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The Toponym *Balīhum* in the Kültepe Texts*

Abstract

Two hitherto unpublished Old Assyrian tablets from the excavations at Kültepe/Kaneš in 1950 (kt c/k 922 and kt c/k 944) are introduced.

Both name the well-attested city of Luhusattia and the *Balīhi*-area in connection with the wool trade of the family of Ennānum, the son of Abīya, found in published tablets from the irregular excavations before 1948. It is shown that the toponym *Balīhi* refers to an urban centre associated with the river of the same name rather than a town in Anatolia.

Although there are many ancient settlement centres mentioned in the Kültepe texts, unfortunately very few have been localized thus far,¹ primarily because most of the tablets found relate to commercial activities. Of course, the fact that a considerable number of the excavated tablets remains unpublished, some as yet even unread, restricts our information. That said, among the thousands of tablets published, the very low number of texts that present direct information on the geographical features of ancient Anatolia might be considered a further considerable hindrance.

In this paper are introduced two new Kültepe texts (Kt. c/k 922 and kt c/k 944) found during the excavation season of 1950. They are both letters and were addressed to Liptānum by a merchant called Usānum, with Ušur-ši-Ištar as a second addressee in kt c/k 922, and they both mention related matters. Of special interest in these two letters is the name *Balīhum*, which occurs only twice in published Kültepe texts², but is recorded three times in these two new texts.³

* If Assyrian studies are compared to the building of a house, each publication resembles a brick in the house's walls. However, Prof. Karl Hecker's works must be considered as building blocks of the house. I had the excellent opportunity to work with him by the help of grants provided by DAAD and Alexander von Humboldt Association. He always supported my studies and showed great interest therein. It is a honor to me to contribute to a Festschrift for him with an article.

¹ Apart from the Kültepe-Kaniš and Boğazköy-Hattuš identifications, localizations of the various toponyms in the Kültepe texts remain tentative.

² BIN VI 176, 4–6 and its parallel ICK II 277, 4–7. The passage reads: *i-nu-mi 3 GÚ 40 ma-na.TA* [síg].HL.A *i-na Ba-li-hi-im il₅-qé-ú-ni*. See for the latest treatment of these texts, Ulshöfer 1995, 433–435.

³ Kt. c/k 922: 5 and kt c/k 944: 6, 10.

According to the records of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, more than 1600 tablets were unearthed during the excavations at Kültepe in 1950.⁴ T. Özgüç states in his related report that the tablets of that year came from various trenches.⁵ Upon their discovery some of the documents were entirely and some partly published by a number of researchers in different periodicals, particularly by K. Balkan.

The fact that the place names Balīhum and Luhuzattiya in the two new texts under discussion and in one previously published document were recorded together suggests one of two possibilities. The less likely of the two is that Balīhum and Luhuzattiya were neighbouring centres. This possibility, however, can be considered unlikely in view of the existence of a river and related settlement centre known as Balīhum located far from the stations immediately preceding Kaniš, where Luhuzattiya should be sought.⁶ The second, and the stronger, possibility is thus that the two centres were recorded together due to them both being cities well known for their wool and wool products. Although these documents include no information relevant to the localization of Balīhum and Luhuzattiya, they enable one to suggest that these two cities known for their wools were centres where caprid husbandry played a particularly important role. As is well known, a considerable number of the Kültepe tablets are concerned with wool commerce⁷. Balīhum and Luhuzattiya are mentioned in both of the new documents in the context of instructions to give an unknown amount of wool (*šāptum/sīg*) to Ennānum, the son of Abīya.

Kt. c/k 922

3.7 × 4.4 × 1.4 cm.

Light Brown

- Obv. 1 *um-ma Ū-sà-num-ma*
a-na Ū-šú-ur-ši-Ištar
ù Li-ip-ta-nim
qí-bi-ma sīg.HI.A qá-tí
- 5 *lu ša Ba-li-hi lu ša*
Lu-hu-za-tí-a / a-na En-na-nim
DUMU A-bi-a dí-na-ma
- L. Edge *ù ì.GIŠ qá-tí a-na*
ši-mì-im dí-na
- Rev. 10 *2/3 ma-na 6 2/3 GÍN*
KÙ.BABBAR ša É kà-ri-im
lá-ap-ta-ku-ni šu-ma
1 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR iš-ta-pu-ku
mu-lá KÙ.BABBAR Li-ip-ta-num
- 15 *li-dí-ma a-na-ku i-na*

⁴ A study to treat certain documents from the 1950 tablets (Kt. c/k 870–1608) has been initiated within the scope of a TÜBİTAK project implemented by the present author.

