

36) A Governor of Byblos from Sippar – Professor Dandamaev recently discussed a text (CT 55, No. 435), dated to the reign of Darius I, in which he identifies a Rikis-kalâmu-Bêl, governor of Byblos (LÚ.NAM ša URU^{URU}*gub-ba-alki*).¹ The text, found in the Sippar region, records the governor's donation of a tithe. Dandamaev observes that except for the silver, the items included in the tithe (red purple wool, blue purple wool, 2 vessels of wine, and cedar) are all items which the Babylonians had to import - and from Phoenicia at that. It is certain, therefore, that the city of Byblos on the Mediterranean Sea is meant, and not the city of the same name in the region of Sippar.

Dandamaev points out a major implication of the text. Classical sources cite the Phoenician cities to demonstrate that the Achaemenids ruled through local dynasts. Yet here we have a Babylonian governor of Byblos! Local dynasts may have been titular heads of governments, but as Elayi has realized the real power in each of the Phoenician cities would have been the imperially appointed Persian governor.² In the case of Byblos under Darius, it was Rikis-kalâmu-Bêl.

Dandamaev suggests that Rikis-kalâmu-Bêl was a Babylonian, an inhabitant of Sippar, and probably a devotee of the sun-god Shamash. "It is possible that during his service in Byblos he visited Sippar bringing his exotic gifts."³ Rather than being simply a devotee of the god, it is more likely that he paid his tithe (*eš-ru-ú*) because he held estates in the region of Sippar that were rented from the temple of Ebabbar. Most of the land there belonged to the temple, so this tithe was likely a rent on land, although rent on a temple prebend is also possible.⁴ Temple property was not unencumbered. Anyone who benefited from the temple, whether by leased land or by owning a prebend, was obligated to pay a tithe on it, the *ešrû*.⁵ This included royal land leased to the temple and then subleased.⁶

If this tithe was the payment of a rent on leased property, as seems likely, then Rikis-kalâmu-Bêl, governor of Byblos, held estates in Sippar. It has long been known that Arsames, satrap of Egypt, held estates in Syria and Lebanon - outside of his own satrapy.⁷ It has not been recognized, however, that governors of small city-states also had sizable holdings outside of the areas they ruled. The Achaemenids evidently selected Rikis-kalâmu-Bêl to govern

Byblos from among the landed aristocracy of Babylon.

1. M. Dandamaev, "A Governor of Byblos in Sippar". Edited by K. Van Lerberghe and A. Schoors, *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: FS E. Lipinski*. OLA 65 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1995), 29-31.

2. J. Elayi, "The Phoenician Cities in the Persian Period," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 12 (1980): 19-25.

3. Dandanmaev, "A Governor of Byblos in Sippar", p. 30.

4. Prebends, temple offices, were sometimes filled only one hour a year!

5. M. Dandamaev, "Der Tempelzehnte in Babylonien während des 6-4 Jh. v. u. Z." Pp. 82-90 in *Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben: Festschr. F. Altheim*. Edited by R. Stiehl and H.E. Stier. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969; E. Salonen, *Über den Zehnten im alten Mesopotamien: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Besteuerung*. Studia Orientalia 43. Helsinki: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1972.; G. Giovinazzo, "The Tithe *ešrû* in Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Period." Pp. 95-105 in *Le Tribut dans l'Empire perse*. Edited by P. Briant and Cl. Herrenschmidt. Paris: Peeters 1989.

6 Royal land leased out by the temple was not always obligated by a strict tithe "Zehnt ist nich gleich Zehnt" (Jursa, *Der Tempelzehnt in Babylonien vom siebenten bis zum dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr.* Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998, p. 11)

7. In on letter (TAD A6.9), Arsames orders the superintendents at way-stations along the route from Susa to Egypt to supply his officials with rations *mn bt' zyly zy bmdyntkm* ("from my estate which is in your province(s)"). For a discussion see M. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašu Firm and Persian Rule in Babylonia* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985) 52-69. The Murašu tablets also indicate that Arsames' owned land in the vicinity of Nippur (Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 64).

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