

magnetite), 127 (together with magnetite), 188 (together with magnetite), 213, 215, 290, 291 (together with magnetite), 299, 300). This stone was also applied as an ingredient of a phylactery (Scurlock 2005, nos. 31, 32, 58, 59 (together with magnetite), 127 (together with magnetite), 204, 206, 208, 209, 210, 214, 238, 241, 242, 245, 344, 345) or for fumigation (Scurlock 2005, nos. 140, 245) for diseases related to the ghost. The *mūṣu*-stone also occurs in all amulet stone lists against ghosts (Schuster-Brandis 2008, Kette nos. 136-141), furthermore, in one of them the three mentioned stones can be attested together (Schuster-Brandis 2008, Kette no. 138).

The sequence of plant seeds can be identified in line 8 (seed of *ēdu*-plant and seed of *ēru*-tree). I know only single further prescription against ghosts which mentions these two types of seed together: 'tamarisk seed, seed of *ēru*-tree, seed of *ēdu*-plant, flax seed' (BAM 199 2-3 // BAM 471 ii 14'-15' // BAM 385 I 4'-5' edited by Scurlock 2005 no. 187b).

#### Notes

1. I thank the Trustees of the British Museum, for permission to publish this tablet. I am greatly indebted to Mark Geller for his suggestions and corrections, but the responsibility for all remaining errors is mine.

2. Reade 1986 xxxi-xxxii. Finkel identified 115 tablets and fragments with mixed contents as follows: lexical texts, royal cylinders, omens, hemerological texts, magical and medical texts, mathematical texts, god lists, astrological texts, administrative texts, school texts (Finkel 2013, 19-20). The consignment was described in the relevant catalogue of the British Museum (Leichty – Finkel Walker 2019, 632-656) and it contains eighteen further therapeutic tablets.

3. Leichty – Finkel Walker 2019, 632.

4. The tablet W 21276 is a landscape format tablet from Uruk and it contains a list of seven drugs (Kessler 1992, 470 and Scurlock 2005, 634 no. 313). The tablet AO 17618 is a portrait format tablet of unknown provenance and it contains a rinse made of nine drugs (Labat 1960, 171 Kessler 1992, 471 and Scurlock 2005, 648 no. 323).

5. A recent example can be identified in the unpublished Late Babylonian medical compendium tablet BM 32277+ i 10-12, which is a duplicate of the text preserved on W 21276. BM 32277+ will be published soon by the present author (Bácskay forthcoming).

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#### 126) YOS 3, 26 – A letter from the early reign of Nebuchadnezzar II from the temple of Amurru in the Sealand

— Letters from the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian empire have recently been edited as a coherent group by Levavi (2018). Here, we present a small addition to this corpus. The protagonists of YOS 3, 26 (YBC 3585) bear names well-known in the Eanna archive, Nabû-mukīn-zēri and Nādin. At first glance, one would be tempted to identify this letter as being exchanged within the temple, between the *šatammu* Nabû-mūkin-zēri, attested from 17 Nbn-1 Cyr (Kümmel 1979: 143) and his colleague Nādin, a temple scribe attested from 12 Nbn-6 Camb (Kleber 2008: 35, Kümmel 1979: 122, Schmidl 2019: 11<sup>45</sup>). Alternatively, letters addressed to a Nādin have been assigned to the city governor of Uruk of that name (Beaulieu 1991: 78), attested from 13 Nbn-1 Cyr (Kleber 2008: 39). In the latter case, however, it is unclear how these letters could have become part of the Eanna archive.<sup>1)</sup> Early Achaemenid letters of the Eanna archive which were incoming to the temple and addressed to a Nādin usually address the temple scribe (Schmidl 2019: 188), or can be re-dated, as I propose for YOS 3, 26. In the present case, the phrasing of

the request is unlike all other instances of interaction between the *šatammu* of the late Neo-Babylonian or early Achaemenid period and one of the temple scribes, his subordinates, from both an interpersonal and a chronological perspective (Schmidl 2019: 179-194; a full edition of the letter is given below). This opens up new avenues of identification.

