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TWO CUNEIFORM TEXTS FOUND IN ACEMHÖYÜK FROM
THE OLD ASSYRIAN PERIOD*

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Acemhöyük, a site located within the boundaries of Yeşilova Town, approximately 18 km to the northwest of Aksaray, hosts one of the most important archaeological centers of Anatolia. The first excavations at this ancient site, known from cuneiform texts as the city *Burušhattum* or *Ulama*¹ were initiated by Prof. Dr. Nimet Özgüç in 1962 and are being continued by Prof. Dr. Aliye Öztan at present. As a result of excavations carried out here until the present-day, many archaeological findings have been uncovered that shed light on ancient Anatolian history. Especially, ornaments made of lapis lazuli and gold inlays, vases made of obsidian and mountain crystals, metal weapons, copper ingots, ivory goods and cuneiform written documents that were obtained from the interiors of the monumental buildings called the Sarıkaya and Hatipler Palaces and the Service Building are the primary rare findings, which make this ancient settlement a unique one. Studies show that Acemhöyük was inhabited as of the 3rd millennium B.C. and that it was one of the important centers of Anatolia

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¹ Khaled Nashef, *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes IV, Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der altassyrischen Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1991, p. 29-31, 127-128; Gojko Bajramovic, *A Historical Geography of Anatolia in the Old Assyrian Colony Period*, Copenhagen 2011, p. 331-338, 357-378; Nimet Özgüç, *Acemhöyük-Burušhaddum I, Silindir Mühürler ve Mühür Baskılı Bullalar*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2015, p. 2.

during the Assyrian Trading Colonies Period; at Achemhöyük this period is represented by 4 building layers and corresponds to the first quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C.² Nevertheless, it is accepted that the most brilliant period of this ancient settlement was a portion of Level II of *kārum* Kanesh, which is contemporary to the Level III of Achemhöyük that ended with a large fire.³



Photo 1: *Aerial view of Achemhöyük* (Özgüç 2015, 201).

No doubt, the bullae, which have seal inscription stamps on them and the written documents consisting of cuneiform labels, are among the most important group of findings in Achemhöyük.⁴ There is a triangular-shaped bulla, the earliest known written document for Achemhöyük, which was obtained with other findings⁵; a large portion of these findings have been stored in a systemized manner (Photo 2) in the warehouse No. 6 of the Sarıkaya Palace. This bulla was uncovered at the corner of the room located on the plan square RA/45. There is an inscription in Old Assyrian on the upper edge

² Aliye Öztan, "Achemhöyük'den Assur Ticaret Kolonileri Çağı'na Ait İki Ender Buluntu", *Belkis Dinçol ve Ali Dinçol'e Armağan VTTA Festschrifti in Honor of Belkis Dinçol and Ali Dinçol*, Eds. M. Alparslan, M. Doğan-Alparslan, H. Peker (2007), p. 609.

³ Nimet Özgüç, "Achemhöyük Kazıları", *Anadolu X*, Ankara (1968), p. 8.

⁴ Ayşe Karaduman, "Achemhöyük Sarıkaya Sarayı'nda Bulunmuş Olan Etiketlerden Bir Grup", *Muhibbe Darga Armağanı* (2008), p. 283-290.

⁵ Özgüç, *Achemhöyük-Buruşhaddum*, p. 16.

of the bulla where the name of the seal owner, *Aššur-bēl-lamassī*, is recorded.⁶ This name is one of the personal names rarely mentioned in the Kültepe texts; there also were a letter (Kt. k/k 20a) sent to him, a note (BIN 6, 184: 17) related to payments, a list of names (Kt. 73/k 14: 2) of local and Assyrian individuals recorded.



Photo 2: Rooms 5 and 6 of the palace (Özgüç 2015, 214).

