

A DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE PEOPLE'S PRESENCE
AT THE *BĪT ASĪRĪ* DURING THE REIGN OF RĪM-ANUM

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This paper offers an approximate calculation of the number of prisoners who were actually present in the bīt asīrī in different dates during Rīm-Anum's reign. It starts from a comparative analysis of texts from his kingdom, with a particular focus on those registering flour allocations for the same "house of prisoners of war". Furthermore, it links the possible numerical growth of prisoners to other texts which record military activities entailing the capture of numerous prisoners.

Keywords: prisoners of war; Rīm-Anum; Old Babylonian texts; Uruk; demographic study

1. THE PLACEMENT OF THE *BĪT ASĪRĪ* DURING THE REIGN OF RĪM-ANUM

The Palace of King Sîn-kāšid (fig. 1) was discovered by J. Jordan¹ during his first excavation season at Uruk/Warka in 1912-13. Its excavations were resumed after the Second World War in the seventeenth mission (1958-59) and continued until the twenty-second campaign in 1963-64.² During these systematic excavations in the Palace were found more than 300 Old Babylonian texts and fragments dated to various kings of Uruk,³ some of which are dated to the kingdom of Rīm-Anum. Most of the Old Babylonian tablets come from a pit found under the floor of room 35 during the 1960-61 campaign. The great majority of the texts dated to Rīm-Anum were found in room 30 (quadrant Ea XIV 4) near the door to courtyard 23. Here, under a deposit of carbonized palm wood and shards, were found seventy-nine Rīm-Anum's texts. Other five tablets dated to Rīm-Anum were found in quadrant Dc/d XIV 4, room 12 at ground level (W 20038, 30);⁴ in quadrant Eb XIV 5, room 35 (W 20038, 31);⁵ in room 2 (W 19622a);⁶ in quadrant Eb XIV 4, room 53 (W 20198).⁷ The eighty-four Rīm-Anum texts found in the Sîn-kāšid's Palace at Uruk are now housed in Baghdad and Heidelberg, specifically 60 are in the *Seminar für Sprachen und Kulturen des Vorderen Orients* in Heidelberg and 24 in The Iraq Museum of Baghdad. All of them are published by Mauer⁸ and mainly by Sh. Sanati-Müller in several issues of the journal *Baghdader Mitteilungen*.⁹

¹ Jordan 1928; 1930. About the Sîn-kāšid's Palace see also van Ess 2014-2016, 482-483, with Abb. 10.

² Lenzen (ed.) 1956; 1961; 1962; 1963; 1964; 1966. See also Margueron 1982.

³ All these Old Babylonian texts were published in several issues of *Baghdader Mitteilungen* (1963-2000).

⁴ Published in Mauer 1987, no. 32.

⁵ Published in Mauer 1987, no. 33.

⁶ Published in Sanati-Müller 1992, no. 179.

⁷ Published in Sanati-Müller 1995, no. 210. Whereas for Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 300 no information is available about the place in which it was found.

⁸ See Mauer 1987.

⁹ These texts, which have the inventory number W 20052, were published in: Sanati-Müller 1992, no. 185 (W 20052, 22); 1996a, nos. 212 (W 20052, 33), 213 (W 20052, 89), 215 (W 20052, 30), 216 (W 20052, 132), 217 (W 20052, 132A), 218 (W 20052, 132B), 219 (W 20052, 132C), 223 (W 20052, 132G), 226 (W 20052, 115C), 227 (W 20052, 102), 228 (W 20052, 23), 229 (W 20052, 13), 230 (W 20052, 52), 231 (W 20052, 90), 232 (W 20052, 29), 233 (W 20052, 24), 234 (W 20052, 28), 235 (W 20052, 32), 236 (W 20052, 5), 237 (W 20052, 19), 238 (W 20052, 20), 239 (W 20052, 31), 240 (W 20052, 77), 241 (W 20052, 45), 242 (W 20052,

From this whole group of texts we know that Rīm-Anum ruled over Uruk in Southern Mesopotamia. We do not know if his kingdom started from Uruk or if he took power on this city from another area. Nevertheless, we can certainly say that the Rīm-Anum kingdom has been located for some time in the city of Uruk, since the first year of his reign, which is called here Lugal-year-name,¹⁰ but is also referred to elsewhere as Rīm-Anum 1¹¹ or 0.¹²

All the texts from area 30 dated to the reign of Rīm-Anum deal with reeds and wood. The thematic homogeneity of these texts is also reflected in their chronology: they are all dated to the 9th-10th months of the Rīm-Anum's Lugal-year-name, so all these texts were likely kept in a single basket.¹³

Even if the eighty-four texts dated to Rīm-Anum coming from the Sîn-kāšid's Palace are mainly records of reeds and wood, there are also records dealing with sheep, textiles, silver, and other items.

In room 30, quadrant Ea XIV 4, two tablets were also found dated to Samsu-iluna; both are from his seventh year.¹⁴ Together with another document dated to Samsu-iluna's eighth year,¹⁵ these texts are the only known ones dated to the Samsu-iluna Kingdom coming from Uruk.

75), 243 (W 20052, 47I), 244 (W 20052, 47II), 245 (W 20052, 16), 246 (W 20052, 46), 250 (W 20052, 104), 251 (W 20052, 18), 252 (W 20052, 38), 254 (W 20052, 53), 256 (W 20052, 91), 257 (W 20052, 92), 259 (W 20052, 126); 2000, nos. 268 (W 20052, 65), 269 (W 20052, 60), 270 (W 20052, 37), 271 (W 20052, 74), 272 (W 20052, 40), 273 (W 20052, 42), 280 (W 20052, 140B), 281 (W 20052, 140C), 282 (W 20052, 140D), 284 (W 20052, 140F), 292 (W 20052, 140N), 293 (W 20052, 140O), 295 (W 20052, 140Q), 302 (W 20052, 64), 303 (W 20052, 84), 306 (W 20052, 98), 308 (W 20052, 63), 316 (W 20052, 108BI+II), 322 (W 20052, 8), 323 (W 20052, 9), 324 (W 20052, 10), 326 (W 20052, 14), 328 (W 20052, 21), 330 (W 20052, 26), 331 (W 20052, 27A), 334 (W 20052, 35), 338 (W 20052, 44), 340 (W 20052, 50), 343 (W 20052, 59), 344 (W 20052, 61), 345 (W 20052, 62), 347 (W 20052, 67), 351 (W 20052, 80A), 352 (W 20052, 80B), 356 (W 20052, 82A), 359 (W 20052, 83), 362 (W 20052, 88), 363 (W 20052, 95), 366 (W 20052, 101), 367 (W 20052, 102), 374 (W 20052, 113), 383 (W 20052, 123B). To these one might add two texts mentioned in Falkenstein 1963, 13-14 (W 20038, 37, 41). See also Charpin 2014, 124; Rositani 2023, 17-18, fn. 5 with reference to previous bibliography; Seri 2013, 22 fn. 5, 371-377 (Catalogue).

