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

Recently published *Astronomical Diaries* mention an official called *rab kumārī* 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 ḫal-me-ru-us-su ḫal-GALku-mar šā ḫal-GALù- ḫal-tūtu⁻\(1\) (⁻129A₂ ʻObv.‘21’)

Himeros, Chief of *kumārī* of the royal domain

ii Ḫal-ša-bar-ru-šā Ḫal-u-šē-piš ku-unm Ḫal-GAL ku-mar-ri šā ḫal-GALù- ḫal-DINGIR⁻\(1\) x x x x (x) x ḫal-GAL ḫal-gab-bi (⁻107C ʻRev.16’)

a Subarean who is the representative of Orodes, Chief of *kumārī* of all the temples

[(and)...]

iii ḫal-GAL ku-mar šā ḫal-GALù- ḫal-DINGIR⁻\(1\) x x x (⁻72 ʻRev.3−5’)

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

The meaning of *kumārī* 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.

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

kumru, kumarī. 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 favorite, 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 bit 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 residence. ‘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 temples.

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. Pentiu, West Semitic Vocabulary in the Akkadian Texts from Emar, Winona Lake, Indiana, 2001, 95-96).