Among the historical records brought to light at Acemhöyük are the bullae⁷ stamped with seals of the Assyrian king *Šamši-Adad I*, the civil servant *Liter-šarrussu*, *Nagihanum?*, the daughter of *Yahdun-Lim* king of Mari and the *Aplahanda* king of Carchemish, located at the Sarıkaya Palace have a different significance. Other stamped seals or labels in the Old Assyrian and Old Syrian styles during the Assyrian Trading Colonies Era of Acemhöyük, especially in the period which is contemporary with Level Ib of Kültepe (±1835-1719 B.C.) display the commercial, political and diplomatic relations of the other cities of Anatolia, led by Kanesh, with Northern Mesopotamia and Syria and furthermore, they also reinforce the importance for Ancient Anatolian history⁸.

⁶ Özgüç, “Acemhöyük Kazıları”, p. 10-11; Özgüç, *Acemhöyük-Buruşhaddum*, p. 100.

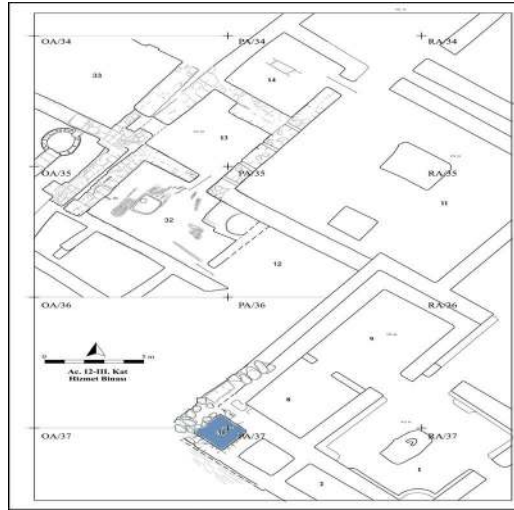
⁷ Nimet Özgüç, “Acemhöyük Saraylarında Bulunmuş Olan Mühür Baskıları”, *Belleten C. XLI*, Sa. 162 (1977), p. 360-381.; Önhan Tunca, “Des Inscriptions de Sceaux-Cylindres Diverses Provenant D’Acemhöyük”, *Aspects of Art And Iconography: Anatolia And Its Neighbors, Nimet Özgüç’e Armağan* (1993), p. 629-633). Nimet Özgüç- Önhan Tunca, *Kültepe-Kaniş, Mühürlü ve Yazıtlı Kül Bullalar*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2001, s. 2; Özgüç, *Acemhöyük-Buruşhaddum*, p. 37 ff.

⁸ Klaas R. Veenhof, “On the Identification and Implications of Some Bullae From Acemhöyük and

Two more documents written in Old Assyrian were acquired for the Achemhöyük cuneiform written record archives during the excavation activities realized in 2012 and 2013. The first of these two documents was a label found in 2012. The other was a tablet, which was awaited for a long time from Achemhöyük and found in 2013.

Label (Ac. 12.52)

The most significant architectural structure brought to light at Achemhöyük after the Sarkaya and Hatipler Palaces is a monumental edifice that was determined in the geophysical measurements in 1994 and revealed during the excavations carried out in 1996. This structure was brought into the open between the Sarkaya Palace and used for official business and the Hatipler Palace, which has the feature of a storage depot and was burned simultaneously with Level III of the city. It is stated that it was abandoned together with the palaces that were subjected to the same disaster.⁹ In this structure, which is deemed to be a “Service Building” due to its features, a new cuneiform written document was added to the documents found at Achemhöyük with the activities realized during the 2012 excavation season¹⁰. This important finding has the attribute of being the first written document obtained in the Service Building. Writing was not determined on the bullae found previously in this building.¹¹



Plan 1: The Service Building

Kültepe”, *Aspects of Art And Iconography: Anatolia And Its Neighbors*, Nimet Özgüç’e Armağan (1993), p. 645-657; Klaas R. Veenhof, *Mesopotamia*, p. 167; Nimet Özgüç, *Achemhöyük-Buruşhaddum*, p. 37-173.