¹⁰ On the reconstruction of Rīm-Anum year-formulas see Rositani 2003, 10-15 (with previous bibliography); Michalowski - Beckman 2012; Seri 2013, 29-36; Charpin 2014, 125-128; Rositani 2020, 196-198, fns. 11, 13, and 17: 1) Lugal-year-name: mu *ri-im-^da-nu-um* lugal.e, "Year: Rīm-Anum (became) king"; 2) Rīm-Anum's Unug-year-name: mu *ri-im-^da-nu-um* lugal.e numun.da.rí nam.en.na.ke₄ unug^{ki}.ga ù á.dam.bi un suḥ.a.bi si bí.in.sá (/ mi.ni.ib.gi₄), that, according to Charpin 2014, 126-127, remembers the proclamation of a *mīšarum* edict by Rīm-Anum in his first year of reign: "Année où le roi Rīm-Anum, semence éternelle de royauté, proclama une *mīšarum* pour la population déroutée (= troublée) d'Uruk et de ses environs", see Charpin 2014, 129; 3) mu *ri-im-^da-nu-um* lugal.e ma.da *e-mu-ut-ba-[lum ugnim]* èš.nun.na ì-si-in^{ki} ka-zal-lu e.ne.bit.a.gin₇ unug^{ki}.se me.a in.si.súg.es.[àm] [gàr.dar] érin.na.[bi] mi.ni.in.gar.ra níg.ul.dù.a.[ta] unug^{ki} sahar.ra la.ba.[dub².ab²].ba sahar ba.dub².ba.a.ba [mi.ni.in.sár].sár.re nam.á.gál.la.a.ni kala.ma [mi].ni.[in.ri].a, "The year in which King Rīm-Anum, the (forces of) the land of Emutbalum, the armies of Ešnunna, Isin and Kazallu, as if all together (with him), having presented themselves at Uruk for war, inflicted a defeat upon their troops. Since time immemorial Uruk had never experienced (such) a dust storm (raised by a foreign army), but after the dust storm settled, he slaughtered (all of them) and by his power ejected (them all) from the homeland" (for the latest reconstruction of this year-formula see Michalowski - Beckman 2012, 426-428).

¹¹ See Seri 2013, especially 29-36.

¹² See Charpin 2014, 125-126.

¹³ See Charpin 2014, 124, with fn. 19.

¹⁴ Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 321, dated to 16.VIII.Si 7; no. 320, dated to 19.VIII.Si 7.

¹⁵ Rositani 2003, 195-197, dated to 11.VIII.Si 8.

Many other texts dated to the same king Rīm-Anum came from the antiquities market and are scattered in various Museums in Europe and the United States,¹⁶ more than three hundred and thirty texts of which there is not any direct information regarding the archaeological context of provenance. Nevertheless, the great majority of them are linked by prosopographical or other internal evidence to the *bīt asīrī*, “the house of prisoners” and can be attributed to this institution, from which, undoubtedly, they came from.¹⁷

The texts from Sîn-kāšid's Palace and those from the *bīt asīrī* are different from each other for typologies of registrations and in general, for the personnel employed. However, they present some elements and personal names in common, which allow us to say that they come from the same context. Among the elements surely common to the two groups, there is the seal of Etel-pī-Erra¹⁸, son of Enannatum, servant of the god Iggalla, which occurs in texts from both the *bīt asīrī*¹⁸ and the palace of Sîn-kāšid.¹⁹ A certain Ištar-ilum also occurs in both groups. He occurs as zadim, “maker of bows and arrows”, in three texts coming from the *bīt asīrī*²⁰ and in one text coming from Sîn-kāšid's Palace.²¹ One of these texts coming from the *bīt asīrī*²² and one from Sîn-kāšid's Palace²³ preserve the impression of his seal: Ištar-ilum / dumu Sîn-gāmil / warad Nin-siana. Moreover, another text from Sîn-kāšid's Palace²⁴ mentions as conveyor a certain Marduk-nāšir who occurs, with the same function, also in a text from the *bīt asīrī*.²⁵ The text from Sîn-kāšid's Palace registers the delivery of a person received by Mār-Bābilim, whose name is well attested in the *bīt asīrī* texts, where he received workers for the é.āgrig, “the house of the āgrig-official”. Although this text is badly preserved in the reverse, the name of Sîn-šēmi might occur. Sîn-šēmi is a well-known *bīt asīrī* official who features in almost all the *bīt asīrī* texts as ugula *asīrī* “overseer of prisoners” or as ugula *bīt asīrī* “overseer of the house of prisoners”. The occurrence of his name is therefore considered one of the most important keys to

¹⁶ In particular, these texts are kept at the Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire of Bruxelles (Belgium); at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève (Switzerland); at the Musée di Louvre, Paris, and at the École Pratique des Hautes Études de Paris (France); at the Museo Archeologico di Firenze, Florence (Italy); at the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Germany); at the British Museum of London, at Liverpool, and at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (United Kingdom); at the Free Library of Philadelphia (USA); at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum (USA); at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago (USA); at the Princeton Theological Seminary (USA); and at the Yale Babylonian Collection, Yale University, New Haven (USA). See Charpin 2014, 123, with fn. 14; Rositani 2021a, 258; Seri 2013, 21, tab. 1.

¹⁷ For a list of *bīt asīrī* texts dated to the reign of Rīm-Anum see Rositani 2018, 42, fn. 2; 2019, 288, fn. 4; 2020, 194, fn. 2 (in chronological order of publication); 2021a, 257-258, fns. 1, 2, 4, 5; 2023, 17, fn. 1; Seri 2013, 377-403. To these must be added a text published in Jursa 2019 (Birmingham A.1731-1982) and another two *asīrum* texts also kept in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, see Jursa 2019, 507, with fn. 2. Moreover, it needs to be added Rositani 2021a, 273-275, nos. 8 (BM 86108), and 9 (BM 88590A); 2021c; 2021b, text BM 86101; 2023, 24-45, texts nos. 1-7, especially nos. 1, 3-4, 6-7.

¹⁸ See Rositani 2003, no. I.4 seal I; I.5 seal I; I.10 seal I; I.13 seal I; Seri 2013, App. 1 no.1; Rositani 2009, 101-104, texts nos. 2 seal and 4 seal. See especially 102, commentary to text no. 2, *Seal* with fns. 23-26.

¹⁹ See Sanati-Müller 1996a, nos. 228, 257; Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 347. See also Seri 2013, 24-25.

²⁰ See Simmons 1978, no. 340 (I.IV.Uruk-year-name); Rositani 2003, II.75 (22.I.Emutbalum-year-name); Seri 2013, App. 1, n. 41 (24.IX.[Rīm-Anum ...]).

²¹ See Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 303 (20.I.Emut-balum-year-name).

²² Rositani 2003, II.75.

²³ Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 303=W 20052, 84.

²⁴ Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 366=W 20052, 101.

