to her home. A last letter, quite anxious and emotional, was sent by Ab-šalim after Aššur-taklāku had been arrested by the Anatolian authorities:¹⁴

Here, we heard that you have been detained since month Mahhur-ilī (iv), so that I and my people we wore our hair as if in mourning! Later on, you sent news concerning your wealth to your sisters, but I and my people, we did not know about it! (...) (If necessary), may 5 talents of silver go for your life! Set out and come here. I set hands and feet against (evil?) gods and demons who keep coming. When you were staying in the palace you sent me news as follows: "Do not worry" (...)

It is quite interesting to notice that, as he was arrested by the local palace authorities, Aššur-taklāku could still communicate and write to his sisters; the plural indicates that Aššur-taklāku had at least two sisters, perhaps more.

Other letters or legal texts involving Ab-šalim refer to the very bad state of the family enterprise after the death of Ali-ahum (among which Kt 91/k 495). She is the co-author of a letter sent to Ilabrat-bāni,

¹¹ Kt 93/k 515.

¹² Kt 93/k 153; 296; 325; 359.

¹³ For the existence of women writers of tablets, see Michel 2009a.

¹⁴ Kt 93/k 296:2-9, 14-23, *a-na-kam, iš-tù ITL.KAM : ša Ma-hu-ur-DINGIR, ki-ma ú-kà-lu-kà-ni : ni-iš-me-ma, a-na-ku : ú ni-šu-ú-a, ma-lu-wa : ni-ta-na-ší, wa-ar-ki-tám : a-na a-ha-tí-kà, šu-lu-um-kà : tù-šé-bi₄-lam-ma, ni-šu-ú-a : ú a-na-ku : lá i-de₈-e (...)* *a-dí-na-an : na-pá-áš-tí-kà, KÙ.BABBAR 5 GÚ li-li-/kam, té-eb-a-ma : a-tal-kam, a-na ša i-li : ú ša ú-tù-ki, ša i-ta-na-lu-ku-ni-/ni, qá-tí-i : ú šé-pí-i, áš-ta-kán : i-nu-mi : i-na, É.GAL^{lim} : wa-áš-ba-tí-ni : , té-er-ta-kà : ta-áš-pu-ra-am, um-ma a-ta-ma : lá ta-pá-ri-dí (...).*

presumably her grandson, concerning the seizure and sale of houses by the eponym; there, we learn that Ali-ahum's grandchildren had still to pay back some silver.¹⁵

1.2 Lušitia, wife of Aššur-taklāku

Lušitia is the wife of Aššur-taklāku according to a letter written to her by Išuhum:¹⁶ “Concerning $\frac{1}{3}$ mina of silver that you gave as a *tadmiqtum*-loan, Aššur-taklāku, you husband wrote to me, and thus for $\frac{1}{3}$ mina, your silver, I gave $\frac{2}{3}$ mina of silver to his representative”.

Lušitia received seven of the letters excavated in 1993, most of them written by Šū-Išhara, Išuhum or Aššur-taklāku. Her husband wrote to her alone a letter for which only a piece of the envelope remained,¹⁷ and he sent to her and Hanunu one more letter which concerns tablets entrusted to them:¹⁸

When the instructions of Šuli will arrive concerning his tablets, give the tablets to the representatives of Šuli and to Išuhum. Moreover, there is a tablet of 10 minas of silver belonging to the *kārum* in the hands of the *amtum*-woman. So give this tablet as well to the representatives of Šuli and note down the witnesses.

The envelope of this letter reads as follows:¹⁹ “Seal of Aššur-taklāku, son of Ali-ahum, to Hanunu, son of Puzur-Aššur, and Lušitia, his wife”. Here, the last pronoun “his” refers to Aššur-taklāku, the author of the letter.