⁹ Öztan, “Achemhöyük’den”, p. 609-621.

¹⁰ Öztan, *ibid*, p. 611.

¹¹ Öztan, “2001 Yılı”, p. 43.

This artifact, which was identified as a label¹² was brought to light in the OA/37 plan square in the Service building, has the dimensions of 3 x 1.8 x 1.1 cm, is in the form of a triangular amulet, has a hole for string, is gray in color and made from baked clay. On the front surface, there is Old Assyrian inscription consisting of three lines, where the last two signs of the long third line, *-na* and *-áš* are written on the (right side of) the reverse. There is no seal stamp present on the label.

Ac.12.52

Obv. *hi-id-ri*

ša a-lim^{ki}

ša Ar-ba-a-/na-áš

Translation: ⁽¹⁻³⁾The *hidrus* of the city belonging to *Arbanaš*.

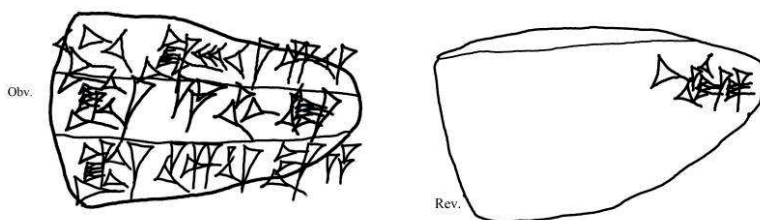


Figure 1-2: *Ac.12.52 Obv.*



Figure 3: *Ac.12.52 Rev.*

¹²The label is from clay, which contains information about the amount of the goods, type, quality and purchaser within packages tied with string. Karaduman, “Acemhöyük Sankaya”, p. 283.



Copy 1-2: *Ac.12.52*

Commentary:

Line 1: *hid(a)ru*: We came across this word for the first time in the Old Assyrian texts and it is difficult to make a clear interpretation. In an Alalakh text (Al. T. 359:1-2) dated to the eighteenth century B.C. and published by D. J. Wiseman in 1953, he gives the meaning of “good quality wool” to the word that is in the expression “68 SÍG *hi-da-ru a-na [Na]-di-na*”.¹³ It is stated in CAD H 182b that it might be a local word used for wool and perhaps it means “a quality of wool?”. It is also expressed in CDA 115 that the word is related to wool (according to Alalakh, Ugarit and Hurrian texts).

D. J. Wiseman, subsequent reading in 1954¹⁴ also records the word as *hi-da-ru*. J. Oliva mostly follows Wiseman’s reading.¹⁵ However, as for the name of the individual *Nadina*, which is also recorded in Al. T. 359:1-2 and is described as a “weaver” in Al. T. 360:1¹⁶, Oliva, on the basis of a new collation, argues that the sign read as SÍG is actually UDU. Oliva argues that UDU with *hidaru* helps understand the latter as *hadiru*¹⁷, and as word might be “related to the age of animals”.¹⁸

As J. Oliva also stated, *Nadina*, the name of the individual recorded in the Al. T. 359: 2 has the attribute of “weaver” in Al. T. 360: 1. Nevertheless, *Nadina*, is not the only individual recorded in Al. T. 359 and in Al. T. 360. *Taki-Ištar* and *Ušše* are the

¹³ Donald J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets, The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara*, London 1953, p. 99.

¹⁴ Wiseman, “Supplementary Copies”, p. 27.

¹⁵ Juan Oliva, “New Collations and Remarks on Alalakh VII Tablets”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 64 (2005), No. 1, p. 19.

¹⁶ The name of this individual is written as 68 SÍG *hi-da-ru* ² *a-na [Na]-di-na* in the Al.T. 359: 1-2¹, whereas, it is written as 80 SÍG *ša.Na-di-na* UŠ.BAR in the Al.T. 360: 1¹.

¹⁷ The meaning of “pen for small cattle” is given for this word in the CAD H 28b and it is also stated as the age of animals, such as lambs and kids.