⁵ T. Özgüç 1953, 103.

⁶ For Luhuzattiya, see Kh. Nashef 1991, 78–79.

⁷ See Veenhof 1972, 130–139, for textile and wool commerce in ancient Anatolia according to the Kültepe.



Abb.1 Kt. c/k 922

a-lá-ki-a KÙ.BABBAR a-ša-qal-šu-um
a-hu-ú-a a-tù-nu
a-na té-er-tí-a ih-da
 U. Edge *šu-ma [E]n-na-num lá-šu*
 20 *síG¹.HI.A¹ a-na ší-mì-im*
dí-na

Translation: ¹⁻⁴)From Usānum to Ušur-ši-Ištar and Liptānum: ⁴⁻⁹) Give my share of the wool, be it from the Balīhi (type) or from Luhuzattiya, to Ennānum, the son of Abīya, and also sell my share (of the) vegetable oil. ¹⁰⁻¹⁶)The 2/3 minas and 6 2/3 shekels of silver which are registered on my name in the house of the Kārum: if they have accumulated 1 mina silver, let Liptānum pay the balance of the silver and I will pay the silver to him when I go (there). ¹⁷⁻²¹) You are my brothers, pay attention to my message! If Ennānum is not there, sell the wool (yourself)!

Notes:

l. 1 ff.: As far as is known there is only one person with the name Usānum in the known material from kārum Kaneš level II. He is the son of a certain Amur-Aššur and is closely associated with the family firm of Imdīlum, son of Šu-Laban. See e.g. BIN VI 228, 13f.: *Ú-sà-nim ša Im-dí-lim*.

l. 2: Ušur-ši-Ištar is the son of a certain Aššur-imitti, the overall boss of the Imdīlum firm, and a cousin of Imdīlum.

l. 14: Another attestation for the rarely occurring *mulā'um* “additional payment, balance (to fill a quota)” (CAD M II 188b) or “Ergänzungsbetrag, -menge” (AHw II 670b).

Kt. c/k 944

3.2 × 4.0 × 1.3 cm.

Cream-colored

Obv. 1 *um-ma Ú-sà-num-ma*
a-na Li-ip-ta-nim
qí-bi-ma áš-pu-ra-kum
um-ma a-na-ku-ma
 5 *lu síG HI.A lu ma-áš-ki-kà*
lu ša Ba-li-hi lu ša
Lu-hu-za-tí-a / a-na
I-na-ar-me-e
 L. Edge *dí-in síG HI.A*
 Rev. 10 *lu ša Ba-li-hi*
lu ša Lu-hu-za-tí-a
a-na En-na-nim
DUMU A-bi-a dí-in
a-na GÉME^{tim} ša En-na-nim
 15 *qí-bi-ma síG.HI.A*
li-il₅-qé-ú



Abb.2 Kt. c/k 944

Translation: ¹⁻⁴)From Usānum to Liptānum: “I have written to you saying: ⁵⁻⁹)Give Inarmē wool or skins of yours, be it of the Balīhi (type) or from Luhuzattiya!” ⁹⁻¹³)Give the wool, be it of the Balīhi (type) or from Luhuzattiya, to Ennānum, the son of Abīya. ¹⁴⁻¹⁶)Tell Ennānum’s secondary wife that they shall get (more) wool!

Notes:

1 ff.) The letter I 515⁸, sent from Ennānum to a certain Aššur-muttabbil, mentions not only a person named Abīja, but also wool, oil and skins, like kt a/k 922 and 944 do. It seems most likely that this Abīja is the father of the sender Ennānum, both known from our two texts, and one gets the idea that the family of Ennānum is stronger involved in the trade with those goods than can be seen alone from the texts treated here.

