A FORGOTTEN TEXT FROM ALALAKH VII

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Both in the edition of the Alalakh tablets by Wiseman and in his supplementary copies, the rather difficult text Al.T. *98d remained unpublished. This document was described (The Alalakh Tablets, 56) as a “Part of a contract of sale” in which “Šamši-Adad(IM) buys something (lost) from Ammu-Adad, son of Niqmi-Adad of Airraš for 100+ (shekels) of silver at its full value. Penalty clause broken. The name of only one (Eḫdli-adad) out of 8 witnesses remains.” During a recent visit to The British Museum, I was able to collate the tablet and the results of my study are presented here in transliteration, comments, translation, and handcopy. Only the first eighteen lines on the obverse are well preserved. The remainder of the tablet is badly damaged; only a few traces remain of the penalty clause as well as the traces of the names of the first two witnesses.

Al.T. *98d

Obv.

1. [1] IKU DÛ GIŠ.GEŠTIN
   1 ME 4? ŠÀ.GAL UZ.MUŠEN
   UDU.ḪI.A UGU am-mu-a-da
   DUMU ni-iq-mi-a-du LÚ ša-i-id-b[e]

5. i-na URU a-ir-ra-.še\n   ki-ma\ i-ba-aš-šu-ú
   šu\-ma\ la\-ru\-ú ma-az-za-a[z]
   KI am-mu-a-da
   ù bé-en-di-ma-lik

10. ᵁsa-am-si-IM
   a-na 1 ME 60 KÙ.BABBAR x
   a-na ši-im ga-me-er
   i-ša-am
   a-pil li-ib-ba-šu

15. ṣa-a-ab
   šum-ma am-mu-a-da
   ib-ba-la-ak-ka-at
   1 ME KÙ.[BABBAR]
   [... Ï.LÁ.E]

Brd.

(Several lines lost)

Rev.

[i-na pî-šu a-ba-ra-am’]
 i-ša-áp-[pa-ku’]

1’.

[IGI] i-[ ...]
[IGI] ab-[ba-AN’ ...]
[IGI] be-in-[d]-i-ŠKUR [...]-šu
[IGI] ad-ri-[a-du SUKKAL É.GAL’]

5’.

[IGI] ia-ab-[ ]
IGI mu-[ ]


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3. I wish to thank C. B. F. Walker for permission to collate Al.T. *98d in September 1999 in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities of the British Museum.
IGI el-î-a-du [SUkkal]
IGI a'-tar'-ma-lik
...
(rest broken)

**Commentary**

According to Wiseman’s catalog, this tablet belongs to the sale material *Al.T.* *52–*75: *52–*58 (purchase of several villages by two governors of Alalakh⁵ and by other people), *59–*61 and *65 (purchase of houses and servants), and *62–*64⁶ (purchase of vineyards). *Al.T.* *98d belongs to this last group. Our text is closely related to *63, in which one “Samsi-Adu buys 2 iku of vineyard also in the district of Airrae.”⁷ To this should be added the material cataloged by Wiseman as “Contracts too fragmentary for exact classification,” *95–*98f⁸ that is the group into which the present document was originally classified. These sources therefore have to be taken into account during the analysis of the new text.

Line 1: [?] IKU DÙ GIÅ.GEÅTIN, read [?] iku (IKU) kal (DÙ) karΩni (GIÅ.GEÅTIN); for the use of kalu in stat. const. see CAD K, 88-89a; this entry shows the use of the value kal (DÙ) in late OB times in northern Syria.⁹ The usual formula in the vineyard sales *62:1, *63:1 and *64:1 is, however, x IKU A.ÅÀ GIÅ.GEÅTIN. For the sign GEÅTIN in this line compare R. Borger, *ABZ*,

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I Paläographie, p. 17, number 210, third column, under *kudurrus.

Line 2: The sign ME at the beginning and UZ.MUŠEN at the end of the line are still recognizable. After ME only very faint traces remain. By comparing UZ.MUŠEN with the formula: ŠÀ.GAL UZ.MUŠEN in the ration lists from Alalakh VII *251:6,10,15,26 and *264:11,10 we can surely read the line as suggested above. In close connection with this is the expression: ŠÀ.GAL MUŠEN.HI.A ú-sí (*261:7; *273:4).11 For Akkadian ûsu (UZ.MUŠEN), “duck,” see Borger, *ABZ*, 372; *AHw* 1438b.12

Line 3: A reading UDU for the first sign seems to me the most likely. On the other hand, the sign UGU, although rather damaged, is still recognizable. According to this formula, it appears that the entire property is understood to be charged to or on account of Ammu-Ada as landowner.