¹⁸ Oliva, *ibid*, p. 19.

other individuals mentioned in the text. Furthermore, these persons are recorded as connected with SÍG (wool) not UDU in Al. T. 360 and the information states that 260 (talents?) of wool belonging to weaver *Nadina*, *Taki-Ištar* and *Ušše* were delivered to the *Ilu-nabi*.¹⁹ It appears that the individuals mentioned on both tablets must also be the same individuals and it is recorded in these texts that they are probably related to a similar subject. Consequently, according to J. Oliva, it appears to be strange to record the individuals who are connected with UDU (sheep) in Al. T. 359 and to SÍG (wool) in Al. T. 360. Besides all of these, we doubt the reading of the UDU sign copy in Al. T. 359:1 (See Copies 3 and 4).



Copy 3: Al. T. 359. Copy made by
D. J. Wiseman (1954)



Copy 4: Al. T. 359. Copy made by
J. Oliva (2005)

It is expressed that some words in Akkadian have different pronunciations with or without *-a-* and spellings, such as *šikrum-šikarum*, *aklum-akalum* and *himum-himatum/himatum* are shown as examples of this situation.²⁰ A new example can be added to these, in our view, relating *hidru* to *hidaru*, and that *hidru* recorded in our text is one and the same with *hidaru* recorded in the Alalakh text.

Another problem related to *hid(a)ru*, is the matter of where it came from or where it was produced. In the text, one reads *hid(a)rus* “of the city” (*h. ša alim^{ki}*). We know that in the Old Assyrian texts, generally the *Ālum* “city” refers the city of Assur. Nevertheless, it is known that *ālum* was also used for Anatolian cities. However, in case when this word was attributed to an Anatolian city, it was written immediately before

¹⁹ Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, p. 99.

²⁰ Ömer Kaşya, “Kültepe Metinlerinde Geçen *himum* Kelimesinin Anlamı Üzerine”, *Archivum Anatolicum* 9/1 (2014), p. 64.

the name of the city, such as in the examples of *ālum Kaneš*, *ālum Šalatuwar*²¹, *ālum Uša*, *ālum Armamana*, *ālum Habušna* and *ālum Harsanna*.²² Accordingly, for the word *hid(a)ru* to occur both in an Alalakh text and in the context of Acemhöyük's economic relations with Northern Mesopotamia, then it should primarily be thought that *Ālim^{ki}* expression in our text refers to "the city of Assur".

The meaning of *hid(a)ru* is open to debate. The proposal by J. Oliva that it is preceded by UDU instead of SÍG is confusing due to the reasons stated above. The facts that the labels obtained in Acemhöyük concerns textiles, the Alalakh record to wool, and that these goods came from an Assyrian city, indicate *hid(a)ru* could be a type of special textile product made of wool.²³

Line 3: *Arbanaš*: This a personal names we have encountered for the first time in Old Assyrian texts. The presence of the *-áš* syllable, which is generally observed at the end of a name in local Anatolian personal names, such as in the examples of *Arawaš*, *Karumuwaš*, *Šalkuataš* and *Tudhiliaš*²⁴ establishes that *Arbanaš* is an Anatolian name. Furthermore, the fact that the label was obtained in the structure called the Service Building makes one think that this person could have been a local civil servant working here.

Tablet (Ac. 13.32)

Without a doubt, the most important architectural structure at Acemhöyük is the Sankaya Palace. This two-story structure is located to the southeast of the mound and was used²⁵ from around the beginning of 2nd millennium B.C. to around the middle of the seventeenth century B.C. Excavations have brought to light 50 rooms on the ground floor, with abundant findings.²⁶ In the excavations realized in 2013 to the south of this monumental structure, which is one of the most beautiful examples of the ancient Anatolian palace architecture, a tablet was found for the first time at Acemhöyük. The royal and administrative seals belonging to the Assyrian and

²¹ Nashef, *ibid*, p. 12, 45, 130; Cahit Günbatu, "Kültepe'de Bulunmuş İki Anlaşma Metni", *Bellelen* LXIX, Sayı. 256, T.T.K.Y. (2005), p. 2-3.

