THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC HERDING IN
THE FIRST DYNASTY OF BABYLON DURING
THE REIGNS OF HAMMURAPI AND HIS SUCCESSORS
(1792-1595 B.C.)

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This paper presents a synthesis of administration of public herding, and articulates a model of the economic structure of public herding in the First Dynasty of Babylon during the reigns of Hammurapi and his successors (1792-1595 B.C.). The provincial administration of Larsa under Hammurapi and the local administration of Sippar during the Late Old Babylonian period are selected as an empirical case study because a large number of official and private letters as well as public and private contracts of both cities provide a wealth of information about the administration of public herding. The common domestic animals which the public herdsmen took care of were sheep, goats, oxen, cows, pigs, and donkeys. However, this paper concentrates on the administration of the herding of sheep and goats which was the most common and was most often mentioned in our available documents.

I Administrative Roles of Public Shepherds

The central government of Babylon made formal herding contracts with shepherds on an annual basis and entrusted them with public herds against contracted revenues. The working conditions of herding contracts can be reconstructed through analysis of the regulations governing herding (CH 57-58; 261-267), private herding contracts,(1) and herding contracts in the Kingdom of Larsa.(2) The shepherds took sheep and goats to the “non-cultivated pasture land with access to canals (nawūm)” and “arid steppe outside the limits of irrigation land (šērum)” for pasturing,(3) and to the fields for grazing (CH 57; 58) outside of the city enclosure. Herding contracts were generally entered into after

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plucking in the twelfth and the first month, the spring time when the shepherds brought the sheep and annual accounts to the owners. The owners and the shepherds negotiated herding contracts based on the proportion of new births, the shares of products, and the rate of rewards. The shepherds might obtain the surplus or a certain proportion of new births, shares of wool, milk products, goat hair, and skins, and rations/wages. The shepherds were responsible for keeping accounts of herding, bringing the products, and compensating for product shortages (CH 263; 264) when they terminated the contracts. The penalty for breach of contract is mentioned in the Code of Hammurapi (CH 265).

Public shepherds, both the chief shepherds (utullum) and regular shepherds (re'ûm, nāqidum) were, like privately contracted shepherds, contractors who shared in profits from new births and product surplus after the deduction of a fixed amount to cover revenues, and had autonomy to manage herds at their disposal as long as they fulfilled contracted revenues. Therefore, the public shepherds were required to compensate for arrears in their contracted revenues in either barely or silver. The remitting of arrears by shepherds and knackers (susikkum) of the country (mānum) and its environs (nawūm) was codified in the Edict of Ammiṣaduqa to protect public shepherds from debts.

Public shepherds seem to have had the authority to enter into hiring contracts with young shepherds (kaparrum), field rental contracts for grazing with farmers, and commercial contracts with private individuals under their jurisdiction so that they could gain some profit from these private transactions. The chief shepherds claimed that young shepherds who were mistakenly drafted as soldiers (rêdûm) were registered under the chief shepherds (AbB 2 3). In a private herding contract (YBC 5944), the shepherd (re'ûm) subcontracted a young shepherd. The chief shepherds could decide how many young shepherds should be hired as regular shepherds or temporary shepherds so that they could strike a bargain just as with the private herding contracts. In addition, public shepherds could arrange deals with farmers to let their fields for grazing (CH 57-58). Ammiṣaduqa (1646-1626 B.C.) ordered a public shepherd to bring the receipts of sheep and goats which he had lent out when he brought sheep for plucking to the Akitum temple (AbB 2 48-52). It indicates that the shepherd was empowered to make transactions offering the loan of herds to private individuals and he could probably turn some profit from it.
suggests that the silver or barley brought by the shepherd to the central government could be a fixed amount of money requested by the central government from private transactions.

Chief shepherds (AbB 4 13; 44; AbB 9 195), regular shepherds (AbB 4 79; AbB 9 195) and regular young shepherds (AbB 4 118) received ration fields in the province of Larsa, probably in addition to their net share after the deduction of contracted revenues from the products. The central government confiscated fields in the conquered province of Larsa and used them for agricultural products and for rations. The ration fields were basically distributed to regular public workers as a part of rewards so that the central government could save rations/wages in barley or silver, the transportation fees, and the number of officials for delivery. The shepherds who had previously not received ration fields were newly qualified to receive ration fields in the province of Larsa (AbB 9 195). The rate of contracted revenues for public shepherd might be higher than that of private herding contracts because the public shepherds might have received ration fields. Furthermore, they were exempted from military service (AbB 2 3).

It is important to add that military personnel at fortifications were also entrusted with herds by the central government to care for during peace time as part-time public shepherds (AbB 8 132; AbB 6 165; BM 80290(15)) and that they were obligated to satisfy contracted revenues (AbB 1 1; BE 6/1 99). Furthermore, large scale private herding was carried out by wealthy individuals, such as a naditum-woman, while small scale herds in self-sufficient economies were tended by shepherds and/or farmers in rural areas.

