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Summary: The Verb *i*-KU-PU-*šum* in the Shamash-Temple Brick Inscription
Since George Dossin published the Shamash-Temple Brick Inscription in 1955 it has attracted repeated attention from scholars on account of its rich geographic and historic information. Yet despite the text's certain readings as well as several erudite investigations into its historical significance, at least one oddity continues to trouble interpreters. In column IV: 27 the difficult verbal form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* introduces the curse-section: "The one who plunders that temple, who *i*-KU-PU-*šum* for evil and wickedness…" This article reviews the previous treatments of the verbal form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* and offers a new explanation of it.

Keywords: Yahdun Lim – Mari – Amorite – Curses

Resumen: El verbo *i*-KU-PU- *šum* en la inscripción del templo Shamash
Desde que George Dossin publicó la inscripción del templo Shamash en 1955, ésta ha atraído constantemente la atención de números especialistas gracias a la abundante información geográfica e histórica que la misma brinda. Sin embargo, a pesar de la gran cantidad de miradas sobre este texto y de las investigaciones eruditas que destacan su significancia histórica, hay ciertas problemáticas de interpretación que continúan hasta en la actualidad. En la columna IV: 27, la difícil fórmula verbal form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* introduce la sección de la maldición: "El que saquea el templo, quien *i*-KU-PU-*šum* por el mal y la maldad..." Este artículo revisa la definición de la forma verbal *i*-KU-PU-*šum* y ofrece una nueva explicación de la misma.

Palabras Clave: Yahdun Lim – Mari – Amorreo – Maldición

In 1953 during the ninth season of excavations André Parrot unearthed nine bricks with each containing the same text. The bricks were commemorative inscriptions that had been placed in the inner cella of the temple for Shamash at Mari, and they recounted the military exploits of the Mariote king, Yahdun-Lim.[1] George Dossin promptly published a composite text of these inscriptions and confidently remarked that the epigraphic reading was assured, "jusqu'au dernier signe, on peut même dire jusqu'au dernier clou."[2] Since the publication of the *editio princeps* by Dossin, the Shamash-Temple Brick Inscription (= SBI) has attracted repeated attention from scholars on account of the text's rich geographic and historic information.[3] Yet despite the text's certain readings as well as several erudite investigations into its historical significance, at least one oddity continues to trouble interpreters.[4] In column IV: 27 the difficult verbal form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* introduces the curse-section: "The one who plunders that temple, who *i*-KU-PU-*šum* for evil and wickedness…"[5] The form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* is one of two attested examples of an otherwise unknown Akkadian verb.[6] The contextual meaning of the verb is clear; it connotes a damaging or detrimental action. At the same time, the verbal root has been explained in several different ways, none of which have forged a scholarly consensus. This article reviews the previous treatments of the verbal form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* and offers a new explanation of it.

[1] Margueron 2004: 503–504.

[2] Dossin 1955: 2.

[3] Malamat 1965: 365–373.

[4] The SBI has long been recognized to contain several linguistic difficulties. For example, column II:19 3 contains the phrase *ḫa-mu-ṣa-am iḫ-mu-uṣ-ma*, which has only recently been illuminated by Durand, who has argued that it describes the erecting of a commemorative stone monument (Durand 2005: 93–4, 140–1). Additionally, the abstract form *maqtūtum* in column III: 29 (*ma-aq-tu-sù la uš-za-zu*) is only attested in the SBI. The form *maqtūssu* in the Yahdun-Lim inscription is a well-formed abstract Akkadian noun that is derived from the verb *maqātum*. Yet the form *maqtūtum* is unique. More common words found in similar phrases of restoring desuetude include abstract forms of the verbs *enēšum anāḫum* as well as the *pars*-noun related to the verb *maqātum*.

[5] IV: 24-27; 27) *ša bi-ta-am ša-tu* 25) *ù-ša-al-pa-tu* 26) *a-na li-mu-ut-tim* 27) *ù la da-mi-iq-tim i-qú-bu-šum*.