²² Kemal Balkan, "Review article of ICK 2", *OLZ* 60 (1965), p. 7; Günbatu, *The letter sent*, p. 88-90.

²³ For the textiles and textile trade in the Ancient Assyrian Period, see Cecile Michel-K.R. Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians in Anatolia (19th-18th centuries BC)", *Textile Terminologies In The Ancient Near East and Mediterranean From The Third To The First Millennia BC* (2010), p. 210-271.

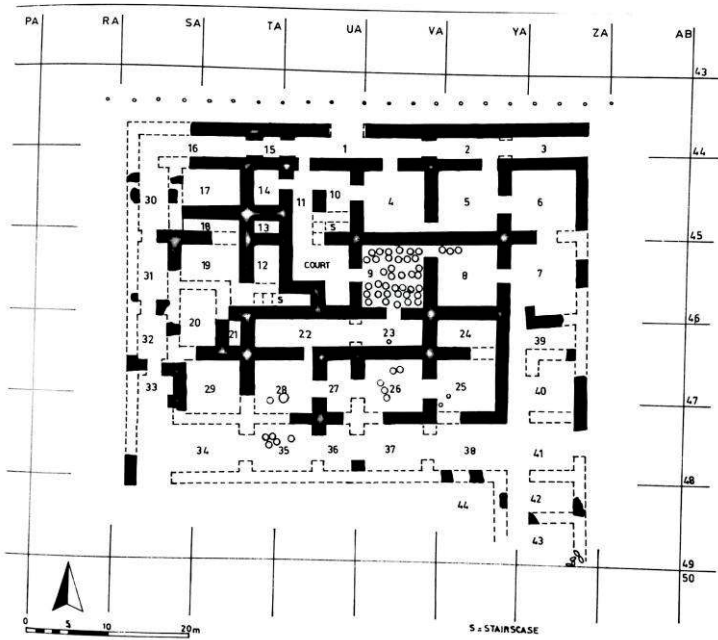
²⁴ Kt 88/k 713a-b, Veysel Donbaz, "Some Remarkable Contracts of 1-B Period Kültepe Tablets II", *Aspects of Art And Iconography: Anatolia And Its Neighbors, Nimet Özgüç'e Armağan* (1993), p. 145-146.

²⁵ Özgüç, *Acemhöyük-Burushaddum*, p. 16.

²⁶ There is major damage caused by the Roman-Hellenistic structuring, illegal excavations and erosion. See Özgüç, *ibid*, p. 5.

Northern Syrian palaces brought to light at this building makes the document finding even more important.²⁷

The tablet found in grid VA/51 of the plan square has the dimensions of 2.2 x 2.8 x 1 cm and is made of camel hair dough and well-baked clay. There are 10 lines written in Old Assyrian on the horizontal rectangular tablet. The contents of the tablet are not completely understood due to broken pieces. However, with the aid of the completed parts, the record concerns shoes and shoes parts, and their receipt by certain individuals and a king. There is no information at all on the text of the tablet to help date it. However, Carbon-14 results of the materials used for filling of the Sarkaya Palace where the document was found show that it dates to the late stage of the Old Assyrian Period, around \pm 1710-1700 B.C.²⁸



Plan 2: *The Sarkaya Palace* (Özgüç 2015, 199)

²⁷ See Özgüç, “Achemhöyük Saraylarında”, s. 360 ff.; Tunca, “Des Inscriptions”, p. 629-633; Nimet Özgüç-Ö. Tunca, *Küllepe-Kamiš*, p. 2; Özgüç, *ibid.*, p. 37-173 for the seals of the Assyrian king I. Šamši-Adad, Nağihanum?, daughter of the Mari king Yahdun-Lim and the Carchemish king Aplahanda and other seal stamps.