Šuli sent a letter to Hanunu, Išuhum and Lušitia concerning his tablets preserved in Aššur-taklāku's safe.²⁰ Lušitia is the recipient of other letters with instructions concerning tablets kept in one of the two neighboring houses excavated in 1993 in which she lived; she was responsible for the archives there and had to take out a tablet or keep some tablets for her correspondents.²¹ These letters no longer mention Aššur-taklāku and we can imagine that he had either disappeared in jail in an Anatolian palace, or that he was already dead. Lušitia lent fourteen sacks of barley to two Anatolians to be paid back at the harvest; the first witness of this loan contract was Hanunu.²²

A tablet found in 1994, during the cleaning of the 1993 houses, records the marriage of Aššur-malik, Lušitia's son, to an Anatolian girl. She arranged the marriage; the father of the groom is not mentioned.²³ This confirms that Aššur-taklāku had died, and thus the text must date after REL 114 (c. 1859):²⁴

Lušitia took as an *amtum*-wife for her son Aššur-malik, Šupiašu, daughter of Hapuašu and Uniuni. If she is deceitful or misbehaves in any way, he shall strip (her) of her clothes and her cloak and drive her away *naked*. He shall take along his *amtum*-wife wherever he wishes. If he comes to hate her, he may drive her away (but) shall give (her) 30 shekels of silver as her divorce money.

In the presence of Amur-Aššur, son of Ali-ahum, of Ilabrat-bāni, son of Ah-šalim, of Hašui, son of Palui.

Lušitia and her son Aššur-malik sent together a letter to the woman Šalimma, who belonged to Šalim-Aššur's family, studied by M. T. Larsen; this letter dates perhaps prior to Aššur-malik's marriage. Mother and son are travelling, and went through the town of Luhusaddia.²⁵

A list of various objects, among which are chairs, bowls, cups, metal coffers and various containers, some of them decorated, ends with the short sentence: “all this left by Lušitia”, could refer to the assets she left after her death.²⁶

¹⁵ Kt 93/k 71.

¹⁶ Kt 93/k 691:3-13, $\frac{1}{3}$ *ma-na*, KÙ.BABBAR *ša a-na, ta-ad-mì-iq-tim, ta-dí-ni-ni, A-šur-ták-lá-ku mu-ut-ki, iš-pu-ra-ma, a-na* $\frac{1}{3}$ *ma-na*, KÙ.BABBAR^{pi}-*ki, $\frac{2}{3}$ ma-na KÙ.BABBAR, a-na ša ki-ma, šu-a-tí a-dí-in.*

¹⁷ Kt 93/k 555.

¹⁸ Kt 93/k 673:4-18, *i-nu-mì, té-er-tí Šu-li, a-na tup-pí-šu, i-lá-kà-ni, tup-pí a-na ša ki-ma, Šu-li ú I-šu-hi-im, dí-na a-ha-ma 1 tup-pu-lum, ša 10 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR, ša kà-ri-im i-qá-tí, am-tim : i-ba-ší, ú šu-a-tí tup-pá-am, a-na ša ki-ma, Šu-li-ma, dí-na ú ší-bi, šu-uk-na.*

¹⁹ Kt 93/k 852:2-7, KIŠIB *A-šur-ták-lá-ku, DUMU A-lá-hi-im, a-na Ha-nu-nu, DUMU Puzur₄-A-šur, ù Lu-ší-tí-a, a-ší-tí-šu.*

²⁰ Kt 93/k 725.

²¹ Kt 93/k 428; 460; 752. For women in charge of their relatives' tablets, see Michel 2009a.

²² Kt 94/k 206.

²³ Kt 94/k 141.

²⁴ Michel forthcoming, no. 31. The fact that Aššur-malik marries Šupiašu as *amtum*-wife suggests that he was already married to an *aššutum*-wife, presumably an Assyrian woman.

²⁵ Kt 94/k 501 (courtesy M. T. Larsen).

²⁶ Kt 93/k 549.

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Tariša	<i>na</i>	<i>li/in</i>	<i>tù</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>Ta</i>
Kt 93/k 198						
Kt 93/k 564						
Kt 93/k 722						
Kt 93/k 301						

Fig. 3: Table with a selection of signs from four letters sent by Tariša.



