

INTRODUCTION

The letters contained in this volume are grouped in the following manner:

(1) Texts from the BM collection Budge 1902-10-11 (1-134). This group is divided into two subgroups, (a) texts which belong together on prosopographical grounds (1-60) and (b) texts without prosopographical connections, at least in this volume (61-134). Within this framework texts have been arranged according to their BM number.

(2) Miscellaneous texts (nos. 135-200). Like group 1b, these texts have been arranged according to their BM number.

The collection Budge 1902-10-11 consists of nearly a thousand texts, among which are letters, contracts, economic documents and a number of texts of varied contents. A few texts from this group have been published elsewhere, cf. C.B.F. Walker, *Index to Parts I-L*, 35b (BM 96974 - 97816).

Among the texts belonging to (1a) we can distinguish the following archives:

- (a) Archive of Ilšu-ibni in Sippar (1-9). Letters to him are sent by Iluni and Nabium-nāšir (both in Babylon). To this group also belongs no. 72. The main topic of the correspondence is the conflict between Ilšu-ibni and the judge Ipqu-ilišu. The presence of, for instance, the 'barber' Ipqu-Nabium suggests that the correspondence took place during the early years of Ammišaduqa (R. Harris, *Ancient Sippar*, 84). Compare also Nanna-mansum, GAL.UNKEN.NA erim ká é. gal in 72:30, attested for Aš 16 and 17+a (Yoffee, *The Economic Role of the Crown in the Old Babylonian Period*, 92).
- (b) Archive of Nabium-atpalam in Sippar (10-31). His main correspondent is Marduk-mušallim (16-25), who resides in Babylon (20:17ff. 21:6ff.).
- (c) Archive of Nanna-intuḥ (32-50), probably in Sippar (cf. the mentioning of Sippar in 45:12 and the Šamaš temple in 39:20-21 and 41:12). According to some letters he travels (38 and 50) and is active in business (32, 38, 40, 49 and 50).
- (d) Archive of the businessman Sin-erībam (51-58), who, in view of the prominent position of Šamaš in these letters, probably lived in Sippar. All the letters were sent by his business-partner Awil-ilim. This small group of texts give us an idea of the problems encountered by a traveling businessman in the late Old Babylonian period and - among other things - gives us the range of his activities: Aššūr (54:7, 56:28, 57:9, 58:6), Emar (51:9), Ḫaššum (51:13), Jablija (55:6) and Samānum

(56:8). The merchandise often remains unspecified (*šimum*), but an important commodity appears to have been textiles (51:7ff., 57:11). That a Babylonian merchant would travel north to sell his textiles does not come as a surprise. Not long before these letters were written textiles played an important role in the Old Assyrian trade and many of them were imported from Babylonia (see K.R. Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology*, 98ff.).

The archive is also interesting from the point of view of its terminology, which is often reminiscent of Old Assyrian terminology. Compare, for instance, the expression *kunukkūja*, “under my seals” (51:19); the conjunction *appiš* (also attested in Mari texts; 56:18 & 23); *illatum*, “caravan” (55:8) and *gamrum* instead of *gimrum* (57:17).

- (e) Two letters sent by Tarīša from Aššur to her father and sister, respectively. The letters are almost identical in content.