²⁸ I thank Prof. Dr. Aliye Öztan who shared this information.

Ac.13.32.

- Obv.** *a-na šé-[ni²*
 ^m*Ša-hi-[x*
 DUMU *Nad[i-x²*
 ru-ba-u[m
- Lo. E.** 5. ^m*Ú-ki-ša*
- Rev.** *a-na ar-bi₄-š[u'*
 ša-hi-ra-[an/tim¹
 A-si-nu-[um
- U. E.** *a-na e-[x*
 10. *il₅-qé-ú*

Translation: ⁽¹⁻⁵⁾ *Šahi[...]* son of *Nad[i...]* (and) king *Ukiša* (took) shoes (and) ⁽⁶⁻¹⁰⁾ *Asīnu[m]* took four pairs of *šahiratum* (all) for e[...].



Figure 4: *Ac.13.32. Obv.*



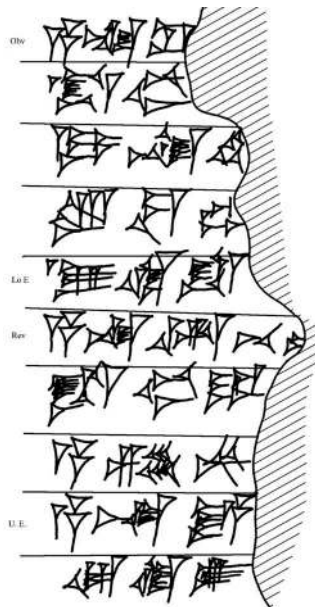
Figure 5: *Ac.13.32. Lo. E.*



Figure 6: *Ac.13.32. Rev.*



Figure 7: *Ac.13.32. U.E.*



Copy 5: *Ac. 13.52.*

Commentary

Line 1: *šēnu*. The word *šahiru*, which is in the seventh line of the broken part of the text, was completed by taking into account the passages which use this word together with *šēnu* in the Old Assyrian texts (CAD Š/I 97). It connected with the word *šēnu* “sandal, shoe” (CAD Š/II 290, 1.a). Furthermore, based on the spelling of *ana arbīšu* (four times) in the 6th line, it might be thought that the expression could also be *ana šī-[ni-šu]* (two times). Given tablet space, it does not appear possible to fit either [šū] or any other sign into the broken part. Nevertheless, while *šēnu* was generally written as *šé-né-en* or *šī-ni-in* in Old Assyrian texts, texts dating after the Old Assyrian period²⁹ which supply the plural form of *šēnu* makes us believe that the spelling of *ana šé-[ni]* existed as the plural form of this word on line 1.

Lines 2-3: *Šahi[...]* DUMU *Nad[i...]*. The personal names cannot be read completely due to breaks. To our knowledge, a similar patronymic name has not been identified in Old Assyrian or other cuneiform. On the other hand, it might be thought that the broken part could be completed in the form of *ša-hi-[ra-an/tim]*. However, the fact that there is a vertical sign in front of the names of the individuals at the beginning of both the line and there is not room to fit the *-ra* or *-an/tim* signs at the end of the line, is a problem for reading the expression *ša-hi-[ra-an/tim]*.

Lines 4-5: *rubā’um Ukiša*. The cuneiform records found at Achemhöyük present the word *rubā’um* “king” on a previously read bulla for *Aššur-emūqi*, the son of *Abu-šalim* and with the expression “the seal of the slave *Aššur-emūqi* to King [...]”.³⁰ The name of this individual, which is observed frequently in Old Assyrian texts, is registered as son of *Abu-šalim* on the debt contract no. Kt 87/k 257, which was found at Kültepe and the dating on the document shows ± 1876 B.C.³¹ Accordingly, it is understood that *Aššur-emūqi* had good relations with the Achemhöyük Palace. A package was sent to the King of Achemhöyük carrying the seal of *Aššur-emūqi*. The name of the King of Achemhöyük cannot be determined due to a text break.

