

80) Office of *rab kumarī* – The purpose of this note is to clarify the meaning of the title of an official, *rab kumarī*, and the role of this official in the Arsacid administrative system.

Recently published *Astronomical Diaries*¹ mention an official called *rab kumarī* three times. All of these instances occur in the records for the Arsacid period. In two of the three instances, the second word is written *ku-mar*, without case ending, but in these instances too the word should no doubt be construed as having a genitive force, since such loss of case ending is frequently observed in the *Astronomical Diaries* of the Arsacid period².

i ^mI-me-ru-us-su ^{lú} GAL^{?1} ku-mar šá É LUGAL-ú-^ltú^{?1} (-129A₂ ‘Obv.’21’)

Himeros, Chief of *kumarī* of the royal domain

ii 1^{en} ^{lú}Su-bar-ru-ú šá ú-še-piš ku-um ^mÚ-ru-de-e-su ^{lú}GAL ku-mar-ri šá É^{meš} DINGIR^{[meš}
x x (x)] ^lx^{meš} gab-bi (-107C ‘Rev.16’)

a Subarean who is the representative of Orodes, Chief of *kumarī* of all the temples
[(and)...]

iii ^{lú}GAL ku-mar šá É^{meš} DINGIR^{meš} šá ^lx x x^l (-72 ‘Flake’10’)

Chief of *kumarī* of temples of /which [...]

The meaning of *kumarī* has not been clarified in previous studies³. We see, however, that the official, at least in cases **ii** and **iii**, had a connection with the temples. From this fact, we may surmise that the signs probably express the plural oblique of Akk.

1 A. J. Sachs & H. Hunger (eds.), *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, Vol. III: Diaries from 164 B.C. to 61 B.C., Wien, 1996.

2 For example, in the title of another official, *rabbi uqānī* (Grand-Marshall, lit. the Great of Troops), the word *uqānī* was often written *ú-qa-an*, without case ending (-90 ‘Obv.15’, 32’, 49’, Rev.’18; -86A ‘Rev.’ 3’;-82B ‘Rev.’4’).

3 G. F. Del Monte, 1997, *Testi dalla Babilonia Ellenistica*, Vol.1: *Testi Cronografici*, Pisa/Roma 1997, 133; T. Boiy, *Late Achæmenid and Hellenistic Babylon*, OLA 136, Leuven, 2004, 211-212; M. J. H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practises*, Leiden/Boston, 2004, 127.

*kumru, kumari*⁴. This noun is related to the Northwest Semitic word meaning ‘priest’ (Aram. *kmr*; Syr. *kumrā*).

Unfortunately, the context of cases **i** and **iii** is unclear because of the damage to the tablet. In case **ii**, the representative of ‘Chief Priest’ or ‘Chief of the Priests’ entered Babylon and requisitioned a part of the property of Esagila (-107C ‘Rev.19’-20’). This fact suggests that the duty of ‘Chief Priest’ probably related to the financial administration of the temples.

At one time, Himeros, King Phraates II’s favorite⁵, served as ‘Chief Priest’ (case **i**). From this fact, we may conclude that the office was highly esteemed in the Arsacid Empire. The words *ša bīt šarrūti* (of royal domain) in Himeros’ title probably indicates that his jurisdiction covered priests or temples under royal rule. It may be conjectured, furthermore, that the jurisdiction of ‘Chief Priest’ probably covered the whole empire. In case **ii**, the representative came from Media (-107C ‘Rev.16’-17’) and went back to Media (-107C ‘Rev.20’-21’). Media is, often in the Diaries for the Arsacid Period, mentioned as royal residence⁶. ‘Chief Priest’ probably served near the king and dealt with the financial problems of the temples within the realm controlled by the Arsacids.

In the Seleucid period, at least in the reign of Antiochus III (and probably from the reign of Antiochus II), a local official, *archiereus ton hieron panton* (Chief Priest of All the Sanctuaries) of the Cis-Tauric region (i.e. the whole of Asia Minor) dealt with the financial problems of the temples⁷.

We cannot deny the possibility that the same office was also installed over the Upper Satrapies (region east of the Euphrates, coinciding more or less with the Arsacid realm) and inherited by the Arsacid Dynasty.

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⁴ This word appears in some Akkadian documents from Emar (E. J. Penttuc, *West Semitic Vocabulary in the Akkadian Texts from Emar*, Winona Lake, Indiana, 2001, 95-96).

⁵ Cf. Just. *Epit.* XLII 1.

⁶ -137A ‘Rev.’9’; -136C ‘Obv.’3’; -119A₂ 19’; -93A Rev.’23’; -77A ‘Obv. 31’.

⁷ J. Ma, *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor*, Oxford, 2000, 27; B. Dignas, *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, Oxford, 2002, 46-59.