

Article

About the names of Kassite kings

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Abstract: The Kassites were a people of the Ancient Near East. The aim of the paper is to propose etymological meanings for the names of Kassite kings on the basis of what little is known of Kassite with the help of Hurrian, which is one of the closest relatives of Kassite.

Keywords: Hurrian, Kassite, Onomastics, Anthroponym.

1. Introduction

The Kassites were a people of the Ancient Near East. Not much is known about them but they conquered and ruled Babylonia from the 16th to the middle of the 12th century BCE. This is their main historical feat and the reason why they are remembered to this day. The oldest stage of the Kassite language is scantily known from a few documents: a single tablet containing a fragment of a Kassite vocabulary and a list of Kassite names with their Akkadian equivalents. Late Akkadian provides more than a hundred items of Kassite origin, of which about 10 percent are divine names. There is no continuous attested text written in Kassite. The number of Kassite words is fairly limited: slightly more than 60, referring to specialized semantic fields: (horse) colors, parts of chariot, irrigation terms, plants and titles. About 200 additional formatives can be retrieved from the numerous anthroponyms, toponyms, theonyms and horse names used by the Kassites. In 1884 a short Kassite-Babylonian glossary was unearthed. It is registered in the British Museum as (82.9-18). It was published by Delitzsch¹ and contains a list of words which a translation in Middle-Babylonian.

The aim of the paper is to propose etymological meanings for the names of Kassite kings on the basis of what little is known of Kassite with the help of Hurrian, which is one of the closest relatives of Kassite.²

2. List of Kassite kings

- *Agum(-kakrime)* : attested as <A-gu-um-ka-ak-ri-me>. This name seems to be coherent with the usual structure of Hurrian names: verb+noun. The first part *agum* is coherent with the Hurrian verb *ag-* ‘to bring, lead’ with passive ending *-um*: ‘was brought’. The second part is not a Hurrian word but seems to be borrowed from Akkadian *qaqqaru* ‘earth, territory’, hence a potential word **kakkari*, or *kakrime* with a Hurrian suffix and resyllabication. This name would then mean ‘The land [of Babylone] was conquered’. It can be noted that the supposedly first ruler of Mittanni is *Kirta*, a name or more exactly a word, which means *krtá* ‘created’ in Old Indian. It is dubious that *Kirta* corresponds to a real ruler³ and nothing is known of this “person”. This rather marks the beginning of the whole Mittannian dynasty. The same seems

¹ F. Delitzsch, *Die Sprache der Cossäer, linguistisch-historische Funde und Fragen von Dr Friedrich Delitzsch*. J. C. Hinrichs, 1884, 39sq.

² See A. Fournet, *The Kassite Language In a Comparative Perspective with Hurrian and Urartian // The Macro-Comparative Journal* (Vol. 2.1), 2011.

³ Cf. A. Fournet, 2012, « La question des mots et noms mittanni-aryens, légués par les Indo-Iraniens du Mittanni », in *Res Antiquae*, Vol 9.

to be true with *Agum(-kakrime)* ‘The land was conquered’. This is possibly an event, rather than a name.