Fig. 4: imprint of Tariša's seal on the envelope of a letter she sent to Kaneš (Kt 93/k 372+380).

2. Aššur-taklāku's sisters

In the letter she sent to her son Aššur-taklāku, Ab-šalim mentions Aššur-taklāku's sisters without giving their names.²⁷ Other texts reveal the names of two of them: Tariša and Ištitiša. And it is possible that Šī-Bēlim, cited in one of Ab-šalim's letter, was also a younger sister of Aššur-taklāku.

2.1 Tariša

Tariša is the sender of at least fifteen letters, half of them only known by fragments of their envelopes, and the recipient of twenty-six. Three envelopes give her patronymic: she is the daughter of Ali-ahum and thus the sister of Aššur-taklāku.²⁸

According to the letters Tariša sent to Kaneš, she was first living in Aššur. From there she sent on her own at least six letters to her brother, but only three are preserved;²⁹ for the other three, fragments of envelopes remain.³⁰

All the letters sent by Tariša present the same regular shape; signs are clear, small and elegant. Four of the letters have been sent by Tariša alone and may be thus compared. Signs *li* and *in* have each seven chevrons on two rows at the beginning. Signs *ta*, *tù*, *nu*, *na* and *bi* look alike in all the four letters. These letters have been written by the same person, either a member of her family or herself (Fig. 3).

²⁷ Kt 93/k 296.

²⁸ Kt 93/k 143; 384; Kt 94/k 222; Michel 2008.

²⁹ Kt 93/k 198; Kt 93/k 301; Kt 93/k 564.

³⁰ Kt 93/k 209; Kt 93/k 372+380; Kt 93/k 384.

She also sent letters to her brother, together with several Assyrians, presumably his associates or representatives in Aššur.³¹ In the archive were also found several envelopes of letters sent by Tariša to Kaneš; very few are inscribed. Others may be identified because they bear imprints of her seal (Fig. 4).³²

Tariša's letters to her brother follow the death of their father, Ali-ahum, who left behind him and enormous number of debts for a total of 2 talents 30 minas of silver (some 75 kg). Some of these debts were due to the Town Hall in Aššur³³ and to some eponyms: Amur-Aššur (REL 86) and Buzutaya (REL 102);³⁴ they concerned transactions in textiles and lapis lazuli.³⁵ Tariša tried to gather silver in order to pay some of her father's creditors and asked her brother to send all the silver he could gather from Kaneš.³⁶ Two letters of Tariša also deal with the affair opposing Aššur-taklāku to Qatimum and which landed Aššur-taklāku in an Anatolian jail; this affair went to the Aššur court, which gave a verdict and produced tablets that Tariša sent to her brother.³⁷ The bad financial situation of the family after the death of Ali-ahum altered the relationships between the brother and the sister; Tariša, being in Aššur and daily in contact with their father's creditors, complained that Aššur-taklāku did not contribute enough.³⁸ A letter sent by Puzur-Aššur to Aššur-taklāku mentions the burial of Ali-ahum for which he had to borrow silver from the house of a creditor; the silver was later given to Tariša and thus we can imagine that she had to arrange the burial, which is quite unusual.³⁹

Other letters and transport contract refer to Tariša as an inhabitant of Aššur. There, she participated to the textile production and sent textiles to her brother in Anatolia.⁴⁰ In return, she appears several times as recipient of small amounts of silver, with some other women, in various transport contracts from her brother's archives. Some of these were written before the death of Ali-ahum since they mention some silver consignment for him.

Table 1: Amounts of silver sent to men and women in Aššur.

