LINGUISTIC IDENTIFICATION OF AN EMAR SCRIBE

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Recently an Akkadian tablet held privately in Tokyo was published by Dr. Akio Tsukimoto.⁽¹⁾ We will call it below “the Miyazawa tablet” after the name of the collector. As Tsukimoto mentioned, it evidently originates from Emar (modern Meskene-Qadime) on the middle Euphrates. Emar was excavated by a French expedition from 1972 to 1976 until it was submerged into a dam.⁽²⁾ Nearly eight hundred Akkadian texts were unearthed at Emar and published by Daniel Arnaud.⁽³⁾ Besides, there are more than two hundred Akkadian tablets, published here and there by several scholars, as those from the vicinity of Emar and from the middle Euphrates region,⁽⁴⁾ part of which are apparently from Emar.

The Miyazawa tablet was written by a scribe by the name of Abi-Kapi. Abi-Kapi, as Tsukimoto pointed out,⁽⁵⁾ is a well-known scribe in Emar. He wrote twelve texts in addition to the Miyazawa tablet, i.e. *RPAE* 4, 14, 126, 144, 156, 157, 159, *ASJ* 12 7, *TSABR* 3, 6, 8, 9. Among them *RPAE* 14, 144, 156 and *TSABR* 3 bear the name of ^dĪŠKUR-GAL as the first witness; *RPAE* 126, *TSABR* 6 that of Abbanu; and *RPAE* 4, 157, 159, *ASJ* 12 7, *TSABR* 9 that of Pilsu-Dagan. Note that all three are members of the royal family,⁽⁶⁾ which can be reconstructed as follows:

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The first witness of the Miyazawa tablet is ^aĪŠKUR-GAL son of Elli.⁽⁷⁾ It follows that Abi-Kapi's scribal career extended over four generations.⁽⁸⁾ Was Abi-Kapi extraordinary long-lived, or were there two scribes with the same name?

Linguistic evidence supports the latter view. The Miyazawa tablet is distinct from the other texts written by Abi-Kapi in the following respects:

1. *SAG.KI* (ll. 9 and 10) is followed by the *IGI* sign. This is not the case with the other texts that Abi-Kapi wrote (cf. *ASJ* 12 7 : 26, 27 ; *TSABR* 3 : 8, 9 ; 6 : 7, 8 ; 9 : 7, 8). Moreover, if the *IGI* sign is a pronominal suffix +*ši* referring to *eqlu* "field", there should be a sort of gender-switching between ll. 5 and 8.⁽⁹⁾ Although a similar phenomenon is attested in *ASJ* 12 6 (written by Dagalli), *eqlu* is consistently treated as masculine in the other texts written by Abi-Kapi (cf. *ASJ* 12 7, *TSABR* 3, 6, 9?).
2. The sentence *be-lu-ū A.ŠÀ^{ma}ĪŠKUR-GAL* "The owner of the field was PN" (l. 11) describes the previous ownership of the field. Such wording is unattested in the other texts written by Abi-Kapi. *X ša Y* "X was Y's" (X=a sold item ; Y=its previous owner) is used instead (*RPAE* 126 : 7 ; 144 : 8-9 ; 159 : 9-10 ; *ASJ* 12 7 : 8, 28 ; *TSABR* 3 : 10 ; 6 : 9 ; 8 : 9 ; 9 : 18).
3. The nominalizer *mannu(m)mē* "whoever" (l. 23) is unattested in the other texts written by Abi-Kapi. A similar curse is attested in *ASJ* 12 7 : 47-50 and *TSABR* 9 : 44-48. In both cases the relative particle *ša* is used instead of *mannu(m)mē*.
4. *saḫāru* D "to turn away" (l. 24) in the curse formula stands in contrast to *nakāru* D "to change (an agreement)" (*ASJ* 12 7 : 47 ; *TSABR* 9 : 44).
5. The *LI* sign of the Miyazawa tablet is written with three horizontal wedges as in Old Babylonian (𒌒), while that of the other texts written by Abi-Kapi has two horizontal wedges as in Middle Babylonian (𒌒).⁽¹⁰⁾

It thus looks quite plausible to assume that there were two different scribes by the name of Abi-Kapi, i.e. Abi-Kapi I (contemporary with ^aĪŠKUR-GAL I, Abbanu and Pilsu-Dagan) and Abi-Kapi II (contemporary with ^aĪŠKUR-GAL II).

It is worth noting here that the language of Abi-Kapi II is different not only from that of Abi-Kapi I but also from that of the Emar royal documents,

viz. texts bearing a name of a member of the Emar royal family. *SAG.KI-ši*, a sentence of the type: *be-lu-ú* X Y (X=a sold item; Y=its previous owner), *mannu(m)mē* and the D stem of *saḫāru* for the curse formula⁽¹¹⁾ are nowhere attested in the Emar royal documents. The most distinctive among them is *mannu(m)mē*. It is widely attested in peripheral Akkadian,⁽¹²⁾ but somehow absent from the Emar royal documents. The fact that Abi-Kapi II did use *mannu(m)mē* indicates that he had a different scribal tradition from the royal scribes of Emar.⁽¹³⁾

Notes

(1) A. Tsukimoto, An Akkadian Field Sale Document Privately Held in Tokyo, *Acta Sumerologica* 14 (1992), pp. 311-315.

