THE ARCHIVE OF ŠAMAŠ-ŠARRA-UŠUR FROM CALAH

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1. Introduction

This archive was found in 1953 in TW 53, an area of private houses built against the eastern wall of the city at the northwestern side of the citadel, all in room 19 together with another six related tablets (cf. just below). 134 different individuals, of which 130 are from Calah (all implicit), are mentioned in the archive. Four are explicitly non-Calahanites, viz. 1.T.1 (from Kiširtu), and 1.I.1–3 (from Ra-pa-a). Both locales, as well as Kapar(Ur)U-Šar-ni (where a field was located, 1.D), are not recorded elsewhere. All the witnesses of the deed, where Kiširtu is recorded, recur in this archive. The same holds true (with one exception) for the witnesses of the deed where Ra-pa occurs. Perhaps it is an indication of the proximity of both settlements to Calah. The chronological distribution (BCE) of the individuals is as follows:


The Šamaš-šarra-ušur archive consists of 39 documents, all deeds (dated between 660 and 619* BCE), where the archive owner functions as creditor or buyer. Most tablets were kept in envelopes; six are triangular labels (dockets) for grain loans (1.K, O, Q, Y, C’, J’). Six

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1 Abbreviations: Akk. = Akkadian; atyp. = atypical; br. = brother; d. = daughter; Eg. = Egyptian; esp. = especially; f. = father; hus. = husband; Isr. = Israelite; pat. = paternal name; poss. = possibly; resp. = respectively; s. = son; sh = shekel(s); wi. = wife; WSem. = West Semitic. The months in Roman figures are the Assyrian.


3 There is no telling whether Ki-šir-te is identical with the homonymous toponym, whose gentilic Ki-šir-ta-A+A is juxtaposed with Hu-b/pur-ta-A+A in a NA copy of a MA decree of Tukulti-(N)inurtu I (1244–1208 BCE), Laura Kataja and Robert M. Whiting, Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period, SAA 12 (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1995), xxxif. ad 68, 28, 30.
more tablets (five deeds and one list, each forming so far a “single-document archive”) were found in the same room. All have prosopographical links with the Šamaš-šarra-uṣur archive. Kanûnâyû (ND 3424 from 16.XI.665 BCE), who purchased a female slave then, acted as the guarantor to another sale of a female slave 29 years later. Both ND 3424 and 1.P share a common witness, viz. Šulmu-bēl. For ND 3455 see 2.2 below. Šamaš-šarra-uṣur acted as the first witness in ND 3454 from 642* BCE. The creditor is Gu-ri-ia and the debtor recurs in Šamaš-šarra-uṣur’s archive (1.W) together with another witness (1.B.3). A female slave, which was sold in 633* BCE (below, 1.V) had been sold to the seller’s father, Lā-tubāšanni-Adad (ND 3421), eight years earlier according to Postgate. ND 3460 (archive owner: Nabû-qātē-šabat, buyer of a female slave) from 639* BCE shares at least five common witnesses with the Šamaš-šarra-uṣur archive (1.A.5, C.3, 5, 7, D.6 as well as, perhaps, 1.L. 2 and 1.M’.3). ND 3425 (archive owner: Ubri-Nabû, buyer of a female slave) from 635* BCE has a common witness with the Šamaš-šarra-uṣur archive (1.L.8). Gabbu-āmur is recorded both in ND 3425 and ND 3455. A sale document belongs to the entrance supervisor Mannu-ki-(N)inūrta (below, 1.G.16). The documents from the other rooms of TW 53 have nothing to do with the Šamaš-šarra-uṣur archive. In addition to the seven documents mentioned above, the Šamaš-šarra-uṣur archive has prosopographical links with other archives from Calah, viz. those of the Nabû temple, Ezbu and a dossier about the (N)inūrta temple as well as with the Ninevite archive of Rēmanni-Adad (cf. below, 3).

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6 Wiseman, “The Nimrud Tablets,” 144.