	Kt 93/k 788	Kt 93/k 598	Kt 93/k 664	Kt 93/k 699	Kt 93/k 490	Kt 93/k 525
Tariša	1 mina <i>šawiru</i>	[x minas/ shekels]	½ mina	5 shekels	10 shekels	3 shekels
Šāt-Aššur	1/3 mina			2 shekels	10 shekels	1 ½ shekels
<i>Kallatum/ana kallitini</i>	1 mina	½ mina				
Qanuttum, wife of Aššur-imitti	3 shekels	3 shekels				
Šīmat-Aššur, daughter of Ikuppī-Ištar, <i>gubabtum</i>	3 shekels	3 shekels				
Enibaš	1 mina <i>tudittum</i> and <i>šawirum</i>					
Nanaya		3 shekels				
Alabi <i>emiqtum</i>		3 shekels				
<i>amat abini ina Aššur</i>			3 shekels			
Hubana				1 ½ shekels		
Bilulu, daughter of Ali-ahum	3 shekels					
wife of Nūr-Sin	3 shekels					
daughter of Šalim-bēli	5 shekels					

³¹ Kt 93/k 543: from Puzur-Aššur and Tariša to Aššur-taklāku; Kt 93/k 143: from Iṭūr-ilī, son of Amur-Ištar, Puzur-Aššur and Tariša, daughter of Ali-ahum to Aššur-taklāku, son of Ali-ahum; Kt 93/k 722: to Aššur-taklāku from Tariša, Aššur-imitti and Hattini; Kt 93/k 352 from Rabi-Aššur, Puzur-Aššur, Tariša and Ušur-ša-Aššur to Aššur-taklāku.

³² Kt 93/k 208; Kt 93/k 210; Kt 93/k 873; Kt 93/k 876; Kt 93/k 879.

³³ Kt 93/k 143; Kt 93/k 301; Kt 93/k 352.

³⁴ Kt 93/k 143; Kt 93/k 352; Kt 93/k 543; Kt 93/k 564.

³⁵ Kt 93/k 143.

³⁶ Kt 93/k 564.

³⁷ Kt 93/k 543; Kt 93/k 722.

³⁸ Kt 93/k 198.

³⁹ Kt 93/k 324.

⁴⁰ Kt 93/k 194.

Almost all the letters received by Tariša were written by her brother,⁴¹ and most of them were presumably found in the second house excavated in 1993; thus, when she moved to Kaneš, she lived there with other members of her family. Again, these letters deal with the affairs following their father's death. In ten of these letters sent only to Tariša, Aššur-taklāku keeps mentioning the necessity of saving the paternal house. He claims that he tried his best to find silver – several times he mentions 10 minas – to pay some of his father's debts. He asked his sister not to spend all her money.⁴² He swears by the god Aššur and the spirit of his father that he has done his best to remedy the bad financial situation of the family, and writes emotional letters to his sister, trying to prove that he has always acted in a honest way.⁴³ In one of his letter found elsewhere, he writes for example: "Would I love only silver and not love our father's house, you, and my partners?"⁴⁴ This difficult situation lasted for a while, at least five years, but presumably much longer.⁴⁵ Ali-ahum left debts, but also some capital invested in joint stock companies; Aššur-taklāku tried to recover dividends and profits from them.⁴⁶

Fifteen more letters addressed by Aššur-taklāku to her sister were also sent to various people, among them his representatives, and some other women, for example Šāt-Aššur and Šimat-Aššur. These messages deal with the same matters: unpaid debts of Ali-ahum and financial difficulties following his death,⁴⁷ silver and gold invested by Ali-ahum to be recovered, including a share in the joint stock company maintained by Šū-Ištar, son of Aššur-bāni,⁴⁸ and properties left by Ali-ahum in the town of Buruštatum.⁴⁹ Some of these letters also concern the dispute between Qatimum and Aššur-taklāku; during the time Aššur-taklāku spent in the Anatolian palace jail, textiles were damaged by moths,⁵⁰ and his outstanding merchandise – to an amount of 1 talent of silver – was dispersed.⁵¹ Some of these letters are, again, very emotional in tone.⁵²

Tariša appears as a very active woman, much involved in the family financial operations. There is no indication about her status, married or unmarried.