II Administration of Public Herding

Herding, one of the most important economic activities, seems to have been directly controlled by the central government of Babylon. The central government of Babylon integrated the herding economy of the conquered province of Larsa without changing the structure of public herding in Larsa. It re-appointed the public shepherds of the Kingdom of Larsa as public shepherds of Babylon, and reassigned herds to them against contracted revenues. It directly controlled public herding in the province of Larsa and organized sheep plucking during the reign of Hammurapi. Hammurapi, himself, summoned the individual shepherds (re'ūm) of the temples and cities in the province of Larsa to
Babylon in order to settle accounts (AbB 2 29; 39). The chief administrator of the provincial administration of Larsa, Sin-iddinam, was ordered to watch the sheep and cattle in Emutbalum, the province of Larsa (AbB 2 58). During the Late Old Babylonian period, likewise, Ammišaduqa directly administered the settling of accounts and plucking of sheep in the Akitum temple in Babylon (AbB 2 48-52; AbB 7 32).

The chief shepherds and regular shepherds were required to bring contracted revenues and reports of accounts to the central government through regional governors (šāpir mātim) and Sin-iddinam, chief administrator of the provincial administration of Larsa, or at the plucking place. The revenues from public shepherds in the province of Larsa were sent to Babylon through the provincial administration of Larsa. All regional governors of Larsa were ordered by Hammurapi to bring oxen and sheep as revenues to Babylon (AbB 13 8). Furthermore, oxen and sheep from the treasury of Larsa and Badtibira were shipped by Sin-iddinam to Babylon (AbB 13 11; 36). Sin-iddinam was also in charge of collecting fattened animals (namriātum) and bringing a report of them (AbB 13 48).

The central government directly organized sheep plucking where the wool was produced and the annual herding contracts were settled and renewed. Hammurapi, himself, organized plucking, appointed a supervisor of plucking, and provided labor forces to carry out the plucking (TCL 17 63; AbB 2 25; AbB 4 86). The plucking of sheep in the province of Larsa was supervised directly by Šamaš-ḫāzir, the chief of agricultural and herding sectors of Larsa and trusted men sent by Hammurapi (AbB 4 86) or the supervisor appointed by Hammurapi (TCL 17 63). Moreover, one thousand workers for plucking were provided by Sin-iddinam under the direction of Hammurapi (AbB 2 25). These temporary, unskilled workers were probably comprised of hired workers, corvée workers, the supplementary force from the soldiers (rēḏūm) and/or public slaves. During the Late Old Babylonian period, sheep plucking in the Akitum temple of Babylon was organized directly by Ammišaduqa. The public shepherd, Ibnī-Sīn, was ordered by Ammišaduqa to bring sheep and receipts pertaining to sheep and goats, which he had lent out, to the Akitum temple (AbB 2 48-52; AbB 7 32) where wool transactions took place under the auspices of the central government (AbB 7 161; 162). After plucking, the wool was stored in the plucking house (bīt buqūmīm) where transactions also took place (TCL 10 13). Wool was sold to private individuals or was lent to the kārum to commercialize it for silver on a
long term basis.\(^{(19)}\) The merchants (\textit{tamkārum}) under the chief merchant (\textit{wakil tamkārī}) at the \textit{kārum} sold wool to private individuals for silver and might have had a chance to gain a profit through these transactions because the central government requested a fixed amount of silver to be sent to Babylon some time later.\(^{(20)}\) Wool was also transferred to a weaving factory which the central government organized with unskilled workers, for the production of woven textiles. The textiles were utilized for the wages of public workers or for commerce and trade.

It seems that compensation money and the reports of accounts were brought directly by public shepherds and chief shepherds in the province of Larsa to Hammurapi or sent through Sin-iddinam to Hammurapi in Babylon. The forty-four shepherds (\textit{re'ūm}) of temples and cities in the province of Larsa (\textit{AbB} 2 29), and the accountants (\textit{šatammum}) of the temples and the shepherd of the Šamaš Temple (\textit{AbB} 2 39) were summoned to go to see Hammurapi in order to settle accounts. Hammurapi required that arrears of revenues be sent to Babylon by the chief shepherd (\textit{AbB} 2 21; 37), and generals (\textit{waklū Amurrim}) and captains (\textit{ša ḫaṭṭātim}) (\textit{AbB} 1 1) as well as through Sin-iddinam (\textit{AbB} 13 9; 33).