Line 5: The city of Airraåe is frequently attested in the Alalakh VII texts.14

Line 6: Although the beginning is quite damaged, one might consider a restoration -ma after the ki- sign. In the expression: ki-ma ibaššū, (see, for example, ki-ma KAR ibaššū, “as the market value is,” VAS 16, 98:10115) it remains unclear whether ki-ma could be interpreted either as a conjunction, in the sense of “as,” “concerning,”16 or as a preposition “corresponding/according to.”17 The verbal form ibaššū, “they are”/“it is,” could refer presumably to the existing property, i.e. the vineyard and foodstuff sold within.18

Line 7: Since the beginning is quite damaged, we can only suggest a tentative reading with all reservations. The phrase might function as an apposition of the preceding line: šu-ma (third sing. masc. anaphoric pronoun šu19 plus the enclitic emphatic particle -ma20), could draw emphatic attention to a possible following subject:21 laru, “branch” and nearly related concepts:22 ma-azza-zal[z] could refer to laru as a nominal predicative.

Except for *28:20 and *36:6, the OB Alalakh texts regularly attest mazzažānu “pledge,” “security,” and mazzažānitu, “state of being a pledge,” after the preposition ana.23 It is not clear whether

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11. Wiseman, JCS 13 (1959) 26, 30. See also the formula: ŠÀ.GAL MUŠEN.HI.A in the following ration lists from Alalakh VII: *241:5; *242:9,11; *243:7,8,19,22; *246:27; *248:5; *257:5; *273:6; *274:18,19,32; *281:3; *283b:10.
15. CAD K, 364a.
20. GAG, §123 a g, see also §126 c–d, g; Giacumakis, The Akkadian of Alalah, 59–60.
22. CAD L, 103b–104; *AHw* 538b: “Zweig,” “Ast;” a PN is quite unlikely.
23. CAD MI, 232b–233a; *AHw* 638a; Giacumakis, The Akkadian of Alalah, 88; B. L. Eichler, Indenture at Nuzi,
mazza[z] would mention here a new case of the mazzazānu-service.\footnote{24} However, assuming that *98d records a purchase of real estate by Samsi-Adu (cf. lines 12–13: \textit{ana šim gamera išām}), a mazzazānu transaction would not be involved in this case, since Ammu-Ada (together with Bendi-Malik) appears as seller of the vineyard. If this be correct, mazza[z] might be interpreted independently of the mazzazānu/mazzazānu texts.

A tentative reading: šu-ma la-ru-ú ma-aż-za-a[z] reminds us in a way to standard Akkadian expressions in which \textit{larū} (logogram PA) appears in close relation to \textit{mazzazu}\footnote{25} and to \textit{padānu} “path.”\footnote{26} Thus, although the actual sense of the line remains unclear, it would appear, by means of this interpretation, that the text could draw specific attention to an additional land part, maybe that of the access way to the vineyard, which could have been included within the full price of the property.

Line 8: Parallels of this use of \textit{itti} (KI), “from,” are attested in a number of transactions from OB Alalakh.\footnote{27}

Line 9: Hybrid PNN are well-known in Alalakh texts. Although as far as I know this Hurro-West Semitic PN Bendi-Malik, “the king is righteous,” is not documented at Alalakh anymore, compare Bendi-Ili (*32:15; *36:7; *38:14,16; *55:36; *455:2ff.), Bendi-Addu (*18:4; *204:2; *270:7,29; *409:34; see A. E. Draffkorn, \textit{Hurrians and Hurrian at Alalah: An Ethno-Linguistic Analysis}, Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959, 47–48), which also occurs at Alalakh IV (154:15,26; rendered: Be-tam-mu in 166:13,17; 180:5; 192:Rev.4; 214+217:Rev.42’; 222: Rev.27’), is not so clear because it can be interpreted as an abbreviation of the Hurrian spelling Bentam-muåuni attested in other sources.

Line 10: Line 10: As already stated, according to *63 presumably the same Samsi-Adu buys 2 \textit{iku} of vineyard at Airrase. He is also mentioned in *96:7, in which Sumunnabi acquires the city of Airraåe respecting the property of Samsi-Adu (\textit{ana epiri ittiq}).\footnote{28} Since both texts are dated to the reign of Niqmepuh of Yamhad, *98d can safely be dated to this same phase.\footnote{29}

Line 11: The sum of 160 shekels of silver parallels that of another vineyard in *62, 30 possibly in the district of Alalakh, which costed 100 shekels of silver plus minor goods. The number of \textit{iku} sold in the present text remains however unclear.