²⁵ Rositani 2003, II.13.

pinpointing a text's belonging to the *bīt asīrī* -an "artificial archive",²⁶ as it were, composed, as already seen, of texts from the antiquities market, spread through many museum collections. Moreover, also Sanati-Müller 2000, no. 320 (W 20052,1) one of the two texts found in the Sîn-kāšid's Palace dated to Samsu-iluna 7 (19.VIII.Si 7) seems to deal with prisoners and with the *bīt asīrī*.

On the basis of these common elements between the two groups of tablets, we can deduce that also the *bīt asīrī* texts come from the palace of Sîn-kāšid at Uruk, where the same *bīt asīrī* must be located.

This geographical placement posed a problem due to the more than fifty-year gap between the last-known occupation of the palace and the beginning of Samsu-iluna's reign, during which the power of Rīm-Anum over Uruk is chronologically located.²⁷ Although there is no complete scholarly consensus on the exact duration of Rīm-Anum reign,²⁸ the mainstream opinion is that he came to power in Southern Mesopotamia and reigned at least over the city of Uruk, during the South Mesopotamian rebellion to the Babylonian supremacy that started in the eighth year of the Samsu-iluna's reign²⁹ (1742 BC, according to the middle chronology of the Hammurabi's reign).³⁰ Rīm-Anum is thought to have maintained his rule for almost 18 months until Samsu-iluna 10 (1740 BC),³¹ in an arc of time corresponding to three years of reign, identified by the three different year-formulas already seen.

The problem of the long gap in the palace occupation between the last-known occupation of the palace and the eighth year of Samsu-iluna's reign is not insurmountable. Because the Sîn-kāšid Palace was very near the modern surface of the mound, we have no real information as to the building's occupational history after its initial construction, nor, for that matter, about the uses to which that area might have been put after the building's eventual abandonment or destruction.³²

These considerations must be combined with the archaeological context in which the Rīm-Anum texts were excavated. Indeed, as seen before, the majority of the texts dated to Rīm-Anum found in the palace of Sîn-kāšid at Uruk during regular excavations were found in area 30.

From all these textual and archaeological data, we can infer that Rīm-Anum collocated in the palace of Sîn-kāšid at Uruk the base of his military and economic activities. It is possible to imagine the Sîn-kāšid palace as a production complex comprising different economic units related to each other: the "house of the weavers", (*é.mí.uš.bar.meš*); the "house of the birds" (*é.mušen.ḫi.a*); the "fattening house" (*é.gurušda / bīt mārī*), to which may be added a place for cattle; the "palace kitchens" (corresponding to the *é.âgrig*, the "house of the administrators" with the *muḫaldim*, "cooks"); a granary for flour production,

²⁶ According to Yoffee 1977, 7 an "artificial archive" is a group of texts assembled according to internal criteria and prosopographical research.

²⁷ See deJong Ellis 1986, with reference to previous bibliography; Gasche 1989, 128-129; Sanati-Müller 1996b; Charpin 2001.

²⁸ See Rositani 2003, 15-26; Seri 2013, 29-36; Charpin 2014, 128-130.

²⁹ See Rositani 2003, 16; Charpin 2014, 129.

³⁰ For the history of the Old Babylonian Period see Charpin 2004a.

³¹ See Rositani 2003, 11-26, her hypothesis has been confirmed by Charpin 2014, 128-130.

³² See deJong Ellis 1986, 68-70.

and the *bīt asīrī* itself as well as some other economic activities connected with reeds and wood, mentioned in the Rīm-Anum texts discovered in area 30 of the Sîn-kāšid palace and also in some *bīt asīrī* texts.³³ The production complex thus outlined at Uruk during the Old Babylonian period is similar to the reconstruction of the royal “Industrial Park” of Ĝirsu/Lagaš during the Ur III period.³⁴

2. REAL NATURE AND CONSISTENCY OF THE *BĪT ASĪRĪ*

It is worth recalling that, as early as 1961, W.F. Leemans³⁵ suggested that the *asīrū*³⁶ in Rīm-Anum's texts must have been foreigners and that “these foreigners had evidently come under the control of Rīm-Sîn and Rīm-Anum as prisoners of war, or at least in connection with hostile actions between two states in the capacity of hostages or something similar”. In fact, in ancient Mesopotamia, labour force could be obtained in different ways, which included house-born slaves (people whose parents, one or both, were already slaves), debt-slaves (free citizens who failed to pay their debts and then lost their freedom, thus becoming servants of their creditor and working for him), deportation (foreign subjected ethnic groups coming from conquered countries), piracy slavery (foreign people abducted by pirates from their homelands and sold as enslaved people abroad), and prisoners of war.³⁷ The latter were usually foreigners who had been taken as booty during military campaigns and then brought to the winners' cities as chattel-people, “captives”, where they were employed as forced labourers or slaves.

We need not discuss this statement any further, for it has been accepted by all scholars, mainly those who have dealt with the Rīm-Anum texts since. It stands to reason that the *asīrū* stayed at the *bīt asīrī*, “the house of the prisoners”, from where they were taken by different figures to be used as slaves or forced labourers. As can be inferred from many texts, we know that the prisoners of war were brought to the *bīt asīrī* and were later allocated to various institutions or individuals for various purposes. The prisoners remained in the *bīt asīrī* until their delivery to individuals or economic units as labour forces and returned there between assignment periods.³⁸ They were often employed in government activities. Sometimes they were counted as war booty (*šallatu*), with the precise indication of the place and the way in which they had been taken captive, which could sometimes be different than their place of origin, i.e. the city or territory where the prisoner presumably was born. In most tablets, the military officials who captured the prisoners and brought them to the *bīt asīrī* are also mentioned. Moreover, the prisoners are usually indicated in tablets as precisely as possible by their names, gender, age group, sometimes also by profession, and family relations.

³³ Some *bīt asīrī* texts register reedworkers, or “overseers of the reed workers”: Rositani 2003, no. II.45 (see also Seri 2013, 133, 334); no. II.68; Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 28. Another text registers reed products, maybe baskets: Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 39.

³⁴ See Borrelli 2019, 110 with fn. 33, 112; Heimpele 1998; 2009, 167; Rositani 2021b, 24-25 with reference to previous bibliography; Sallaberger 2016, 241.

³⁵ See Leemans 1961, 66-74, for the feature of the term *asīrū* in the Rīm-Anum texts see especially 70.

³⁶ See *AHW* 1 74 “(Kriegs-) Gefangener”; *CAD A/II*, pp. 331-332, s.v. *asīru*: “prisoner of war, captive foreigner used as worker; often wr. a.si/sī.rum as pseudo-log”; Landsberger 1935-1936, 144.

³⁷ See Gelb 1973, 70-71; Reid 2015, 2016, 2018; Richardson 2019; Stol 2011; Van Koppen 2004, 11; Westbrook 1995.

³⁸ See Rositani 2020.

