

F. R. KRAUS, *Briefe aus dem Archive des Šamaš-ḫāzir in Paris und Oxford (TCL 7 und OECT 3)* (= Altbabylonische Briefe IV). Leiden 1968. XVI + 113 pp. E. J. Brill.

The fourth volume of the series of Old Babylonian letters edited by F. R. Kraus contains letters from the archive of Šamaš-ḫāzir previously published by Thureau-Dangin in *TCL* 7 (cuneiform copy) and *RA* 21, 1924 (transliteration and translation), and by Driver in *OECT* 3 (cuneiform copy and transliteration and translation of selected documents), also 1924. The book, dedicated to Thureau-Dangin, is a fitting tribute to his memory, showing as it does—almost 50 years after his 1924 publication, and after his texts have been submitted to a good deal of rethinking by many scholars—how much his original insights still hold true. Kraus's publication is a masterly contribution, like his previous one in the series. Besides a useful brief introduction on terms and symbols for measures and weights, its main virtue lies in a careful reassessment of the text (in transliteration, as usual in the series) and the equally careful reworking of the translation. The effects of the former are to be seen in better readings and in collations done on the original text. These are not always immediately apparent because often they are not explicitly indicated in the text even when they may afford a better understanding of complete lines, e.g. in N. 87 : 10 where Kraus reads *a-[n]a m[i]-nim a-pil-[2-li]-šū* for Driver's 'A' x NIM A AM U[M x x x]; for occasional explicit mention of new readings see e. g. 15 : 10 (by M. Stol), 46 : 10 (collation by Frankena indicated in the title of the letter). As for the translation, here too one often finds a new and better understanding of the established text, from attention to nuances such as the rendering of "emphatic" -*ma* (e.g. as "but" in 69 : 23 or as "even, after all" in 69 : 38) or of the perfect (e.g. 66 : 9-10, 11-12) to more interesting points of interpretation some of which deserve to be pointed out explicitly. Thus in 40 : 20 he takes *še-e i-na-aš-ša-ar* as *še'i inaššar* "he takes my barley" (possibly as a form of sandhi). In 53 : 22-23 he reads the text as a direct speech, namely: *ša "Eqlam ātappalšu" mehir tuppiya* "an answer to my letter saying 'I have given him his field as due'." In 64 : 14-15 the sentence *Ibašši ašar ištenma gummuru?* is translated as "Are they really registered under just one entry?", with a correct interpretation of *ibašši* in an adverbial sense (note that *CAD* B 155 has no OB example from Babylonia proper of this expression). Some interesting suggestions by Landsberger are incorporated by Kraus, as in 59 : 5 (LÚ Û[R].RA for LÚ UR₄.RA "the roof maker"), 67 : 1 (the PN DUMU—DÜG.GAR.KI read as *Mār-Damru*) or 69 : 41 (reading *a-na <na>-ga-ḫi-im* "to this brute").

Places where one may note mistakes or omissions are minimal in number and importance. With regard to the transliteration see e.g. 68 : 31 where Thureau-Dangin's copy shows a break, here omitted, in the first two signs (or is it the result of better cleaning of the tablet?). With regard to the translation, in 54 : 17-18 the second term in *šabē adim* "workmen for special tasks" is left untranslated; in 65 : 12 *iššak* PN may perhaps be understood as a singular, and in l. 14 "the field of" should be put in parenthesis since it does not appear in the text. A reservation of a general nature may also be expressed against the decision to alter the line numbering of the *editio princeps*, by numbering two half-lines in a case as two distinct lines instead of one as Thureau-Dangin had done (in this review Kraus's line numbering will be followed).

I would like now to add a few comments and to suggest a few interpretations which differ from Kraus's, fully aware of their tentative nature. Within the boundaries of the present review I limit myself, as in the preceding remarks, almost exclusively to the texts published by Thureau-Dangin. If nothing else, my attempts may serve to underscore how problematic some of these texts remain even after so much attention has been paid to them. This difficulty is stressed, occasionally, by Kraus, for instance where he says about one passage that its meaning was probably unclear even to ancient Babylonians except for the writer and the

addressee (p. 41, note 60 a)—a fact, incidentally, which serves as justification for the new edition by Kraus of texts like these which might give at first the impression of having been treated in a “definitive” publication by the original editor.