[6] The other attestation is from a tablet recovered at Tell Asmar that has been cited, in part, in the CAD Q 99 *qâpu C* and will discussed further below.

The History of Interpretation

In the *editio princeps,* Dossin transcribed the signs in column IV: 24-27 *ša bi-ta-am ša-tu ù-ša-al-pa-tu a-na li-mu-ut-tim ù la da-mi-iq-tim i-ku-pu-šum* and translated, "Celui qui détruira ce temple, qui l'abandonner à la decadence et à la deterioration…."[7] Dossin's initial, intuitive rendering of the form *i*-KU-PU-*šum*, while without explanation, has been followed by nearly all subsequent interpreters. And like Dossin, most have done so without attempting to explicate the verb; rather, the form *i*-KU-PU-*šum* has simply been translated *ad sensum*. A. L. Oppenheim, for example, rendered the passage "Whoever desecrates this temple, *assigns* it to evil and untoward purposes…." At the same time, Oppenheim indicated his uncertainty about the form and candidly remarked in a footnote that, "[t]he signs *i-ku-pu-šum* cannot refer to a verb "abandonner," nor to *qâpu*. The translation given is a guess proposed to fit the context."[8] Likewise, Sollberger and Kupper inferred the meaning of the verb from its unambiguous context, and translated the clause without comment, "Celui…qui le laissera à la degradation et à la ruine…."[9]

Von Soden, by comparison, posited an etymology for this verb, which related it to the root *ʾkp* ("to come close, to approach"). He rendered the passage: "wer zum Bösen … *i-ku-pu-šum* an ihn (den Tempel) herantritt."[10] Von Soden's solution, however, seems unlikely because the theme-vowel of the verb *ekēpum* is consistently /i/, whereas the form in the SBI shows a /u/ vowel. The *CAD*, too, has provided an interpretation of this form, reading the signs as *i-qú-pu-šum* in its entry for the middle weak/biconsonantal root, *qâpu* C ("to intend harm"). Perhaps what is most significant about the CAD's analysis is its comparison of the form from the SBI with another form, *li-qú-up,* found in a fragmentary, unpublished tablet from Tell Asmar. The Tell Asmar text cited by the CAD, reads as follows: "As long as PN and I are alive, I will not desire his evil and his hostility. [If] Akkadum, Yamūt-balum, Numhi'um, or Ida-Maraṣ *li-qú-ub* [against] PN for evil or hostility, I will take up weapons" (*adi PN u anāku balṭānu lemuttašu u nikurtašu l*[*a*] *aḫaššeḫu Akkadum Yamūt-balum Numḫi'um Idamaraṣ ana lemuttim u nikurtim* [*ana*] *PN li-qú-ub* [*ka-a*]*k-ki eleqqēma*).[11] This text adds to our understanding of the

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[7] Dossin 1955: 16.

[8] Oppenheim 1969: 556 n. 4.

[9] Sollberger and Kupper 1971: 247.

[10] *AHw*, 195.

[11] The translation is adapted from the CAD Q 99 *qâpu* C.

verb in question by confirming its negative connotations, yet it does not provide evidence for the interpretation of the verb as a middle weak root and leaves the etymology largely unsettled. In fact, that the interpretation of this verbal form was not satisfactorily resolved is indicated by the translation of the SBI in *RIME*, where the editors were even reluctant to translate the verbal form and rendered the passage in question: "(As for) the one who destroys that temple, who … it to evil and no good."[12]