Immediately after being captured, prisoners of war seem to have become property of the Palace and most of them probably remained under the permanent control of the crown; in fact, as can be seen from some of the 141 Rīm-Anum texts coming from the *bīt asīrī* that register the management of the war prisoners and their assignments to different centres or specialists as labour force,³⁹ they were turned over to the *bīt asīrī* after the conclusion of the period in which they were in service to individuals or households: they were kept in the *bīt asīrī* before being assigned, and between various allocations.⁴⁰ Prisoners were put “under the authority/responsibility of” (ni.šu PN), meaning that they were in temporary service under a designated person’s authority. However, the prisoners always remained under the authority of the *bīt asīrī*, in fact, as recorded in many texts, also when they were assigned to other households, they remained under the supreme authority of the *ugula asīrī*, the “overseers of the prisoners” and, therefore, under the authority of the Palace.

This hierarchy in prisoners’ control can also be highlighted in the “death certificates”, a small group of texts that record the death of prisoners.⁴¹ In fact, in these texts “ni.šu PN” indicates the person in whose service or under whose responsibility the prisoners of war were at the time of their death, the first to note a prisoner’s death. A further guarantee of the registration of the death was the certification of the conveyors (*giri*), that in the majority of the *bīt asīrī* “death certificates” are Nabī-ilīšu, and the *ugula é.meš*.⁴² The title *ugula é.meš*, “overseers of the house(s)”, is never preceded by personal names, and could be considered the group of those responsible for the various households who acted together as conveyors to declare the death of prisoners. The attestation of death was then confirmed by those who affixed their seals, who had taken part in the official ascertainment of death and guaranteed its veracity; many texts have two seals impressed, some of which are of the same people who recur as conveyors in the texts. The conveyors and those who affixed their seals officially ascertained the death of the prisoner, confirming the death declaration of those who had responsibility for the deceased persons (ni.šu).

These “death certificates”, therefore, had a purely administrative and probably legal function, while no importance was given to the deceased themselves; in fact, none of these texts states the cause of death. All these formal guarantees were used to prevent a false death from being used as a trick to hide the escape of prisoners, but, above all, their purpose was to update the lists of war prisoners and thus to update the flour assignments.⁴³

Therefore, the *bīt asīrī* seems to have been an institutional entity, managed by the state and belonging to it in the same way as prisoners. During the period in which the prisoners were held in the *bīt asīrī* they were under the authority of an “overseer of the prisoners of war” (*ugula asīrī*) or an “overseer of the house of prisoners of war” (*ugula bīt asīrī*), the most frequently mentioned officeholder in the texts is the above mentioned Sîn-šemi. Indeed, it must be construed as a physical place where the prisoners of war were held captive and housed for the necessary time, a “camp de transit” where the prisoners stayed

³⁹ About this typology of texts see Rositani 2020, with reference to previous bibliography.

⁴⁰ See Rositani 2020.

⁴¹ See Rositani 2023, 23-45, texts nos. 1-7, with reference to previous bibliography.

⁴² See Rositani 2023, 21-23.

⁴³ See Charpin 2012, especially 21-29; Rositani 2023, especially 18-23, with reference to previous bibliography.

for a brief time between their arrival until the time of their assignment or between one assignment and another.⁴⁴

3. TEXTS AS INSTRUMENTS FOR A DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY

The *bīt asīrī* texts dating to Rīm-Anum can be divided into two groups, flour assignments and movement of prisoners. The clear distinction between the two groups allows Charpin to suggest that they were originally kept in homogeneous baskets,⁴⁵ similar to the basket in which the texts coming from the area 30 of the Sîn-kāšid Palace had to be kept, as seen before.

It was suggested that the prisoners were used in the *é.âgrig* as labour force for the milling of flour.⁴⁶ During the time in which the prisoners stayed in the *bīt asīrī*, in fact, it is likely that they were employed for grinding flour and maybe forced to turn grindstones. There is evidence that the *bīt asīrī* was related to a granary. On the basis of the data in Rīm-Anum texts, it is possible to suggest that the *bīt asīrī* could have the capacity of supplying flour, although it is difficult to think that the *bīt asīrī* itself was a granary for flour production.⁴⁷

Part of the flour ground by the prisoners, who doubled as millers, was obviously meant to cover their food needs. Indeed, among the *bīt asīrī* texts, 184 tablets register allocations of flour, of two different types: whereas in the majority of texts (130) the flour is allocated to men, military officials, generals, messengers, temples, and the same lugal (*ĝešbun* texts); another type of texts consisting of registrations in which the flour is assigned to the *bīt asīrī* itself.

The latter type of texts could be of great interest for a study of the number of prisoners housed in the *bīt asīrī*. It is a very homogeneous group of 54 *bīt asīrī* texts, that record quantities of flour as *šuku é a-si-ri*.⁴⁸ They are mostly of quadrangular shape, with the sides measuring between 27 and 37 mm. Unlike the *ĝešbun* texts, in which the preposition *ana* (“for”) precedes the word *ĝešbun*, in the *šuku é asīrī* texts there is no preposition. The term *šuku*, corresponding to the Akkadian *kurummatum*, means “food portion (usually barley or flour, allotted by the administration to dependent persons and domestic animals)”.⁴⁹ Accordingly, these texts record an amount and, occasionally, the quality of flour followed by the characterization *šuku é a-si-ri* “food allocations for the house of the prisoners”, and then the statement that the flour was “issued” (*zi.ga*), “under the responsibility of” (*ni.šu*), the official or the officials in charge. In the majority of these texts two men are mentioned

⁴⁴ See Charpin 2014, 132-133; Rositani 2003, no. II.61; 2020. Differently Seri 2013, 140, who construes the *bīt asīrī* as a simple bureau, an “administrative unit” managing the redistributions of prisoners.

⁴⁵ See Charpin 2014, 124, with fn. 19.

⁴⁶ See Rositani 2018; 2021b, 25-26; Seri 2013, 256. See also Charpin 2014, 138.

⁴⁷ See also Feigin 1934, 224; Rositani 2018.

⁴⁸ In almost all of these texts the “house of the prisoners of war” is written in the proper grammatical form *é a-si-ri*, while in 5 texts, one finds the form *é a.si.rum*, see Rositani 2003, nos. I.29; 37; 45; 53; 54. The pseudo-Sumerian *a.si.rum* is quite common in the Rīm-Anum texts. Moreover, in 2 texts: Rositani 2003, no. I.16 and Simmons 1978, no. 341 one reads *šā* instead of *šuku*.

⁴⁹ See CAD K, 573-574, s.v. *kurummatu*, 1a. For the term “šuku” see Steinkeller - Postgate 1992, 69; Bauer 1989-1990, 82-83. In the *bīt asīrī* texts we usually find the Sumerian term “šuku”; we find the Akkadian counterpart, *kurummat bīt asīrī*, only twice in Rositani 2009, text no. 10:2 and in Figulla 1914, no. 55:1.

with this function of *nì.šu*: Aḫu-waḡar and Nabi-Sîn,⁵⁰ sometimes the two men are mentioned together, whereas in some texts Nabi-Sîn appears by himself. The first is also attested twice as *aḡrig*,⁵¹ strengthening the link between the prisoners of war, the flour grinding and the *é aḡrig*.