II: 17–19. The syntactical structure is rather complex and the text perhaps faulty in one detail. The construction *ana ša...apālim* is not grammatically sound (see also Aro, *OLZ* 66, 1971, 247). Possibly the scribe started out with the intention of writing *ana ša rakkī* (accusative plural)... *tāpūlā* “so that you could satisfy the *rakbu*-officials”, with a construction of a type attested in OB to express finality (cf. *GAG* § 174 h). But because of the long intervening relative clause *rakkī ana eqlim šabātim ešū* “the *rakbu*-official who have been assigned to hold a field” (with *rakkī* in the construct state, and a following relative clause without *ša* favored by the presence of *ša* before *rakkī*), the scribe lost track of his construction, and fell, anacoluthically, in the more usual *ana rakkī* (genitive plural, for attraction) *apālim*. The *ša* in the present text, then, could simply be expunged (a solution which seems simpler than the metathesis proposed by *CAD* E 328), and the whole passage understood as follows: “Only then (*u*) you made out a certificate

17 *ana* < *ša* > *rakkī ana eqlim šabātim ešū*

18 *apālim*

17–18 so that you did (finally) satisfy

17 the *rakbu*-officials who have been assigned to hold a field.”

The meaning is that Šamaš-ḥāzīr, who the previous year had been guilty of negligence with respect to a case of land assignment in Larsa (ll. 3–7), having come now (l. 10) to face the royal administration in Sippar (ll. 8–9), behaved finally more promptly and made out the proper certificates for people deserving of either rations (ll. 14–16) or field assignments (ll. 11–13, 17–19). This whole antefact serves then as a warning that the new case of land assignment which the king is entrusting to Šamaš-ḥāzīr in the present letter (ll. 20–28) be handled very quickly, this time, by the governor (ll. 29–30): otherwise he would be provoking too far the patience of the king (ll. 31–33).

23. This elusive text defies comprehension with respect to both overall meaning and precise understanding of single passages (such as ll. 11–12 which Kraus prefers to leave untranslated). A tentative interpretation is advanced here if for no other purpose than to stimulate discussion. There seem to be *two* documents in question. Our tablet, a *letter*, is meant to accompany a second tablet which was probably a *register* giving the specifics (i. e. names, numbers, hierarchical position, etc.) about field parcels, plow oxen and farmers (*tuppum ša eqlim, alpī epinni u iššakkī*, l. 5). The purpose of the register is stated in ll. 7–14, and the procedures to be followed in ll. 16–33 of our letter. The section describing the purpose is the most difficult; it may perhaps be understood as follows:

5 *tuppam*...

7 *ša biltim* 1800 ŠE.GUR 450 ŠE-GUR *aldām*,

9 *u 4 manā kasap tamkārī, ša ana iššakkūtīm,*

11 (*ša eli bilat Imṭi-Enlil ana zittim watrūma*

13 *ana Arwium innadnū*)

14 *uštābilakkunūšim*.

14 Herewith I am sending you

5 (1) a register...

7 (2) 3,825 bushels of seed and fodder barley for a yield of 15,300 bushels of barley

9 and (3) 4 pounds of the merchants' silver which is for farming—

11 (amounts) which are a portion over and beyond the yield (already set) for Imṭi-Enlil

13 and have been given to Arwium.

The situation presupposed by this reading is as follows. Ḥammurapi, i.e. the central administration, had previously set the yield expected from the fields of Imṭi-Enlil. The level of this yield is now raised by 15,300 bushels (1800 GUR) of barley. To obtain this yield, the central administration provides 3,825 bushels (450 GUR) of barley to be used for seed and fodder (*aldām*); at the same time the central administration sends to Larsa 4 pounds of silver which are to be used for rations, wages and other expenses incurred by the farmers: this silver comes not directly from the palace, but from the merchants. The additional seed and fodder barley as well as the silver are sent to Larsa through a messenger who is named specifically (Arwium) because of the considerable sums involved in the shipment.

