

EXOTIC FRUITS - R. Englund

When in the pursuit of material goods the ruling houses of Mesopotamia discovered important sources which, as a result of difficult access, did not lend themselves to direct intervention and plundering, they often resorted to the establishment of monopolies over foreign trade and domestic markets to secure their uncommon needs. Dilmun, itself only a clearing house primarily of metals from Oman, thus lay in all periods on the periphery of Babylonian economic interests; by no means a vital element, it was nonetheless a matter of some prestige to be able to count the island outpost among those areas coming under the rulers' "sphere of interest".

The rapid and lucrative expansion of the empire of Sargon of Akkad (ca. 2340-2284 B.C.) (1) is a case in point. Having consolidated his power in Sumer with military victories over Uruk, Umma, Lagash and Ur, the ruler concentrated his efforts on regions essential to the acquisition of metals, stone and wood: Elam to the East, and Syria — perhaps as far as Anatolia (2) — to the Northwest. Yet in the well-known 28 column Old Babylonian copy from Nippur of inscriptions on Sargonic statues (3), the almost

magical triad of overseas trading posts — Meluhha, Magan (4), and Dilmun — assumes a more than passing role (5):

Obv. v	Obv. vi	Obv. xiv 1'-4' (Akk.)
1' []	Šar-ru-GI	Sargon
[]	LUGAL	king of
[]	KIŠI	Kiš:
[]* ra	34 KASKAL.XKASKAL	34 battles did
5' [TUN.K]ĀR bí.sè	iš,, -ar	he fight victoriously,
bàd.bi	bàd.bàd	(city-)walls
ì.gul.gul	ì.gul.gul	he destroyed,
zà a.ab.ba┘.ka.šè	a-ti-ma	as far as
má Me.luh.ha ^{ki}	pu-ti	the edge of
10' má Má.gan ^{ki}	ti-a-am'-┘tim	the sea.
má Dilmun ^{ki}	má Me.luh.ha ^{ki}	Ships from Meluhha,
kar Ag.gi.dè ^{ki} ┘ ka	má Má.gan ^{ki}	Magan,
bí.kéš	má Dilmun ^{ki}	and Dilmun
	in ga-rí-im	made fast at
	Ši A-ga-de ^{ki}	the dock of
	ìr-ku-u[s]	Akkad.

The goods carried by these ships are not mentioned, but with some certainty have to do with copper, hardwoods, and diorite (6). Although the circumstance of tablet recovery — and it might again be noted that the capital Akkad has not been identified — should warn against any judgment of the available material, there is a striking lack of comprehensible references to Dilmun among Old Akkadian economic documents. Of the five texts known to me, four appear to come from Umma. USP 2 (7), a mu-iti text, records quantities of flour to be loaded (?) in a boat for Dilmun (rev. 8: má Dilmun.e ì.gu₇); guruš-workers under assignment to the depot (?) of a Dilmun boat (8) are registered in the Girsu text ITT I, 1418. Finally, the bread and beer ration list CT 50, 55 as well as two unpublished Umma texts (9) record two men from Dilmun.

If on the other hand the overseas trade was in fact a state monopoly in the hands of the ruling family, the sparseness of text references from the "provinces" shouldn't be surprising: the sought documentation could instead

lie buried, with Akkad, in the sands of Iraq.

Notes

1. For a general historical outline of the Sargonic Dynasty s. C.J. Gadd, "The Dynasty of Agade and the Gutian Invasion," in CAH³ I/2 Ch. XIX (Cambridge 1971) 417-463; E. Weidner, "Das Reich Sargons von Akkad," AfO 16(1952-53):1-24; H. Hirsch, "Die Inschriften der Könige von Agade," AfO 20(1963):1-82.

2. If the epic of Sargon šar tamhāri, found at El-Amarna (s. VS 12, 193 and KAV 138; E. Weidner, "Der Zug Sargons von Akkad nach Kleinasien," Boghazköi-Studien 6(1922):57-99) is to be believed.

3. CBS 13972 = PBS 5, 34 + 15, 41, photo of complete tablet PBS 15, pls. 3-7; edited H. Hirsch, AfO 20, 34-53. The scribe went from statue to statue copying the inscriptions and describing the spot where he found them; for example, after a short dedicatory inscription, with curse formula against anyone who tampers with the statue, is written rev.iv20'f. ki.gal.an.ta igi.ni.šè a.ab.šar "written above the pedestal toward his (Rimuš') face".

4. For possible identifications of these two lands s. B. Alster in this volume; D. Potts, "The Road to Meluhha", JNES 41(1982):279-88 with pertinent literature.

5. The very improbable historicity of the claim in the Neo-Assyrian Legend of Sargon that the king thrice conquered Dilmun (s. now B. Lewis, The Sargon Legend: A Study of the Akkadian Text and the Tale of the Hero Who Was Exposed at Birth, Cambridge, 1980, 94-101) precludes its treatment here. Control over Dilmun, like exposure in a reed basket, belonged to legendary repertoire.

6. Gudea Statue Div2-v1 (s. E. de Sarzec, Decouvertes en Chaldée, Paris, 1884-1912, p. XVII-XIX) should be compared:

á ^d Nanše.ta	As a result of the power of Nanše,
á ^d Nin.gír.su.ka.ta	and Ningirsu,
Gù.dé.a	the wood-bearers
5 gidru sum.ma	Magan
á ^d Nin.gír.su.ka.ra	Meluhha
Má.gan ^{ki}	Gubi
Me.luh.ha ^{ki}	and the land Dilmun
Gu.bi ^{ki}	shipped to Gudea, he whom
10 kur Dilmun ^{ki}	Ningirsu has given the
gú giš mu.na.gál.la.am	scepter (of rule),
má giš dù.a.bi	wood of all kinds
Lagaš ^{ki} .šè	into Lagaš.
mu.na.DU	
15 hur.sag Má.gan ^{ki} .ta	From the mountains of Magan
na.ési im.ta.e, ₁₁	diorite was brought down
alan.na.šè	and made into
v1 mu.tu	statues.

An indirect reference to copper and hardwood-producing Dilmun is made in Cyl. A (TCL 8, I-XXX) xvll-18: "He (Gudea) conferred with the divine Ninzaga (= Enzak of Dilmun), who transported copper like grain deliveries to the temple-builder Gudea. He conferred with the divine Ninsikila (= Meskilak of

Dilmun), who transported great poplars and ebony -- wood from overseas -- to the ensi building the é.ninnu". s. A. Falkenstein, Die Inschriften Gudeas von Lagaš (= AnOr 30, Rome 1966) 47-49.

7. B. Foster, Umma in the Sargonic Period (= Memoirs of the Conn. Acad. of Arts and Sciences 20, Hamden 1982) pl. 1; edited pp. 11-12. Correct there obv. 5 a¹.gá.lá.a ì.si (s. A. Salonen, Die Hausgeräte der alten Mesopotamier = AASF 139, Helsinki 1965, 184-87 to a.gá.lá = naruqu); rev. 7 0,1,2,5 síla; p. 227 read Dilmun 12, 144.

8. Both USP 2 and ITT I, 1418 write dilmun NI+TUKU -- like CBS 13972 -- compared to the sign form in Sumerian documents NI+HÜB, also attested in the Old Akkadian text CT 50, 55.

9. NBC 11447 and Serota 18, cited B. Foster, Iraq 39(1977):39, n. 105 (reference D. Potts).