In many of these texts that register flour *šuku é asīrī*, the seal of Sîn-šemi, son of Išme-Sîn, servant of Rīm-Anum occurs. As seen before, Sîn-šemi occurs in the great majority of the *bīt asīrī* texts from the Rīm-Anum Kingdom as *ugula asīrī*, or *ugula bīt asīrī*.

None of these texts indicates either the number of the recipients, nor the period covered by the assignments; furthermore, no text indicates the typology of people to whom the flour is allocated. Nevertheless, in none of the *šuku é asīrī* texts occurs the indication *u aḫiātīm* “and dependants” that we find in other flour allocation texts of the *bīt asīrī* archive. In fact, among the *bīt asīrī* texts the term *šuku* occurs in different typologies of flour allocations:⁵²

1. *ana šuku é u aḫiātīm*, “for allocation of the house and dependants”;
2. *ana šuku lugal (u aḫiātīm)*, “for allocation of the king and dependants”;
3. *ana šuku (éren) mu-wa-ar-ba-tim*, “for allocation (of the team) of *mu-wa-ar-ba-tim*”;
4. *ana šuku lú GN u aḫiātīm*, “for allocation of the man of GN and dependants”;
5. *ana šuku é asīrī*, “allocation for the house of prisoners”.⁵³

Seeing as in none of the *šuku é asīrī* texts the indication “and dependants”, *u aḫiātīm*, occurs, it looks more like recipients were the prisoners themselves rather than the personnel of the *bīt asīrī*, such as the guardians or the overseers of the prisoners. This hypothesis is according to the Charpin’s considerations⁵⁴ about three of these texts:

- Seri 2013, no. 15 (9.X.Rīm-Anum-Unug-year-name), in which are registered 36 *šila* of flour;
- Rositani 2003 no. I.55 (11.X.Rīm-Anum-Unug-year-name), in which are registered 48 *šila* of flour;
- Rositani 2009, no. 11 (12.X.Rīm-Anum-Unug-year-name), in which are registered 48 *šila* of flour.

As we can easily see, these texts are dated to within a few days of the same month: 9, 11, and 12.X.Rīm-Anum-Unug-year-name. From this, Charpin infers that the allocations of flour were daily. Moreover, given the quantities of 36, and 48 *šila*, and considering an assignment of one or half a *šila* of flour per person, there could have been 50 or 100 recipients per day inside the *bīt asīrī*.

These considerations of Charpin are in turn supported by other flour allocations recorded in some texts chronological subsequent:

- Rositani 2003, no. I.1 (18.IX.Lugal-year-name), 70 *šila* of flour;
- Figulla 1914, no. 37 (19.IX.Lugal-year-name.IX.19), 70+1/2[?] *šila* of flour.

⁵⁰ The only exception is apparently found in Oberhuber 1960, 77, where one reads: [ni].šu *ba-lum*?

⁵¹ See Simmons 1978, no. 341:3; Rositani 2003, no. I.16:4.

⁵² Seri 2013, 68.

⁵³ In none of the texts here considered the preposition *ana*, “for”, precedes the word *šuku* differently than in the other types.

⁵⁴ See Charpin 2014, 132.

And from other texts in close chronological successions that register the same quantities in sila of flour, such as:

- Rositani 2003, no. I.55 (11.X.Unug-year-name), 48 sila of flour;
- Rositani 2009, no. 11 (12.X.Unug-year-name), 48 sila of flour.

Or as in:

- Rositani 2003, no. I.40 (13.VI.Unug-year-name), 40 sila of flour;
- Rositani 2014, no.1 (15.VI.Unug-year-name), 40 sila of flour.

And again, the similar flour allocations recorded in other two texts chronological close, such as in:

- Rositani 2003, no. I.45 (11.VII.Unug-year-name), 47 sila of flour;
- Rositani 2003, no. I.47 (13.VII.Unug-year-name), 50 sila of flour.

Or in:

- Rositani 2014, no. 6 (18.VI.Unug-year-name), 50 sila of flour;
- Rositani I 2003, no. I.43 (22.VI.Unug-year-name), 55 sila of flour.

Since the ratio was likely of one overseer to ten captives,⁵⁵ it seems to be too much to refer these assignments only to guardians, the overseers of the prisoners, which would imply from 400 to 700 prisoners present every day in the *bīt asīrī*: a number decidedly too high for a transit camp which was the house of the prisoners. Moreover, we can imagine that the ugula *asīrī* and other personnel implied in the *bīt asīrī* have a salary decidedly higher than one or half a liter of flour per day. It appears therefore more likely that the recipients of the flour were not the personnel of the *bīt asīrī*.⁵⁶ So, we can say that in all likelihood the flour was for the meals of the prisoners themselves.

In most allocations, the quantities are accurately specified, often including the indication of the unit of measure. An accurate calculation must have been behind such precision, presumably based on a determined number of sila of flour per each single *asīru* sheltered at that moment in the “house of prisoners”. The close or even coincidental dating of some texts seems to confirm that the allocation had to cover the daily needs of the recipients.

These texts that register flour quantities as “food portion of the house of prisoners” span over a period of about fourteen months, from the ninth month of the first year of Rīm-Anum's reign (27.IX.Lugal-year-name: Rositani 2003, I.2) until to the end of the eleventh month of the second year (23.XI.Unug-year-name: Loretz 1978, no. 35). As far as is currently known, no šuku *bīt asīrī* text is dated to the third year of Rīm-Anum's reign.

Sometimes the allocations even consider a half sila. We can suggest that the daily ration was half a sila of flour per each prisoner or, more likely, that half a sila of flour was the daily ration for women and children, whereas for men the ration was 1 sila per day, a gender and age differentiation that reflects the system of remuneration of the hired workers.

Since these preliminary considerations, on the basis of the data provided by the flour allocations to the “house of prisoners”, an approximate calculation can be suggested of the number of prisoners present in the *bīt asīrī* in the different periods. Here is a list of the allocations in chronological order with an approximate hypothesis of prisoners present in the *bīt asīrī*. The lower number refers to an assignment of 1 sila per person, the higher to ½

⁵⁵ See Charpin 2004b, especially 90.