The most recent analysis of the verb *i*-KU-PU-*šum* has come from J.-M. Durand.[13] Durand has sought to nuance the interpretation of the CAD, suggesting the existence of a lemma **quāpu*, which he relates to the noun *qīpūtum*. He explains that, "…le *qîpûtum* d'époque amorrite résulte d'un accord passé entre deux individus et dérive, non pas du verbe *qiâpum* signifiant "avoir confiance", mais d'un **quâpum* (le pseudo *qâpu* C, "intend harm", de *CAD*) qui note justement l'accord passé entre deux rois contre un autre adversaire."[14] Durand's solution is certainly possible and it adds argumentative force to the suggestion made by the CAD. He maintains that the verbal forms in question are from a middle weak/biconsonantal root (*quāpum*), which he correlates with the well-known noun *qīpūtum*. At the same time, however, that the noun *qīpūtum* should be connected with the less well known verb in the SBI and Tell Asmar tablet is perhaps not the most parsimonious solution. That is, correlating *qīpūtum* with the less certain lemma found in the SBI and Tell Asmar text rather than the better understood verb *qiāpum* ("to trust")*,* as well as the nominal form *qīptum* ("trust, loan") and the adjective *qīpum* ("trustworthy") is far from certain.

An Alternative Proposal

Having briefly reviewed previous treatments of the verbal form *i-qú-bu-šum* in the SBI and the related form *li-qú-ub* in the Tell Asmar tablet, I would now like to offer an alternative solution: that the verbal root √ʿ*qb* best explains these forms. This root is well-attested in West and South Semitic in both verbal and nominal forms, whereas in Akkadian it is rare (e.g. *eqbum*, "heel"). In fact, that the root √ʿ*qb* is attested at all in Akkadian is likely the result of a complex process of language contact, since the attestations are concentrated in periods with West Semitic cultural influences (i.e. the Old Babylonian and

[12] Frayne 1990: 607.
[13] Durand 2000–2001.
[14] Durand 2000–2001: 701.

Neo-Assyrian periods). I am not suggesting that *i-qú-bu-šum* or *li-qú-ub* was calqued from an Amorite dialect or represents an "Amorite-ism." The process of language use and contact has been repeatedly shown to be more complicated than often imagined.[15] But what I am proposing, however, is that the attestation of the root √ʿ*qb* fits the broad pattern of "Amorite" cultural contacts that characterized the first half of the second millennium. That Amorite dialect(s) affected the Akkadian written at Old Babylonian Mari cannot be dismissed too quickly. While in many—if not most—respects the Akkadian written along the central Euphrates is consistent with typical Old Babylonian,[16] the influence of Amorite dialect(s) is detectable in lexical items such as the social and political titles *šāpiṭum*, *sugāgum*, *merḫum*, and *kaltum*. Furthermore, collocations for concluding a treaty may also have possible origins in West-Semitic parlance.[17] Even several verbal roots that are used in less specialized contexts attest to West-Semitic influence in this period, as is the case for *ḫarāšum, kazābum* and *sakānum*, just to note a few.

   In support of the suggestion that the verbal root √ʿ*qb* lay behind the forms in the SBI and Tell Asmar text, it should be noted that the forms *i-qú-bu-šum* and *li-qú-ub* conform to the basic meaning for the root √ʿ*qb* as attested in West and South Semitic. Since the verbal root √ʿ*qb* is likely a denominative verb derived from the common noun ʿ*qb* ("heel"), the nominal forms of this root in West Semitic illustrate the trajectory for the verbal connotations of the root: Hebrew √ʿ*qb*: ʿ*āqēb* ("heel"), Hebrew ʿ*ēqeb* and Arabic *tʿqb* ("end, result"), and Hebrew ʿ*āqōb* ("sly"). For example, in Classical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic the G-stem conveys the ideas "to follow after, to creep up behind, to bring consequences on" and by extension, "to take advantage of, to turn against, to betray and defraud."[18] In the D-stem, by comparison,

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[15] Issues related to writing a language, language use, and language contacts in the Near East are well discussed by several of the contributions in Sanders 2006. Concerning cuneiform texts that discuss Amorites (*amurrûm*), it is important to bear in mind Fleming's caution against understanding them as an essentialized ethnic group (Fleming 2004: 39–43: the term "… carries a subtle trap, always twisting our understanding toward a southern Mesopotamian perspective..." (Fleming 2004: 39). For a more extensive and nuance review of literature regarding the "Amorite question," see Michalowski 2011: 82-121.