The personal name *Ukiša* does not occur in the Old Assyrian or other contemporary cuneiform. The “king” word, which identifies this individual, is rendered in the nominative case on the tablet. We encounter a similar expression in a historical letter giving the news of the death of the Assyrian king *Šamši-Adad I*, published by C. Günbattu.³² This is Kt. 01/k 217, which preserves the spelling *ru-ba-um* ^dUTU-šī-^dIM “king *Šamši-Adad*”.

Furthermore, by adding [ša] to the end of line 4, *ru-ba-u[m ša] Ú-ki-ša* “king of

²⁹ CAD Š/II 290, 2 and 292, d).

³⁰ Özgüç, *Achemhöyük-Burushaddum*, p. 74.

³¹ *Imum Šilūlu* (REL, 94).

³² Günbattu, *The letter sent*, p. 88.

Ukiša” or by adding the [(i)-um] locative suffix, the *ru-ba-u[m] Ú-ki-ša-[(i)-um]* “king of *Ukiša*” expression can be completed and we can also evaluate *Ukiša* as the name of a place. However, there is not enough space on the tablet to write the missing signs needed to support these probable readings, so these can be discarded.

Line 6: *ana arbīšu*. This word, by providing the meaning of “four times” (CAD E 255), is connected with the word *erbēšu*. It is recorded for the first time in this text with the verb *leqû* (to take).

Line 7: *šahirātum* is the plural form of the word *šahiru* “shoe” (as in KT VI-a, 388), which in CAD Š/I 97 is given the meanings of “an article of footwear or part of one”. It frequently occurs with the word *šēnu* “sandal, shoe” in the Old Assyrian texts (CAD Š/II 290, 1.a).

Line 8: *Asīnu[m]*. The last sign is missing due to the break. However, when the phonetic spelling *A-sī-nim* of the personal name *Asīnum* in the Old Assyrian texts is taken into consideration (ICK 3, 21a:1; 21b: 9), the broken sign can be completed with the *-um* syllable.³³

Conclusion

As a result of the 2013 excavations, after Kültepe, Boğazköy, Alishar, Kaman-Kalehöyük and Kayalıpınar, Acemhöyük also took its place among centers in Anatolia where Old Assyrian tablets were found. Due to the fact that there are names, which to our knowledge appear for the first time in the Old Assyrian texts, and due to the nature of its content, there are no textual hints for a date. However, its orthographical features and the filling of the Sarıkaya Palace, which is also contemporary with the Level Ib of Kültepe, and the discovery of the Service Building, give an Old Assyrian period date. Carbon-14 results of the materials for the filling of the Sarıkaya Palace where the tablet was found show dates to around ± 1710-1700 B.C., hence indicating the time around the end of the Old Assyrian Period.

The label (Ac.12.52) belongs to a local individual and mentions a thing called *hid(a)ru* that was probably sent from Assyria. The tablet (Ac.13.32) is a record of goods purchased by some individuals among whom was a king by the name of *Ukiša*. Of Mesopotamian and North Syrian origin, the royal and administrative seal stamps discovered at the Sarıkaya Palace, which also mention a king, may mean that the individuals mentioned on these stamps could be important figures. Furthermore, the two documents studied in this article once again show that Acemhöyük, one of the

³³This name can also be compared with *A-zī-nu-ú*, which is stated could be a name in the Mari texts and could be an individual's name in Akkadian (ARM VII.190.16) H. B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts*, (1965), p. 109, n. 62.

main cities of Anatolia in towards the end of the Old Assyrian period³⁴, preserved its importance when the economic relations between Anatolia and Northern Mesopotamia decreased. Acemhöyük again proves to be an important archaeological center for Ancient Anatolian history.

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³⁴ Günbattu, "Kültepe'de Bulunmuş", p. 778.

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