⁵⁶ See Charpin 2014, 132.

silā per person. If we presume a difference between male, female, and children's assignments probably the real number of prisoners present in the *bīt asīrī* is between the gap of the minimum and maximum number calculated here, likely closer to the average between the two extremes given here inside parentheses followed by an asterisk:

TEXT	DATING	ALLOCATION	PRESENCE
Rositani 2003, no. I.1	18.IX.Lugal-year-name	70 sila of flour	70 / 140 (105*) ⁵⁷
Figulla 1914, no. 37	19.IX.Lugal-year-name	70.5 ⁷ sila of flour	70+½ ⁷ / 141 (106*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.2	27.IX.Lugal-year-name ⁵⁸	90.5 ⁷ sila of flour	90+½ ⁷ / 181 (136*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.3	27 ⁷ .IX.Lugal-year-name ⁵⁹	36.5 ⁷ sila of flour	36+½ ⁷ / 73 (55*)
Simmons 1978, no. 341	1.X.Lugal-year-name	56 sila of flour ⁶⁰	56 / 112 (84*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.6	17.X.Lugal-year-name	142 ⁷ sila of flour	142 / 284 (213*)
Rositani 2014, no.10	20.X.Lugal-year-name	80 sila of flour ⁶¹	80 / 160 (120*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.7	24.X.Lugal-year-name	90 sila of flour	90 / 180 (135*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.9	5.XI.Lugal-year-name	95 sila of flour	95 / 190 (143*)
Rositani 2009, no. 12	5.XI.Lugal-year-name	147//148 ⁷ sila of flour ⁶²	147//8 / 294//6 (221 // 222*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.11	19.XI.Lugal-year-name ⁷	65 sila of flour ⁶³	65 / 130 (98*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.12	21.XI ⁷ .Lugal-year-name ⁷	72 sila of flour	72 / 144 (108*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.14	8.XII.Lugal-year-name ⁷	90 sila of flour	90 / 180 (135*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.16	26.[J].Lugal-year-name	74 sila of flour	74 / 148 (111*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 5	15.I.Unug-year-name	68 sila of flour	68 / 136 (102*)
Rositani 2014, no. 4	29.I.Unug-year-name	60 sila of flour	60 / 120 (90*)
Rositani 2014, no. 2	2.II ⁷ .Unug-year-name ⁶⁴	67 sila of flour	67 / 134 (101*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 30	11.II.Unug-year-name	50 sila of flour	50 / 100 (75*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.19	16.II.Unug-year-name	40 sila of flour	40 / 80 (60*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.20	19.II.Unug-year-name	55 sila of flour	55 / 110 (63*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.24	28.II.Unug-year-name	50 sila of flour	50 / 100 (75*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.29	16.IV.Unug-year-name	45 ⁷ sila of flour	45 / 90 (68*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.30	19.IV.Unug-year-name	40 sila of flour	40 / 80 (60*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 26	23.IV.Unug-year-name	50 sila of flour	50 / 100 (75*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.31	26.IV.Unug-year-name	46 sila of flour	46 / 92 (69*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.37	29.V.Unug-year-name	48 sila of flour	48 / 96 (72*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 34	4.VI.Unug-year-name	40 ⁷ sila of flour	40 / 80 (60*)

⁵⁷ The first number concerns the hypothesis of 1 sila for each prisoner; the second the hypothesis of 0.5 sila for each prisoner; the third, in round brackets and followed by an asterisk, is the calculation of the average between the two digits given above, rounded by one unit in the case of fractional value (e.g. in the second text the average 105.5 is rounded up to 106).

⁵⁸ For the reading suggested here see Rositani 2003, 61-62.

⁵⁹ For the reading suggested here see Rositani 2003, 61-62.

⁶⁰ Here Aḫu-waqar is qualified as aḡrig.

⁶¹ For the reading suggested here see Rositani 2014, 57-58.

⁶² See Rositani 2009, 114: 2 (nigida) '2¹ (bán) 4+¹3//4¹ sila, "147//148(?) sila (of flour), food allocation for the house of the 'prisoners of war'".

⁶³ See Seri 2013, 325.

⁶⁴ For the date suggested here see Rositani 2014, 43-44.

Rositani 2003, no. I.40	13.VI.Unug-year-name	40 sila of flour	40 / 80 (60*)
Rositani 2014, no.1	15.VI.Unug-year-name	40 sila of flour	40 / 80 (60*)
Rositani 2014, no. 6	18.VI.Unug-year-name	50 sila of flour	50 / 100 (75*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.43	22.VI.Unug-year-name	55 sila of flour	55 / 110 (83*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.44	29.VI.Unug-year-name	35 sila of flour	35 / 70 (53*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.45	11.VII.Unug-year-name	47 sila of flour	47 / 94 (71*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.47	13.VII.Unug-year-name	50 sila of flour	50 / 100 (75*)
Rositani 2014, no. 9	18.VII.Unug-year-name ⁶⁵	50 sila of flour	50 / 100 (75*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 13	24.VII.Unug-year-name	45 sila of flour	45 / 90 (68*)
Rositani 2014, no. 8	15.VIII.Unug-year-name ⁶⁶	58 sila of flour	58 / 116 (87*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 36	20.VIII.Unug-year-name	60 sila of flour	60 / 120 (90*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.50	23.VIII.Unug-year-name	54 sila of flour	54 / 108 (81*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 37	30.VIII.Unug-year-name	53 sila of flour	53 / 106 (80*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 38	[..].VIII ² .Unug-year-name	300 sila of flour	300 / 600 (450*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.52	4 ⁺ .IX.Unug-year-name	56 sila of flour	56 / 112 (84*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.53	13.IX.Unug-year-name	55 [?] sila of flour	
Rositani 2003, no. I.54	25.IX.Unug-year-name	58 sila of flour	58 / 116 (87*)
Oberhuber 1960, no.106	5 [?] .X.Unug-year-name	370 [?] sila of flour	370 / 740 (555*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 15	9.X.Unug-year-name	36 sila of flour	36 / 72 (54*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.55	11.X.Unug-year-name	48 sila of flour	48 / 96 (72*)
Rositani 2009, no. 11	12.X.Unug-year-name	48 sila of flour	48 / 96 (72*)
Rositani 2003, no. I.56	18 [?] .X.Unug-year-name	38 sila of flour	38 / 76 (57*)
Rositani 2014, no. 3	28.X.Unug-year-name ⁶⁷	37 sila of flour	37 / 74 (56*)
Rositani 2014, no. 5	11 ⁺ .XI.[Unug-year-name?] ⁶⁸	42 sila of flour	42 / 84 (63*)
Loretz 1978, no. 35	23.XI.Unug-year-name	42 sila of flour	42 / 84 (63*)
Rositani 2014, no. 7	10 ⁺ .XII.Unug-year-name ⁶⁹	44 sila of flour	44 / 88 (66*)
Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 40	3.II.[Rīm-Anum ...]	85 sila of flour	85 / 170 (128*)

Tab. 1 - List of flour allocations in chronological order with hypotheses of the numbers of prisoners present in the *bīt asīrī* on those dates

We can offer some remarks based on these data. Firstly, the quantities assigned in each text range between 35 and 300 liters, the documents yield a total of approximately 3,662 liters. The majority of the texts of the second year of Rīm-Anum's reign record quantities

⁶⁵ See Rositani 2014, 56-57.

⁶⁶ See Rositani 2014, 54-55.

⁶⁷ For the day number suggested here see Rositani 2014, 45-46.