[16] Durand 1997: 39–49; Durand 2004: 113–114.

[17] For example, the expressions *qaṭālum ḫayyārum* and *lipit napištim,* they are never found together, which has led Charpin to conclude that these expressions correspond to two cultural traditions for conducting foreign politics, one in keeping with traditional southern Mesopotamia culture and another following northern and western traditions.

[18] The verbal root, as was noted by A. Guillaume long ago, has a remarkable breadth of meaning (Guillaume 1964: 285–286). For an overview of the root, see Militarev and Kogan 2000:

one finds an intensive meaning "to hamper, hinder, assail" in both Hebrew and Ugaritic, where in the latter the D-stem participle *mʿqb /maʿaqqib-/* (CTA 1.18 I.19) is attested with the meaning "one who opposes".[19]

The syntax in both Akkadian attestations, too, is not without some similarity with West Semitic usage, where an intransitive use of this verb is attested. For example, in the Hebrew Bible, in Jer. 9.3b, one reads: כָל־אָח עָקוֹב יַעְקֹב וְכָל־רֵעַ רָכִיל יַהֲלֹךְ ("Every brother takes advantage, every friend spreads slander"). And likewise, the G-stem in Ugaritic is used intransitively with the meaning "to takeover, encroach" (RS 19.109: 1) *šd . snryn . dt . ʿqb b . ayly* "The field of GN$_1$ which encroaches on GN$_2$"). And morphologically, the two attested forms of this verb reveal that the theme-vowel of both the preterite and that of the durative for the verb in question is /u/, which conforms with the propensity for intransitive verbs in Akkadian to have u-class theme-vowels.[20] The form *līqub* found on the Tell Asmar tablet is a precative, which shows the theme-vowel of the preterite,[21] whereas the form *i-qú-bu-šum* in the SBI must be judged a durative based upon the numerous durative verbal forms in the immediate context:

> *Whoever plunders (ù-ša-al-pa-tu) that temple and i-qú-bu-šum for evil and wickedness, does not strengthen (ù-da-na-nu) its footings, does not restore (uš-za-zu) that which has collapsed and cuts off (i-pa-ra-su-šu-um) offerings from it, who erases (i-pa-ši-ṭú) my inscribed name or causes it to be erased (ù-ša-ap-ša-ṭú) and inscribes (i-ša-ṭá-ru) his name which was not inscribed, or because of the curse instructs (ù-ša-ḫa-zu) another…*

14–15. For Classical Hebrew, see Koehler and Baumgartner 1994: 872; for Aramaic, see Sokoloff 1990: 414–415 and Jastrow 1903: 1140; for Old South Arabic, see Beeston *et. al*: 1982: 17–18 and Biella 1982: 379–380.

[19] See Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2004: 176. While lexicographers have delineated a second valence for the root √ʿqb within West Semitic corpora, the meaning discussed above is connected with the verbal root √ʿqb is found in colloquial West Semitic whereas the second, positive connotations of this root ("to protect, guard watch") is restricted to West Semitic prosopography as observable in Amorite and biblical personal names (see Streck 2002, §2.171-72 and Noth 1928: 177. A similar meaning is also preserved in South Semitic colloquial usage as well (Leslau 1991: 66).

[20] Less likely is that the u-vowel reflects the theme-vowel of the West Semitic imperfective, which was *yaqtulu*. In West Semitic, the *yaqtulu*, however, tends to be transitive and that in West Semitic the finite forms of the root √ʿqb are typically transitive.

[21] The u-class theme-vowel for the preterite is also attested in the prosopographic data (*e.g.*, Gelb 1980: 265).

At the same time, it should be noted that the forms *i-qú-bu-šum* and *li-qú-ub* found in the SBI and Tell Asmar text, respectively, are construed in each case with two prepositional phrases, both of which are complements: one that indicates against what or whom the verb's action is directed (i.e. *dativus incommodi*) and the other elaborates the purpose of the verbal action (*dativus finalis*).