2.2 Išitiša

A verdict concerns another daughter of Ali-ahum called Išitiša.⁵³ She may have been younger than her brother and sister. She had been promised to Aššur-malik, son of Anīnum, but the marriage ceremony 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 had to come and marry the girl within six weeks. After this deadline, fixed on month iii of year REL 108 (c. 1865),⁵⁴ the commitment was broken and Išitiša was free to marry an Anatolian called Tišpišu. One can imagine that Išitiša's marriage had been arranged by her father, but since Ali-ahum died in REL 105, Aššur-taklāku replaced him and acted in his sister's interest.

2.3 Bilulu and Šī-Bēlim

Bilulu, daughter of Ali-ahum received 3 shekels of silver according to the transport contract Kt 93/k 788. In the same contract, Tariša is the recipient of jewels worth 1 mina of silver. It is impossible to say if Bilulu is her sister or if their fathers are homonyms.

Ab-šalim asked her husband Ali-ahum for gold earrings for Šī-Bēlim, who could be her younger daughter, and thus the sister of Aššur-taklāku.⁵⁵ She later on acknowledged the receipt of these jewels. Thus Ali-ahum and Ab-šalim may have had four daughters, but only Tariša is well documented, perhaps because she could have been single?

⁴¹ Twenty-three of the twenty-five letters sent to Tariša were written by Aššur-taklāku.

⁴² Kt 93/k 461; Kt 93/k 482; Kt 93/k 473; Kt 93/k 528.

⁴³ Kt 93/k 527; Kt 93/k 530; Kt 93/k 537; Kt 93/k 539.

⁴⁴ KTK 18:9'-10', *a-na GÍN KÙ.BABBAR : ar-ta-a-ma É a-bi₄-ni, ku-a-tí ú a-hi-a : lá ar-ta-am.*

⁴⁵ Kt 93/k 539.

⁴⁶ Kt 93/k 489; Kt 93/k 536+534.

⁴⁷ Kt 93/k 295; Kt 93/k 446; Kt 93/k 512; Kt 93/k 516; Kt 93/k 544; Kt 93/k 964.

⁴⁸ Kt 93/k 363; Kt 93/k 464; Kt 93/k 518; Kt 93/k 519; Kt 93/k 520; Kt 93/k 585+587.

⁴⁹ Kt 93/k 468.

⁵⁰ Michel 1998.

⁵¹ Kt 93/k 526.

⁵² Kt 93/k 514.

⁵³ Kt 93/k 286:3-18, *iš-tù ha-muš-tim, ša A-šūr-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-šūr-ma-lik, DUMU A-ni-nim, lá i-tal-kam, Iš-tí-ti-ša, DUMU.MUNUS¹ A-lá-hi-im, a-na mu-ut, Tí-iš-pì-šu, ta-lá-ak.*

⁵⁴ Because of the date of the archives, I suppose that this Enna-Sîn was *limum* in REL 107 and not in REL 115.

⁵⁵ Kt 93/k 153.

3. Šāt-Aššur, another woman of Ali-ahum and Aššur-taklāku's family?

Šāt-Aššur appears regularly among the other women mentioned in the archives excavated in 1993, but we have no real clue about her possible position in the family. She sent textiles with Tariša⁵⁶ and is regularly mentioned after Tariša, receiving some silver in transport contracts;⁵⁷ the amounts of silver for Šāt-Aššur were usually smaller than those for Tariša. She was also often among the recipients of Aššur-taklāku's letters, regularly mentioned after Tariša.⁵⁸

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The activities of women mentioned in the archives unearthed in 1993 reflect the general image of the Assyrian women's role illustrated by the Kültepe written sources (Michel forthcoming). Married women in Aššur, as Ab-šalim, managed their households and participated in the textile production and export to Anatolia. Married women in Kaneš, as was Lušitia for part of her life, were in charge of the household, including the archives of their husband while he was away, returning to Aššur or travelling to other Anatolian cities.