⁶⁸ For the dating suggested here see Rositani 2014, 48-50 with fn. 54, where Rositani highlights that the year name is written on three lines. Accordingly, she excludes that it refers to Rīm-Anum's first year and, judging from the visible part of the signs, she suggests the Unug-year-name. The occurrence in the text of *na-bi-EN.ZU* by himself would support this hypothesis: in fact, the texts in which he occurs by himself date from the IV to the X month of Rīm-Anum's second year (Unug-year-name). The break, falling exactly in correspondence to the year name, could lead one to suppose an attempt to blank out the memory of Rīm-Anum's reign.

⁶⁹ For the dating suggested here see Rositani 2014, 52-54.

between around 40 and 60 sila of flour, whereas in the first year the quantities are certainly higher.

The flour allocations data for the *bīt asīrī* are in accordance with the chronological and numerical indications of the captured prisoners in texts recording personnel movements. For example, two texts dated to 5.XI.Lugal-year-name record a high number of sila as assignments to *bīt asīrī*, which would indicate a conspicuous presence of prisoners in the *bīt asīrī*: Rositani 2003, no. I.9 (5.XI.Lugal-year-name, 95 sila of flour); and Rositani 2009, no. 12 (5.XI.Lugal-year-name, 147//148⁷ sila of flour).

At the same 5.XI.Lugal-year-name is dated the text Rositani 2003, no. II.13, which mentions for the first time “the booty of Isin”: the text registers the assignment of a prisoner, from the booty of Isin and indicates as giri (conveyor) Mardik-našir, the aga.ús.sag (the chief gendarm).⁷⁰ Prisoners of war, taken away from the “Gate of Isin” or from “the booty of Isin” are mentioned also in Figulla 1914, no. 36 (6.XI.Lugal-year-name);⁷¹ Rositani 2021a, no. 8 (7.XI.Lugal-year-name); Rositani 2003, no. II.6 (11[?].XI.Lugal-year-name),⁷² and no. II.20 (15.XI.Lugal-year-name); Figulla 1914, no. 43 (10.XII.Lugal-year-name).⁷³ With the exception of Rositani 2003, no. II.20, all these texts register war prisoners whom the king presented to different deities as gift. All these prisoners given to the deities were male and in the majority of cases were qualified as “men of Ešnunna” or connected to people of Ešnunna.⁷⁴ Sometimes the prisoners were high-ranking military officers, as for instance an ugula mar.tu of Ešnunna⁷⁵ or were connected with important people, such as the Munawwirum qualified as énsi lú Ešnunna, “officer” or “prominent” of the reign of Ešnunna⁷⁶ already known elsewhere as *rubûm*, “prince of Ešnunna”, or the Ilûni,⁷⁷ who is qualified as énsi lú Ešnunna too and known as king (*šarrum*) of Ešnunna in other sources. Moreover, it is likely that also Ḫuzālum⁷⁸ and Sîn-erībam⁷⁹ could be qualified as *rubûm*, “prince of Ešnunna”. Prisoners presented to deities were often sent from Mutiabal by Daganma-AN; in the majority of occurrences they are qualified as men of Ešnunna, while in Rositani 2003, II.25 one of the two prisoners sent from Mutiabal by Daganma-AN is qualified as a man of Malgûm.⁸⁰ The gift of prisoners to

⁷⁰ For the mentions of the booty of Isin see Rositani 2003, 22-23; 2019, 290, 295, 298-299, with reference to previous bibliography; 2020, 202-203, 207-209, with reference to previous bibliography. See also Groneberg 1980, 112-113.

⁷¹ See also Rositani 2021a, 260-262, no. 1.

⁷² See also Seri 2013, 328; Rositani 2021a, 262-264, no. 2.

⁷³ To these references must be added Figulla 1914, no. 50 (10.XI.Unug-year-name); Rositani 2003, no. 51 (5.VI.Unug-year-name), and no. 72 (11[?].XI.Unug-year-name); 2019, no. 2 ([]Unug-year-name) all dated to the second year of Rīm-Anum; Speleers 1925, no. 250 (date lost); Rositani 2021a, 271-272, no. 7.

⁷⁴ About Ešnunna see Groneberg 1980, 73-76; Saporetti 2002; Van Koppen - Lacambre 2008-2009. See also Frayne 1990, 388-390.

⁷⁵ Rositani 2003, II.16.

⁷⁶ Rositani 2003, II.22. About the “prominent” of the reigns see also Stol 2002.

⁷⁷ Rositani 2003, II.23. About Ilûni see Charpin 1998; Guichard 2016; Kupper 1980.

⁷⁸ Rositani 2003, II.25.

⁷⁹ Rositani 2021a, 274-275, no. 9.

⁸⁰ It has been established that Malgûm lies on the route between Susa and Babylon, probably along the bank of the Tigris at north-east of Maškan-šapir. See Charpin 1988, 154; Colonna d’Istria 2020; Groneberg 1980, 156-157. Recently, it has been suggested that Malgûm is located at modern Tell Yassir, see Jawad *et al.* 2020. See also Rositani 2023, 31-32.

the most important deities could also refer to a specific situation: a public event probably in the course of a triumph.⁸¹ The hypothesis of a public dedication of the captives to the temples could be connected to the proclamation of a *mīšarum* edict by Rīm-Anum in his first year of reign.⁸²

At the same time, messengers from Isin are attested in *bīt asīrī* texts dated from the tenth to the twelfth months of the same Rīm-Anum first year (Lugal-year-name): Loretz 1978, no. 20 (2.X.Lugal-year-name); Rositani 2003, no. I.13 (23.XI.Lugal-year-name); and probably also Seri 2013, no. 21 ([]/IX/[Rīm-Anum...]) that register flour allocations for messengers of Isin. So, we can suppose that the presence of Isin messengers in Uruk, attested from the assignments of flour in the *bīt asīrī* texts, was due to the ongoing negotiations to obtain the liberation of their prisoners, thanks to the payment of a ransom or a diplomatic agreement.⁸³

Also interesting are the 300 šila of flour registered in Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 38 ([]/VIII⁷.Unug-year-name), which would suggest a presence of prisoners that suddenly rose to 300/600 units (with an average of 450). Perhaps this high amount, which contrasts with the 45 šila of flour of the text Seri 2013, App. 1 no. 13 (24.VII.Unug-year-name) and with the 58 šila of flour of Rositani 2014, no. 8 (15.VIII.Unug-year-name)⁸⁴ can be related to two prisoner registrations Rositani 2003, II.62 and II.63, both dated to 27.VII.Unug-year-name. In the first text is registered a man of Ešnunna, Abī-šagiš, who had come to the *bīt asīrī* from Daganma-AN,⁸⁵ captured in the expedition (kaskal) of Bēlānum probably against Subartu. The second text registers that the same man of Ešnunna, Abī-šagiš, whom Bēlānum, the ugula mar.tu, i.e. the general, of Nazarum, brought to Uruk, had been entrusted to Šamaš-muballit. The interesting data are: the references to Daganma-AN, to an expedition and to the general (ugula mar.tu) Bēlānum. In particular, as already seen, we know that Daganma-AN often sent from Mutiabal prisoners, mainly men of Ešnunna or men of Malgûm. Daganma-AN was likely a prestigious military ranking under the order of the king of Uruk.⁸⁶ These data could be connected to a military activity that brought many prisoners to the *bīt asīrī*.