(2) The discoveries of the excavations are summarized in D. Beyer (Ed.), *Meskéné-Emar: Dix ans de travaux 1972-1982*, Paris, 1982.

(3) D. Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d'Aštata - Emar VI. 1-4*, Paris, 1985-1987 (abbr. *RPÆ*).

(4) M. Sigrist, Miscellanea, *JCS* 34 (1982), pp. 242-252. J. Huehnergard, Five Tablets from the Vicinity of Emar, *RA* 77 (1983), pp. 11-43. J.-W. Meyer und G. Wilhelm, Eine spätbronzezeitliche Keilschrifturkunde aus Syrien, *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 1 (1983), pp. 249-261. D. Arnaud, La Syrie du moyen-Euphrates sous le protectorat hittite: l'administration d'après trois lettres inédites, *Aula Orientalis* 2 (1984), pp. 179-188. A. Tsukimoto, Eine neue Urkunde des Tili-Šarruma, Sohn des Königs von Karkamiš, *ASJ* 6 (1984), pp. 65-74. D. Arnaud, La Syrie du moyen-Euphrates sous le protectorat hittite: contrats de droit privé, *Aula Orientalis* 5 (1987), pp. 211-241. G. Beckman, Three Tablets from the Vicinity of Emar, *JCS* 40 (1988), pp. 61-68. A. Tsukimoto, Sieben spätbronzezeitliche Urkunden aus Syrien, *ASJ* 10 (1988), 153-189. A. Tsukimoto, Akkadian Tablets in the Hirayama Collection (I), *ASJ* 12 (1990), pp. 177-259. D. Arnaud, *Textes Syriens de l'âge du bronze récent*, Barcelona, 1991 (abbr. *TSABR*). A. Tsukimoto, Akkadian Tablets in the Hirayama Collection (II), *ASJ* 13 (1991), pp. 275-333. A. Tsukimoto, Six Texts from the Middle Euphrates Region, *ASJ* 13 (1991), pp. 335-345. A. Tsukimoto, Akkadian Tablets in the Hirayama Collection (III), *ASJ* 14 (1992), pp. 289-310. A. Tsukimoto, *loc. cit* (note 1 above).

(5) A. Tsukimoto, *loc. cit.* p. 313, notes on l. 36.

(6) For the royal family of Emar, see D. Arnaud, Les textes d'Emar et la chronologie de la fin du Bronze Récent, *Syria* 52 (1975), pp. 87-92; and F. M. Fales, Notes on the Royal Family of Emar, in: D. Charpin et F. Joannès (Eds.), *Marchands, diplomates et Empereurs: Études sur la civilisation Mésopotamienne offertes à Paul Garelli*, Paris, 1991, pp. 81-90.

(7) Note that the Miyazawa tablet shares at least two witnesses with *RPÆ* 144 and *TSABR* 3: *ad-di-ia DUMU da-da* (Miyazawa Tablet l. 28; *PRAE* 144: 28; *TSABR* 3: 26) and *še-um'/(Tsukimoto: ka)-ma DUMU la-a-la* (Miyazawa Tablet l. 33; *PRAE* 144: 30; *TSABR* 3: 30). This suggests that ⁴IŠKUR-GAL son of Elli in the Miyazawa tablet and ⁴IŠKUR-GAL son of Yaši-Dagan in *RPÆ* 144 and *TSABR* 3 may well be the same person. A reevaluation is needed of the genealogy of the Emar royal family.

(8) It is known to the present writer that there is an unpublished tablet bearing

the names of Abi-Kapi, the scribe, and Yaši-Dagan, the father of ^YIŠKUR-GAL. If the readings of these names are correct, Abi-Kapi's scribal career turns out to extend over five generations, which is practically impossible.

(9) *eqlu* is referred by +š^u (ll. 3 and 4) and modified by *annā* (l. 18).

(10) Based on the photograph (*ASJ* 12 7) and Arnaud's hand copies (*PRAE* and *TSABR*).

(11) Cf. A. Tsukimoto, *loc. cit.* p. 313, notes on ll. 23–26.

(12) E. g. Ugarit, Boğazköy, Carchemish, Amurru, Alalaḥ and Nuzi (cf. *AHw*, p. 603b).

(13) Note that another scribe by the name of Abi-Kapi is attested in Tall Munbāqa. Cf. W. Mayer, *Der antike Name von Tall Munbāqa, die Schreiber und die chronologische Einordnung der Tafelfunde: Die Tontafelfunde von Tall Munbāqa 1988*, *MDOG* 22 (1990), pp. 45–66.