Now as to matters of detail. Ll. 7-8 are understood as consisting of an anticipatory genitive *ša biltim* which refers to *aldām*: "seed and fodder barley of a yield," i.e. "for a yield," with a genitive of purpose. This interpretation was advanced by CAD I 265 and CAD A/1 337, where, however, the first figure is emended to read 10,800 ŠE.GUR (instead of 1800); the reason for the change, accepted by Kraus, is to obtain here the double of 5,400 which appears in l. 26. The emendation, however, presupposes a mistake on the part of the scribe which is difficult to explain, since it involves not simply the omission of one or two figures, but rather the writing of three signs instead of three others (3×3600 instead of 3×600): this is not the kind of error a scribe makes when writing under dictation or composing on his own (though it would be easier to understand as a copying mistake). Also, the ratio 1 to 24 between seed and fodder barley on the one hand and the final yield on the other is much too high. So I prefer to keep the figure as given in the text, without emendations, obtaining a more reasonable ratio of 1 to 4; and I would explain the amount of 10,800 (i.e. $2 \times 5,400$) ŠE.GUR given in l. 26 as the total yield expected from the fields of Imṭi-Enlil, i.e. the total consisting of the yield already set at some earlier date (which we must assume to have been of 9,000 ŠE.GUR) plus the additional request formulated in the present letter. In modern measurements, the total yield expected is of 91,800 bushels of barley.

Ll. 9-10. With AHw 398 (cf. also, though less clear, CAD I 265) I refer the complement *ana iššakkūtīm* directly to *kašap*; Kraus prefers instead to refer it to *tamkārī*, meaning that the merchants are here considered on the level of the *iššakku*-farmers. This interpretation rests in turn on the interpretation of ll. 26-27, which I believe can be understood differently than in Kraus, see below. The reduction of merchants to the status of farmers would be anomalous, especially in a context, like the present one, where the merchants remain connected with the handling of silver.

Ll. 11-12. The expression *eli x watūru* in the sense of "to be in excess over x" is found in OB texts, cf. CAD A 488, and makes good sense here. The prepositional phrase *ana zittim*, on the other hand, is more difficult. I would take it in a modal sense, "for a part, partially", i.e. as an equivalent of *ana gamrim* "for the whole, completely." If so, the sentence is somewhat awkward but not without meaning: the excess yield requested is to be considered a portion of the total yield expected, the other portion being the regular yield already set in precedence. A word by word translation then would run: "which is in excess as a part over the (set) yield of Imṭi-Enlil." — The proper name with which is connected the yield of the field is normally regarded as a personal name. Could it not be instead the name of a field area? Note in this respect that such names do occasionally occur without A.ŠĀ (*egel*) in front (for Ur III see Pettinato, *Landwirtschaft*, Nn. 51, 94, 316-21, 429, etc.; for OB see, in Kraus's book here under review, N. 150 : 6 where a field is described as being simply *i-na Uḫ-pi-la*; also, with a different topographical term, *Nam-šu-um* in one text for BĀD *Nam-šu-um* in others, Walters, *Waters for Larsa*, N. 110 : 7 compared with 108 : 22, 109 : 12); also note that the expression "yield (*biltum*) of a field" or "of an orchard" is not infrequent in OB (CAD B 231). The omission of the term A.ŠĀ would be less disturbing for someone like the addressees who not only knew quite well the area but also were being sent, with the present letter, a register detailing all kind of data precisely with respect to this field. The advantage of understanding this as a geographical rather than a personal name is not only

that it accounts more easily for the considerable amount of yield involved, but also that it explains, assuming the field area was directly under the control of the royal administration, why the latter takes care in such minute details of the entire operation and provides for seed, fodder and the farmers' expenses.