In Sippar, the \textit{kārum} also took charge of collecting revenues, including lambs and goat hair, the skins and corpses of animals, and compensation money in barley or silver from public shepherds to store at a local place for redistribution or to send them to the central government. The lambs (\textit{AbB} 2 64; 72; 75; \textit{AbB} 11: 102) and the goat hair (\textit{AbB} 2 53) which were forwarded to the local administration of Sippar (\textit{AbB} 2 64; \textit{AbB} 11 102), of Sippar-Amnānum (\textit{AbB} 2 75), and of Sippar-Yaḥurum (\textit{AbB} 2 53), were sent to the central government during the Late Old Babylonian period. Skins and corpses were brought by public shepherds to the local administration of Sippar (\textit{CT} 8 1c) through knackers of Sipper (\textit{CT} 8 33c). Compensation money was then sent by the shepherd of the palace (\textit{YOS} 13 281; 317), the public shepherd, his sons and a general (\textit{BE} 6/1 99), and the knacker of Sippar (\textit{BE} 6/1 72).

\textbf{Conclusion}

The central government of Babylon directly controlled public herding and had direct contact with public shepherds. It integrated the public herding economy of the conquered province of Larsa into its own sphere, entrusted herds
with public shepherds against contracted revenues, organized the plucking of sheep, and collected revenues and compensation money directly from public shepherds or through Sin-iddinam or the kārum under the reign of Hammurapi. Likewise, during the Late Old Babylonian period, the king directly administered the plucking of sheep and the collection of revenues from herding.

The chief shepherds and regular shepherds were contractors who had the authority to manage the public herds under their jurisdiction, hiring young shepherds, contracting farmers for grazing fields, and making transactions with private individuals as long as they satisfied contracted revenues, that is, a fixed amount of new births and products for the central government. They could have a chance to profit from private transactions. They were paid by wages, the remainder of the products after paying contracted revenues, and/or ration fields. This indicates that the substructure of public herding was integrated into the private economy under a market-oriented system.

Notes

(6) Finkelstein, JAOS 88 (1968): 34. Concerning the wool, J. N. Postgate supposes that all the wool probably went to the owners because the actual quantity was recorded, though the two minas of wool per sheep was made as a standard estimate (Kraus, op. cit., pp. 29-31). Postgate,
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JSS 20 (1975): 5, note 1. However, it does not necessarily mean that all surplus sheep went for plucking so that the shepherd might keep the surplus sheep for themselves and take wool from them.

(7) The wage for a shepherd who tended oxen or small cattle was 8 kur barley per year according to the Code of Hammurapi (CH 261). A shepherd was hired with 8 kur of barley and 1 shekel for clothing (VS 9:59-60). The shepherd was rewarded by 5 kur of barley of wage, 2.2 kur of ration, 1 shekel silver for clothing (UCP 10:58). The shepherds were probably granted ration fields (UET 5:118; 850). Van De Mieroop, BSAg 7 (1993): 170-171.

(8) The account of a shepherd of a naditum-woman includes the number of cattle, the loss and expended, share for another year, arrears, impost and expenditure. A. Goetze, “Thirty Tablets from the Reigns of Abi-esuḫ and Ammi-diṭānu,” JCS 2 (1948): 80-81, No. 9.

(9) Ten to fourteen shepherds (reʾūm) were under one or two chief shepherds (utullūm) (AbB 2:29). A shepherd (nāqidūm) was under a chief shepherd (VS 9:107).

(10) It is interesting to remark that the herds of the Nanna-Ningal temple were “assigned to private shepherds who combined the care of their own herds with that of the temple animals,” Van De Mieroop, BSAg 7 (1993): 166-167.

(11) For example, the king ordered a chief shepherd (AbB 2:21; 37) or regular shepherds (AbB 13:9; 33) to pay the arrears of cattle and sheep/goats. In addition, the silver or barley from public shepherds: annual tax, 2/3 shekel, from a knacker of Sippar and its environs (nawūm) (BE 6I:72); 14 kur of barley from a shepherd and a general (wakil Amûrim), and 1 kur of barley from the sons of shepherd (BE 6I:99); an annual tax (nēmēttum), 10 shekels, from the shepherd of the palace in Ilip, to the kārum of Sippar-Amûnûm (YOS 13:281; 317) was probably in the form of compensation money in order to satisfy the contracted revenues.


(16) The regulations of herding contracts were mentioned in the Code of Hammurapi (CH 57-58; 261-267). Some private herding contracts are listed in Table 1 of J. Postgate. Postgate, JSS (1975): 3.

(17) For example, Iltani, naditum of Šamaš, the daughter of Abi-esuḫ(?) (Goetze No. 22), entrusted 240 herds of cattle to the shepherd in the reign of Abi-esuḫ (1711-1684 B. C.) (Goetze No. 9). Goetze, JCS 2 (1948): 80-81, No. 9 and pp. 94-95, No. 22.

(18) For example, Ubarrum, the chief soldier (qaqqad reḍi) made private herding contracts concerning 4 to 14 flocks. E. Szlechter, “Les tablettes juridiques datées du règne d’Abi-esuḫ conservées au musée d'art et d’histoire de Genève,” JCS 7 (1953): 90-92, Nos. 16-18.


Chart: Economic Structure of Public Herding in the Province of Larsa
Under the Reign of Hammurapi