The solution proposed above, then, attempts to clarify the meaning of these verbal forms in question and yields a translation for the pertinent passages "Whoever plunders that temple and brings consequences on it for evil and wickedness..." for the SBI. As for the Tell Asmar tablet, it should be rendered: "As long as PN and I am alive, I will not desire his evil and his hostility. (If) Akkadum, Yamut-balum, Numhi'um, or Ida-Maras brings consequences on (*līqub*) PN for evil or hostility, I will take up weapons." At the same time, in addition to explaining these verbal forms as conjugations of the root $\sqrt{\ ^c qb}$, the proposed solution also illustrates the active process that characterized the composition of curses found in royal inscriptions and treaties during the "Amorite age." Michael Guichard has observed that curses were the result of extensive literary and social processes; they were conscientiously formulated, they were not simply stock phrases.[22] In a letter preserved at Mari (A.2968+), Hammu-rabi reportedly complained to Zimrī-Līm that the curse-section that concluded a proposed treaty between the two kings was too severe.[23] As a result, Hammu-rabi appealed to the curses found in the treaties of his predecessors at Babylon such as Sin-muballiṭ and perhaps even treaties concluded with Yahdun-Lim of Mari.[24] This glimpse into the thoughts and perceptions of the king of Babylon, a glimpse only letters could provide, casts new light on what might be a misperception that curses were rigidly formulaic. As Guichard has summarized:

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[22] Guichard 2004: 16ff.

[23] The phrase is *áš-pa-le-ˀe-emˋ ša ṭup-pí an-ni-im ma-di-iš du-un-nu-un* (A.2968+: 73, 74). See the commentary by Guichard on the lemma *ašpalûm* (Guichard 2004: 25). Also note, as observed by Guichard, that this expression is mirrored in the Akkadian of the Yahdun-Lim Inscription under consideration here, only nine lines after the form *i-qú-bu-šum*.

[24] Hammu-rabi reportedly instructed Zimri-Lim to consult other exemplars of treaties between sovereigns retorting: "There are oath-tablets from the time of Sumu-El and Sin-muballiṭ, my father. And since I have entered the throne of my father's house I have sworn an oath with Shamshi-Addu and many (other) kings; moreover, these tablets are extant!" (76) *a-nu-um-[ma ṭup-pa-at ni-iš* DINGIR-*li]m ša iš-tu su-mu-ˀelˋ* ᵈSEUN-*mu-ba-ˀlí-iṭˋ a-bi-ia* 77) *ù iš-[tu a-na-ku-m]a a-na* ᴳᴵˢGU.ZA É *a-bi-ia e-ru-bu* [*it-ti*] ᵈUTU-ᵈIM *ù* LUGAL.MEŠ *ma-du-tum* 78) *ni-iš* DINGIR-*limáz-ku-ur ù ṭup-pa-tum ši-nai-ba-aš-še-e...* [A.2968+: 76–78, in Guichard 2004]).

> L' "intensité" des malédictions qui a suscité une si vive reaction de la part de Hammu-rabi implique d'ailleurs, que la chancellerie de Zimri-Lim ne s'est pas contentée de reproduire un modèle figé. Mais elle s'est appliquée à sortir du formulaire habituel. On peut supposer que les malédictions sont à la fois plus longues que d'habitude, plus percutantes et terribles par leurs images que les autres exemples connus par Hammu-rabi. La manière dont ce "genre littéraire" a pu évoluer se laisse ainsi entrevoir autrement que par la simple comparaison des malédictions qui nous sont par venue. Les malédictions ne représentent pas une partie convenue, mais elles constituent au contraire l'aspect le plus vivant du texte du traité.[25]

The proposal that the root $\sqrt{\,^{\varsigma}qb}$ lay behind the forms *i-qú-bu-šum* and *li-qú-ub*, which have been discussed above, then, may solve a lexical difficulty as well as serve to illustrate the complex socio-political processes associated with composing cuneiform texts and even more specifically the innovative lexical choices and the creativity of curse-sections during the "Amorite age."

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[25] Guichard 2004: 31.

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