In the already mentioned text *63, 31 Samsi-Adu acquires for 20 shekels of silver 2 \textit{iku} of vineyard also at Airraåe.\footnote{32} As in *63 and *64, the price of the vineyard in *98d consists of the quoted sum of silver. In comparison with that amount, the price of a village or a city was usually much higher. The city of Iburiya (*52), for instance, costed 1000


\footnotesize{24. Mesopotamian lexical evidence indicates, in fact, that real estate may also constitute a mazzazānu, see Eichler, \textit{Indenture at Nazi}, 51 and 78 n. 49; see even in this regard \textit{A.I.T. *41}, where the village of Kunuwe constitutes a mazzazānu-pledge, Eichler, \textit{Indenture at Nazi}, 74–75 (cf. also from MB Alalakh \textit{A.I.T. 49}, Eichler, \textit{Indenture at Nazi}, 77, 87 n. 103).}

\footnotesize{25. See especially \textit{CAD M/I}, 235a and 237b, 4.}


\footnotesize{27. See Giacumakis, \textit{The Akkadian of Alalah}, 80.}

\footnotesize{28. See Na’a’aman, \textit{AnSt} 29 (1979) 110–11. I collated the tablet in September 1998.}


\footnotesize{32. The same is true for Sumunnabi, who bought 3 \textit{iku} of vineyard at Airrase for 27 shekels of silver (*64); see Kienast, \textit{WO} 11 (1980) 62.}
shekels of silver plus 2000 *parisi* of grain.\textsuperscript{33} The village of Ammenaåe (*58) was quite less important, since it costed 100 shekels of silver plus minor goods, therefore, cheaper than the present vineyard at Airraåe. It seems then that this vineyard must have been quite an important property.\textsuperscript{34}

Lines 14–15: For this formula cf. *58:10: *apil libbaåsu tāb and in *61:12: *apil ŠÅ [tāb].\textsuperscript{35} See also *aplu libbašunu ṭāb (*52:16–17).\textsuperscript{36}

Line 17: A parallel of this verbal form in the present 3. sing. is employed in *56:35,39 as well.\textsuperscript{37}

Line 19: In view of other parallel documents,\textsuperscript{38} a penalty clause formula including the sequence Î.LÂ.E might well have been used in this line.

Rev.: For the restitution *i-ša-ap-[pa-ku] see for instance: *8:31; *9:Brd., *28:25–26; *61:18–19 and on its envelope *61A:9–10\textsuperscript{40}; *95:32; *96:Rev.4′–5′.


Line 4': For this tentative restitution see *96:7′, where a certain adri-a-du(?) seems to have been a visir of the palace at Airraåe.

Line 7': For this restitution see *63:17.

Line 8': For this conjectural restitution see *64:10.

**Translation**

“One complete *iku*-field of vineyard, one hundred … food rations for duck (and) sheep, (are) on account of Ammu-Ada, son of Niqmi-Ada, hunter, in the city of Airraåe. Concerning (what) they are/it is, even the located (access) path(?),\textsuperscript{41} from Ammu-Ada and Bendi-Malik, Samsi-Adu bought for 160 (shekels) of silver at its full price. He is paid off; his heart is satisfied. If Ammu-Ada claims, \[he will pay\] 100+ (shekels) of silver ….”

Penalty clause and eight witnesses follow.

\textsuperscript{33} The village of Kunuwe (*53) cost 770 shekels of silver plus 510 *parisi* of grain (see in this regard Eichler, *Inden-ature at Nuzi*, 74–75 n. 34); Akê (*54) 1800 shekels of silver plus grain, animals and other goods; compare also *56: 3 villages and other territories for 3080 shekels of silver plus minor goods; [x]-išabar (*57) for 3000 shekels of silver.

34. In *59, one house at Alalakh costed about 15 shekels of silver; another one at Ebla, however, with its household furnishings (*60), came to 400 shekels.


38. *52:14–21; *58:9–14; *61:13′–19′; *96:Rev.1′–5′.


40. Personal collation (BM, September 1999).

41. *šu-ma la-ru-ú ma-az-za-at[*] lit. theoretically: “*itself the branch (bifurcation)?*” (is) place” (?).