Another huge number of šila is recorded in Oberhuber 1960, no. 106 (5⁷.X.Unug-year-name), 370⁷ šila of flour which would lead to calculating for between 370 and 740 prisoners (with an average of 555). This acme could be related to “the two prisoners of Ešnunna whom they brought back from the ‘Gate of Latarak’” registered in Loretz 1978, no. 2 (18.IX.Unug-year-name), and with the “prisoners of war, men of Ešnunna, out of 102 prisoners whom they brought back from the ‘Gate of Isin’” registered in Figulla 1914, no. 50 (10.XI.Unug-year-name). These texts testify to the highly conflictual situation in the last months of the second year of the Rīm-Anum's reign, probably connected to the death of the

⁸¹ See Rositani 2021a, 277-278.

⁸² See Charpin 2014, 126-127, 129; Rositani 2021a, 277-278.

⁸³ See also Rositani 2003, 23; 2018, 45, 47, 54, 59; 2019, 290-291, 295, 299; 2020, 202-203, 207-209; Cavigneaux - Clevestine 2020, 28 about assignments of flour for messenger from Larsa.

⁸⁴ Despite the gap of the day it is possible to place the text in the first half of the VIII month.

⁸⁵ See also Seri 2013, 129, with fn. 50, 337.

⁸⁶ See Rositani 2021a, especially 277.

other king who rebelled against Babylon, Rīm-Sîn of Larsa. His death must have had serious consequences on the organization of the rebels.⁸⁷

4. CONCLUSION

The texts analysed here, the so-called šuku é *asīrī* texts, register the distribution of food allocations to the sole *bīt asīrī*. The roles of these assignments are clearly distinguished: on the one hand, Sîn-šēmi, overseer of the house of the prisoners of war, is the one who seals the texts and ratifies the completed deliveries of food allocations to the *bīt asīrī*; on the other hand, Aḥu-waqar and Nabi-Sîn are in charge of the distribution of food allocations to the *bīt asīrī* and presumably only to it, given that their names do not appear in texts recording food allocations for other recipients. This reinforces the hypothesis that the allocations of flour to the *bīt asīrī* recorded in these texts were part of a very well-organized system in which each task was distinct from the others and was placed under the authority of specialized officials; a system of allocations compartmentalised in different groups of activities, all placed under the superior responsibility of Sîn-šēmi, overseer of the house of the prisoners of war.

Thanks to the quantitative analysis, considering the assignments as daily, and considering an assignment of 1 sila or ½ sila of flour for each person, an estimate of the possible recipients can be drawn up, i.e. the prisoners actually present in the *bīt asīrī* on the days recorded by the assignments. These are not excessively high numbers, but perfectly in line with the reconstruction of the *bīt asīrī* as a transit camp, in which just enough prisoners were housed to be placed as labour force by assigning them to private individuals or to the different households, under the authority of the various ugula.

The *bīt asīrī* appears then as part of a complex economic reality, consisting of various economic activities interconnected with each other and with the *bīt asīrī* providing all of them with labour force.

Among the various activities carried out by the prisoners there was also the grinding of barley which was mainly distributed outside the *bīt asīrī* to various subjects and households. A part of this flour was assigned to the *bīt asīrī* itself, for the feeding of prisoners.

The amount of sila allocated increases exponentially in some texts, whose dates can be compared with those of other texts dated to the reign of Rīm-Anum, in particular with those that record movements of personnel. This comparison allows to relate the high number of sila flour recorded in these šuku é *asīrī* texts to the military activities mentioned in the texts registering movements of personnel and in the dating formulas.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AHw</i>	W. von Soden, <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> , 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965-1981
<i>BM</i>	British Museum (text kept at the).
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> , Chicago 1956-.
<i>W</i>	Warka/Uruk (text coming from).

⁸⁷ See Rositani 2003, especially 22-23.

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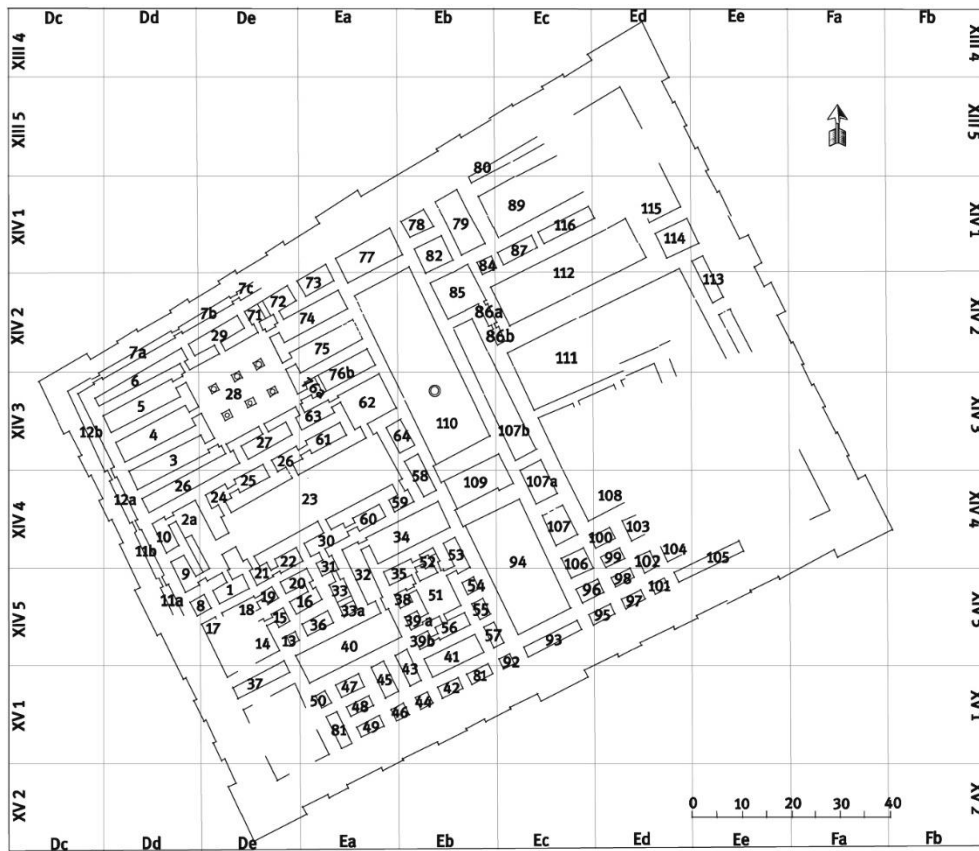


Fig. 1 - Plan of Sîn-kāšid's Palace at Uruk (Lenzen ed. 1966, pl. 36; Seri 2013, 23, fig. 1).