- *Burna-buri-yaš* : attested as <^lbur-na-bur-ia-aš = Akk. ^lkidin-bēl-mātāti> ‘Servant, protector of the lord of all lands’. Also written *Burraburiyaš* with assimilation. The Akkadian word *kidīnu* means ‘protection, protector’. The Kassite word *burna* easily compares with Hurrian *purame* ‘servant’ and Urartian *bura* ‘slave’. As for Kassite *buri*, or its variant *ubri*, it can be compared with Hurrian *ebri*, *euri* ‘lord, master’, which was ultimately borrowed into Georgian as *euri*. Laroche⁴ once considered this word *ebri* to be the native equivalent of the Akkadian word *šarru* ‘king’ but it can be noted that the phrase: *buri-yaš* or *ubri-yaš* is equivalent to Hebrew *abīr Isra’el* ‘lord of Israel’. There is a strong formulaic and phonetic similarity between *buri*, *ubri* and *abir*. Another example of this kind of formula is: *Teššub^{uru} Kummeniwi talawuši ebri* ‘Teššub, you immense lord of Kumme’ (KBo 32.15 Vo 4.14). So it is quite possible that this set of words: *ebri*, *euri*, *buri*, *ubri* is related to Semitic **abīru* ‘lord’ and they may well be borrowings from that source⁵. Kassite *yaš* ‘land’, attested in the glossary, easily compares with Hurrian *eše* ‘earth’. This root **yaš* ‘land, earth’ has connections with some Caucasian languages like Nakh Inguš *yost* ‘earth’. For that reason it is highly probable that Kassite *yaš* ‘land’ and Hurrian *eše* ‘earth’ are inherited.
- *Ulam-buri-yaš* : attested as <^lu-lam-bur-ia-aš = Akk. ^lidān-bēl-mātāti> ‘Son of servant, protector of the lord of all lands’. From this equation it results that Kassite *ulam* presumably means ‘son, progeny’.
- *Kaštiliyaš* : The name looks a kind of past participle: Hurrian *pailiya* ‘that is built’, *šeduiiya* ‘that is fattened’. It is unclear what the stem *kašt-* might mean. The Hurrian adjective *kašali* is often used with *šeheli* ‘pure’ but its meaning was considered unknown by Laroche⁶. Wegner⁷ considers it to mean ‘strong’: *šehaluleš kaluleš kiraššuleš* ‘May (s)he be pure, strong and lasting’ (KUB 29.8 4.31). In that case the name *Kaštiliyaš* would mean ‘May he be strong’.
- *Agum III* : more or less the same name as *Agum(-kakrime)* seen above.
- *Karain-daš* : The structure of this name with an internal hiatus is rather peculiar. Some people have proposed to parse the word so that a segment <indaš> would stand for *Indra*. This is thoroughly unacceptable. It is possible to parse *karain* with an Optative and *taš* with a noun, following the regular structure of names. The first formative *kar-* can be ‘to last, to be long’ without the usual fronting of /a/ when followed by *l*, *r*, *n* in Hurrian *keri* ‘long’. Wegner⁸ indicates that the verbal root *taš* means both ‘to offer’ and ‘to help’. This name may mean ‘May the help last long’. As for the capital *Karuduniyaš* <ka-ru-du-ni-ia-aš>, it follows an Adjective-Noun pattern, which the root *dun-* ‘to win, overcome’. So its means is ‘The victory over the country is lasting’.
- *Kadaš-man-Harbe I* : written <ka-da-áš-ma-an-har-be>. *Harbe* is the Kassite equivalent of *Enlil*. This name is a formula ‘He believes in Harbe’, following the pattern of *Tikulti-Ninurta* ‘He believes in Ninurta’. It would therefore appear that *kadašman* must be a verbal form but the ending is highly unusual. The stem *kad-* means ‘to say’ in Hurrian, so this can indeed be a verbal form, followed by an intensive suffix *aš*. But the correct parsing is <kadaš man Harbe>, which involves the copula *man* ‘to be’. The name means ‘[his] profession [of faith] is Harbe’. This structure of person names with three components and a copula is unusual. There does not seem to exist other instances.

⁴ E. Laroche, 1980, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite*, Paris, p. 86.

⁵ Cf. A. Fournet, 2011, « About some features of Hurrian loanwords », in *Aramazd* VI. 1, p. 51.

⁶ E. Laroche, 1980, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite*, Paris, p. 138.

⁷ I. Wegner, 2007, *Hurritisch: eine Einführung*. (2nd ed.). Wiesbaden, p. 112.

⁸ I. Wegner, 2007, p. 246.