Tariša had a special position in Ali-ahum's family: she appears to be totally independent and, as she lived in Aššur, she acted as the family representative there. The great majority of her correspondence with her brother is motivated by the difficult family's financial situation after the death of the father. There is no evidence that she was married, and we may imagine that she was the oldest daughter of Ali-ahum and remained single after being presumably consecrated to the god Aššur. In fact, her activities, as well as the content of her letters, are similar to those of Ahaha, the consecrated daughter of Pūšu-kēn, who was also involved in the disposition of her father's estate, and wrote many letters to her brothers in Anatolia.⁵⁹ If Tariša was a consecrated woman, then we need to know why she moved to Kaneš and lived in one of the family houses there.⁶⁰ The apparent absence of contacts between Ab-šalim and her presumed daughter Tariša is also puzzling; there are, for example, several letters sent by both Lamassī and her daughter Ahaha to Pūšu-kēn.

When reconstructing Assyrian family trees, we often have the impression that, besides the merchants' wives and the consecrated daughters, there were no girls. Innaya and Tarām-Kūbi had five sons, Innaya's brother, Šū-Kūbum, married Abaya and had at least two sons.⁶¹ Pūšu-kēn and Lamassī had four sons and one consecrated daughter, or perhaps two daughters.⁶² Two of the three sons of Issu-arik and Baštum-damqat,⁶³ Aššur-bēl-awātīm and Iddin-abum had each three sons; the third one, Šalim-Aššur, married to Ennam-Ištar, had two sons and two daughters. Elamma and Lamassātum had a very large family with possibly six sons, a consecrated daughter and another daughter married in Aššur.⁶⁴ But the birth ratio nowadays is one hundred and five boys for one hundred girls. A letter exchanged between brothers concerning the arranging of the marriages of their sisters after the death of their parents highlights a family composed of four sons (Iliā, Enah-ilī, Ennum-Aššur and Ah-šalim) and four daughters; but only the name of one daughter is given (Haštahšušar), the others are not named.⁶⁵

We need to understand why the girls are invisible in the reconstruction of family trees. One of various explanations is that the great majority of the written sources were initiated by men, written for men and concern mainly men's occupations. However, women are not entirely invisible since we can still trace the activities of some of the Aššur women through their correspondence. Most of these remain unmarried or lived alone in Aššur while their husbands carried on commercial activities in Anatolia.

The married women occurring in the archives excavated in 1993 are those who entered the family by marriage; we unfortunately know nothing about their own families. The young and still unmarried girls are very rarely mentioned, usually as recipient of jewels or only on the occasion of their marriage; they

⁵⁶ Kt 93/k 328.

⁵⁷ Kt 93/k 788; Kt 93/k 699, Kt 93/k 490, Kt 93/k 525.

⁵⁸ Kt 93/k 295; Kt 93/k 514; Kt 93/k 516; Kt 93/k 518; Kt 93/k 519.

⁵⁹ Michel 2001, 438-442.

⁶⁰ For Assyrian consecrated women living in Anatolia, see Michel 2009b.

⁶¹ Michel 2001, 388.

⁶² Michel 2001, 426.

⁶³ Kt 94/k archives published by M. T. Larsen as AKT 6.

⁶⁴ K. R. Veenhof in this volume.

⁶⁵ Kt 84/k 281 published by Bayram – Çeçen 1995, 5-7, and collated by Michel forthcoming, no. 9.

then leave the family to enter their husband's family and are not attested in their family archive, except on special circumstances, when, for example, they kept up close contact with their brothers, as Tarām-Kūbi with Imdilum, for example.⁶⁶ Concerning Ali-ahum's family, we know by chance the name of several of his young daughters: Ištitiša and possibly Šī-Bēlim, and perhaps also Bilulu. When the father died, the sons were in charge of their sisters' marriage, which is the case for Ištitiša.

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