Such details come to the fore in the second part of the letter, which deals with the procedures to be followed. There is a danger of quarrels about irrigation waters, in that some farmers may think that others have been favored intentionally. Hence all available resources as detailed in the register tablet which was being sent separately (ll. 17-19) would have to be divided in two groups, which would then be assigned, by drawing lots (and thus avoiding invidious preferential treatments), to the two supervisors (ll. 20-22). There is a difficulty in l. 22: after fields, oxen and farmers we find listed, among the resources to be divided, the merchants. The term « merchants » is qualified by a relative clause: *tamkārī ša iššakkū innadnū*. Kraus translates: "Kaufleute, die als Lehnsbauern zugewiesen worden sind," "merchants who have been assigned as farmers." There are, however, grammatical difficulties with this translation, which presupposes that *iššakkū* is somehow appositional to the subject. Now such a construction does not appear to be Akkadian; one would expect instead something like *kīma iššakkī innadnū*. Besides, there are problems with the notion of merchants serving as farmers, as indicated above. I would therefore propose to take the relative pronoun *ša* as referring to an indirect complement of instrument ("through which"), and to understand the entire sentence as: "merchants through which the farmers have been provided." The problem which remains is that the merchants, at first reading of the text, are divided in two between the two supervisors. But this could be an awkward ellipsis for a longer phrase such as *kasap tamkārī ša ana iššakkūtīm* (l. 9) or simply *kasap tamkārī* (ll. 26-27). In other words, the resources to be divided are (ll. 21-22): "the fields, plow oxen, farmers and the merchants' (silver) through which the farmers are procured." Only the barley for seed and fodder (*aldūm*) is left out in the enumeration, and it has to be understood as implicit. The awkward ellipsis may be explained if one assumes that the writer, intending to write something like *kasap tamkārī ša ana iššakkī innadnu* "the merchants' silver which is given for the farmers," forgot to write KÜ.BABBAR for *kasap*, and tried to remedy with an involved relative clause rather than with an erasure. For a similar type of ellipsis cf. 65:14 *Etel-pī-Marduk ša[btū]* "they hold (the field of) Etel-pī-Marduk." — The first verb in l. 23, *šutābilā*, is taken by Kraus (after a suggestion of Landsberger) to mean: "pool together, combine!"; with a slightly different nuance it may be taken in the sense of "juxtapose, put side by side, oppose!," a meaning which the verb has in a bilingual text (*Sumer* 13 (1957) 77, IM 51544:7, cf. CAD A/1 II and 216; I owe reference and interpretation to prof. van Dijk, who has also kindly discussed with me the content of this letter). L. 23 then could be translated, taking the two verbs as a hendiadys: "put side by side in two equal groups!"

At the end of the work in the fields each group of men will measure out exactly half of the total yield expected by the administration, i.e. 5,400 ŠE.GUR, or 45,900 bushels of barley each. In addition, they will also return the silver of the merchants, in the same amount: 2 minas (2 pounds) each, i.e. 4 minas (4 pounds) altogether. It would appear then that no silver had been sent by the central administration before this letter was written, and that 4 pounds, the entire amount needed for this operation, was shipped at the same time that an increase in yield was requested. The silver was probably to be recuperated, after it had been spent on farming, through part of the yield derived from the fields (the interest, if any, must have been put up by the central administration). The information about the total yield seems to be mentioned here only accidentally (it was probably stated with precision in the register tablet), and we owe its mention to the detail about the two groups dividing equally the resources among themselves: in fact the main concern in the text, as emphasized by the last two sentences, is that there should be no quarrel among the farmers, since both resources and yield have been divided exactly in half.

To summarize our discussion of this text N. 23 it may be well to offer a translation of the entire letter:

- 14 Herewith I am sending you
 5 (1) a register concerning fields, plow oxen and farmers,
 7 (2) 3,825 bushels of barley for seed and fodder (to produce) a yield of 15,300
 bushels of barley
 9 and (3) 4 pounds of the merchants' silver for farming—
 11 (amounts) which are a portion over and beyond the yield (already set) for Imṭi-
 Enlil,
 13 and have been given to Arwium.
 16 In order that the farmers of Zimru-Akšak do not harrass those of U-balana-
 namḫe because of the (irrigation) waters,
 23 put side by side in two equal groups,
 20 following (the details) of the register tablet I sent you,
 21 the field (parcels), the plow oxen, the farmers and the merchants' (silver) through
 which the farmers are procured: then
 24 having drawn lots (among them), give (one) to Zimru-Akšak and (the other) to
 U-balana-namḫe, so that
 26 (in the end) they will have to measure out 45,900 bushels of barley and 2 pounds
 of silver each, i.e.
 25 their yield will be exactly the same (for each), and as a result
 26 those farmers will have no (reason to) harrass each other about the irrigation
 waters.