I identify the sender of this letter as a different *šatammu*, the *šatammu* of the temple of Amurru in the Sealand,<sup>2)</sup> also called Nabû-mukîn-zēri. This official is attested in PTS 3245 (Beaulieu 2003: 329). PTS 3245 pertains to Nebuchadnezzar II's construction of the north palace, and can be roughly dated to 24-28 Nbk through prosopography, as it mentions the *šatammu* of the Eanna temple during this time, Marduk-bēlšunu (Kleber 2008: 33; see Beaulieu 2003: 329 and Beaulieu 2005: 48<sup>8</sup>, 68 on this text). The deities invoked in the greeting formula of the letter, Marduk and Nabû, do not help to identify the letter's place of origin.<sup>3)</sup> This new time frame opens up a new possibility for the recipient of this letter. I identify him as Nādin, *šatammu* of Eanna attested from 15 Npl-3 Nbk (Kleber 2008: 33). This leads us to a dating of this letter to the early years of Nebuchadnezzar II. This dating is roughly congruent regarding our suggested sender – a period of office of twenty years is possible for temple officials. The letter may provide additional – though weaker – hints supporting this dating: the audience gift mentioned could fit a dating to the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign, and the rhetoric of the letter also advocates for an earlier dating (see commentary to l. 22).

A previous edition of the text was provided by Ebeling (1930-34: 24-26). A translation of most of the letter (ll. 5-25) is given by Olmstead (1948: 71).

<p>1 im<sup>ld</sup>+ag-du-n[umun] a-na<sup>1</sup>na-din šeš-ia <sup>d</sup>+ag u<sup>d</sup>amar.utu a-na šeš-ia lik-ru-ub</p> <p>5 a-ga-a-ia ki-i<sup>r</sup>šeš-ú-tu<sup>1</sup> u en-mun<sup>r</sup>tu<sup>1</sup>-tu mi-nu-ú taq-ba-a<sup>r</sup> lu-ú ma-a-du lu-ú mi-i-ši</p> <p>10 al-te-me ti-i-de 4 udu.nitá a-na na-mu-uš<sup>r</sup>ti<sup>1</sup>-iá</p>	<p>rev <i>ha-áš-šá-ak</i> <i>a-di<sup>lu</sup>ra-šip-ti a<sub>4</sub></i></p> <p>15 <i>it-tah-ú a.ab.ba</i> <i>kù.babbar a<sub>4</sub> ina muḫ-ḫi-šú-nu</i> <i>lu-us-su-uk-kám-ma</i> <i>udu.nitá<sup>mes</sup> a-na na-mu-uš-ti-iá</i> <i>lu-um-ḫur-áš-šú-nu-tú</i></p> <p>20 <i>at-ta a-na ar-rak-a-a-tú</i> <i>ta-šak-kan</i> <i>ul kaskal<sup>ll</sup> šá en-mun-tú-tú</i> <i>šu-ú nu-bat-tú</i> <i>la i-ba-a-t[u<sub>4</sub>]*</i></p> <p>uE <i>šu-bi-la</i></p>
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<sup>1-4</sup> Letter from Nabû-mūkin-zēri to Nādin, my brother. May Nabû and Marduk bless my brother. <sup>5-10</sup> Is this like brotherhood and benefaction? Whatever you asked (from me in the past), be it a lot or a little, I have heard it (and complied). <sup>10-13</sup> You should know, I need four sheep for my (audience) gift. <sup>14-19</sup> I will impose this silver on them, (on everybody) down to these *Rasiptu*-people at the edge of the sea and I will receive the sheep for my (audience) gift from them. <sup>20-25</sup> You just keep putting off (my request); this is not the way of benefaction! He (a messenger) should not waste time, have (the sheep) delivered!