- *Kuri-Galzu* I : written <ku-ri-gal-zu>. The son of *Kadašmanharbe* I. According to bilingual equations it seems that *Kurigalzu* means ‘Shepherd of the Kassites’, *kuri* being ‘shepherd’ and *Galzu* being the native word for ‘Kassite’ in that language. The meaning *kuri* ‘shepherd’ is not attested in Hurrian.
- *Kadaš-man-Enlil* I : usually written <^mka-dáš-man-^dEN.LÍL>. This name is the same as *Kadašmanharbe* with a Sumerian rendition of *Harbe* as *Enlil*.
- *Burna-buri-yaš* II : same as above.
- *Kara-hardaš* : logically this should be parsed as *kara* ‘long, lasting’ and a noun *hardaš*. Hurrian has *hari* ‘road, way’ but it is hard to see what *Karahardaš* could mean: ‘(?) His road is long’.
- *Nazi-bugaš* : apparently a usurper, installed on the throne by the army. There is no particular reason to equate *bugaš* with Indo-Iranian *Bhaga*. The word *bugaš* can be compared with *bukašu* ‘prince’, or some other title (duke, etc.). This name could mean ‘The prince protects him’.
- *Kuri-Galzu* II : presumably the son of *Burnaburiyaš* II. See *Kurigalzu* above.
- *Nazi-Maruttaš* : written <Na-zi-Ma-ru-ut-ta-aš> or <^mNa-zi-Múru-taš>. This name is a formula equivalent to Bab. *Šilli-Ninurta* ‘Ninurta protects him’, composed of item38 *nazi* = *šillum* ‘protection, help’ and item8 *Maruttaš* = *Ninurta*, known from the Kassite glossary.
- *Kadaš-man-Turgu* : written <ka-da-aš-ma-an-túr-gu>. The name quite transparently means ‘His profession of faith is Turgu’. Cf. item14: *Dur(a)* = Bab. ^d*Nergal* ‘god of the netherworld’ ~ Hurrian *turi* ‘inferior’ and *enna turina* which translates Hittite *katteres siunes* ‘infernal gods’, as mentioned in Laroche (1980:273).
- *Kadaš-man-Enlil* II : same explanation as above.
- *Kudur-Enlil* : written <Ku-dur ^dEN.LÍL> ‘son of Harbe/Enlil’. Not a Kassite name.
- *Šagarakti-šuriyaš* : easily understandable as being ‘The sun saves him’, on account of item40: *ša-ga-rak-ti* = Bab. *nap-ša-ru* ‘to save’ and item5: *šu-ri-ia-aš* = ^dŠamaš.
- *Kaštiliyašu* IV : cf. *Kaštiliyaš* seen above. The ending *-u* looks like an akkadianism.
- *Enlil-nadin-šumi* : Not a Kassite name. It means ‘Enlil gives his name’.
- *Kadaš-man-Harbe* II : same as seen above.

Following king names are not Kassite any more.

3. Typological approach of king names

These Kassite names can be divided into three main categories: descriptive, theonymic and propitiatory names. To the first set belong: *Agum(-kakrime)* ‘The land was conquered’, *Burna-buri-yaš* ‘Servant, protector of the lord of all lands’, *Ulam-buri-yaš* ‘Son of servant, protector of the lord of all lands’, *Kuri-Galzu* ‘Shepherd of the Kassites’, *Nazi-bugaš* ‘The prince protects him’. To the second set belong: *Kadaš-man-Harbe* ‘His profession of faith is Harbe’, *Kadaš-man-Turgu* ‘His profession of faith is Turgu’. The third set comprises: *Kaštiliyaš* ‘May he be strong’, *Karain-daš* ‘May the help last long’, *Nazi-Maruttaš* ‘Maruttaš protects him’, *Šagarakti-šuriyaš* ‘The sun saves him’.

4. Conclusions or perspectives

The names of Kassite Kings present little difficulty and can be easily analyzed and parsed according to Hurrian morphemes and the usual patterns of Hurrian person names. This confirms the close relationship between the two languages.

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