Commentary

The significance of the Balīh River for its region should be briefly emphasized⁹. It is clear that the creeks and streams which nourished the river as ground or aboveground water sources originated in the Harran region. The ground water that appears on the surface near Akçakale (Şanlıurfa) forms the Balīh River on the other side of the Turkish border, flowing to the south into Syria parallel to the Euphrates. Archaeological research shows that the Balīh historically played an important part in the economy of the region, which was based on farming and stockbreeding.¹⁰ The fertility of the Balīh allowed numerous population centres to appear on the river banks beginning in prehistorical times.¹¹

The fact that Balīh was mentioned in the documents presented here together with Luhu-zattiya, a toponym found frequently in the Kültepe texts and known to have been governed by a *rubā'um*, suggests that a centre of population is intended, not the river Balīh itself. Further, in a text dating to the Middle Assyrian Period¹² the use of "Balīh city", URU *Ba-li-ha*, clearly shows that such a centre existed at a later juncture. In the Neo-Assyrian Period this name appears as both an old town and as a river, and it was taken to be identical with modern T. Abyad.¹³

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⁸ Published by Hecker-Kryszat-Matouš 1998, 108f.

⁹ The river Beli/eh in the Arabic sources was known as Balissos in the classical period.

¹⁰ T. J. Wilkinson 1998, 63–64.

¹¹ For the historical centres of population around the Balīh Valley, see: T. J. Wilkinson 1998, 66 and 72.

¹² Kh. Nashef 1982, 50.

¹³ Parpola – Porter 2001, 7 and 21.

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Appendix to İ. Albayrak, Eine altassyrische Urkunde zum anatolischen Bodenrecht, *AoF* 34 (2007), 219–224:

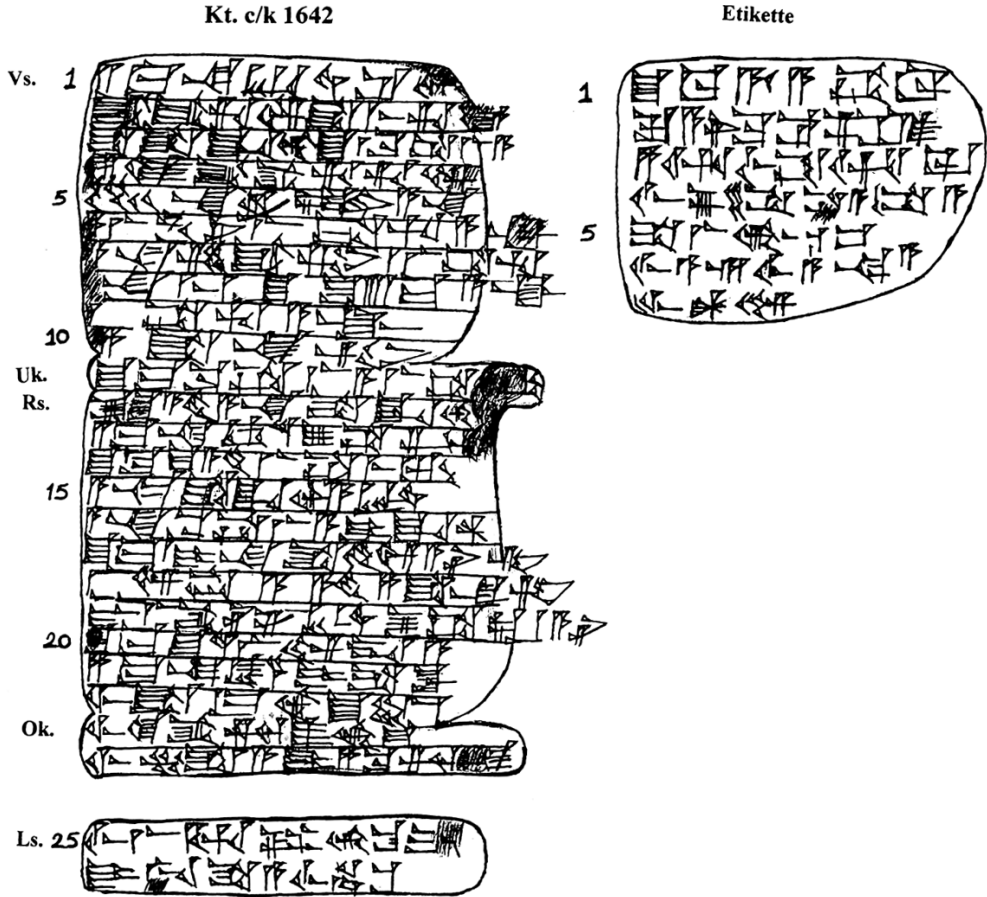


Abb.3 Kt. c/k 1642

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