32. I would like to see in this short letter the reflection of a contrast between provincial and central administration. The former, following its routine procedures, has delayed (*uḫḫuru*, l. 12) the assignment of some fields to a group of courtiers (for a more precise identification see Landsberger *apud* Kraus, and von Soden, *BO* 26, 1969, 361). The central administration (i. e. Hammurapi himself in the wording of the letter) steps in and preempts the routine by taking the case in its own hands (*mahrīya*, l. 16) away from the jurisdiction of the provincial administration (*ina pānikunū*, l. 14; note the semantic parallelism between the two Akkadian terms). Hence I would understand the text as follows:

- 6 *tuppāt eqlim, mala... taḫlukā,*
 9 *u eqlam, mala... ana nadānim uḫḫuru,*
 13 *ina tuppim šuṭrānim,*
 14 *ina pānikunū liqīānimma*
 15 *ana girseqī... eqlum mahrīya linnesih.*
 13 Copy down on a (separate) tablet
 6 the (content of the) field certificates for whatever field you have (already) parcel-
 led out...
 9 and the (data about) whatever fields you have not yet allotted...:
 14 (then) take it here, away from your jurisdiction, so that
 15 the field may be assigned to the courtiers (directly by) my (central office).

The main differences in interpretation from Kraus are two. First, I understand ll. 6-13 as grammatically correct rather than anacoluthic, and this by assuming that *šaṭāru* means "to copy." Second, I understand *ina* in l. 14 as ablative, and thus take *ina pāni x leqū* to mean "to take away from the consideration of x"; for a similar use of *leqū* see. e.g. N. 34 where a member of the provincial administration is given permission to appear in front of the central administration (*ana mahrīya*, l. 16) taking with him (*lilqiam*, l. 15) the records of barley processing.

45: 6. The two difficult signs at the end (X BI/GA in Kraus) can be read as ḪÚB.BÉ, possibly a logogram for *aluzinnu* "clown (?)": ḫ ú b. b. é accurs next to a l a n-z u and u₄.

d a . t u š in *MSL* XII, p. 54: 583; for an occurrence of ALAN.ZŪ.MEŠ next to a NAR.GAL in an OB letter see *TIM* II 109: 4.10 (interpretation and references by prof. van Dijk).

58: 12-14. This passage seems to give an interesting glimpse in the historical background of our letters. Lu-Ninurta, most likely an official of the central administration, urges (with an effective asyndetic style, which gives an abrupt tone to the letter—not a single sentence conjunction is found in the text) Šamaš-hāzir to give a field to a reed worker in compensation for the field he has lost to someone else, namely a “lady who resides in the palace” (*awiltum... ša ina ekallim wašbatu*, ll. 12-13). The interesting fact is that the new owner, i.e. the lady, does not apparently live in Larsa, but in Babylon—she is, in other words, an absentee landlady. Obviously, the Babylonians were getting the best land of Larsa, as of the other provinces, and even if the local owners were compensated with other land, they were understandably none too happy about the intrusion. The delays on the part of the provincial administration to carry out the transfers of land, and the consequent frequent reprimands from the central administration, may derive from the fact that the provincial administration was still made up of local people who, even though collaborating with the Babylonians, were trying to protect the interests of their co-citizens. In the present letter it should be noted that the concern of the central administration is dictated not so much by a desire of justice for the reed worker, as rather by the fact that he was becoming a source of embarrassment for the palace lady to whom he was addressing directly his complaints (l. 15, for which see the comment in Kraus).

85: 7. The use of the D stem of *petū*, instead of simple G imperative, may be explained in one of two ways: either because there is plurality of objects (Poebel) or because it is the transitive of the stative (Goetze); in the latter case the translation would be “leave open!” rather than “open!”.

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