### Commentary

6, 22 The usage of *tābtu*, ‘good deed, favour’ for the purpose of persuasion is unevenly distributed in the administrative letter corpus: it is attested several times in the early letter corpus from the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian period, but is almost completely absent at the beginning of the Achaemenid empire. Only one instance can be found in the late letter corpus, YOS 3, 16 (no. 55 in Schmidl 2019), a letter by a West-Semite to Nabû-mukîn-zēri, the aforementioned *šatammu* of the Eanna, which could date either to the last year of Nabonidus or to the beginning of Cyrus’ reign. By contrast, *tābtu* is attested eight times in the early letter corpus published by Levavi (2018, see the glossary on p. 594<sup>4)</sup>). It is also attested in royal contexts, for instance in a letter from later in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (BIN 1, 93: 4). When we look at the interpersonal distribution of *tābtu* in the early letter corpus, it becomes clear that in inner-temple correspondence, i.e., correspondence between officials of the same temple, it is usually employed in letters from subordinates to their superiors, not the other way round (e.g., Levavi 2018, no. 15: 18<sup>5)</sup>). The only exception is the rhetorically exceptional letter no. 30 in Levavi 2018 (BIN 1, 40). This letter was sent by the *qīpu* to the *šatammu* and the *tušsar bīti*,<sup>6)</sup> but addresses these officials as ‘lords’ in the body of the letter, despite the superior rank of the *qīpu*. This means that within the framework of the letter, the *qīpu* is presenting himself as subordinate to express his dependence on these two officials (Levavi 2018: 264). The other letters which employ *tābtu* were sent to the temple by officials with a different institutional affiliation. This means that they were not included in the direct temple hierarchy even if they were of high status, lending more importance to the use of rhetoric to convince

the recipient(s). Examples are no. 34 in Levavi 2018 (YOS 21, 159), by a *bēl pīḫāti*, and no. 202 in Levavi 2018 (CT 22, 155), a letter by an Urukian to the scribes of the Ebabbar temple in Sippar. This pattern fits the new identification of the parties of our letter in question here.

13 I take *ḫa-āš-šá-ak* as a stative form of *ḫašāḫu*, cf. already Ebeling 1930-34: 25.

14 This designation of people is unclear. There is no suitable toponym listed in Zadok 1985. I take this to be a reference to an otherwise unattested tribal designation, possibly of an Aramean group. Less likely, we may be dealing with an occupational designation, i.e., derived from (possibly) *rašāpu*, ‘to erect, pile up’, (e.g., walls) and ‘to keep in good repair’, possibly meaning ‘maintenance workers’. The form, however, is far from ideal for such a reading. One could think of a term expressing the notion that everybody will have to pay silver, no matter how small their task, but it could just as well be a simple reference to a tribal designation or a type of workers followed by their location.

15 This reference to the sea also supports a southern framework for our letter to some extent.

20-21 For a similar attestation of this phrase, cf. SAA 17, 152: 17-18, [*a*]-*na ár-ra-ka-a-ti la it-[ta-na-āš]-kan*, translated as “It may not be postponed until later!” (Dietrich 2003: 134).

24 I take the third person form to refer to a messenger, as the imperative in l. 25 also implies a delivery through a third party. Less likely, the sender may have switched from the second to the third person to address the recipient. In this case, one would expect an appellation used in combination with the verbal form.<sup>7)</sup>

## Notes

\* This note was written within the framework of the project REPAC “Repetition, Parallelism and Creativity: an Inquiry into the Construction of Meaning in Ancient Mesopotamian Literature and Erudition” (2019-2024, University of Vienna) funded by the European Research Council within the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement no. 803060). It is based on research done and material collected under the auspices of the Austrian National Research Network “Imperium and Officium” that was financed by the Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (Vienna), including photographs of the tablet by K. Wagenonner. Parts of this note were developed with the support of a Dissertation Completion Fellowship by the University of Vienna. I thank Michael Jursa for discussing this paper with me, and especially the edition. Frank Simons kindly corrected my English. None of them should be held accountable for any remaining errors.

1. Outgoing letters from the temple should only be part of the archive if they were brought back to the temple or if they were copied for storage. Copies of outgoing letters are rare, and are often of a distinct format or epigraphical style (Levavi 2018: 37). For an example of a copy from the early Achaemenid period, see no. 13 in Farber with Jursa 2018 (pp. 74-80).

2. For the god Amurru and his cult in the Sealand according to texts from the Eanna archive, see Beaulieu 2003: 327-330. For the relationship of the Eanna temple with the Sealand in the formative phase of the Neo-Babylonian empire with an emphasis on letters, see Levavi in press.

3. They are, however, often attested with the type of greeting formula employed in YOS 3, 26, the blessing formula, see Levavi 2018: 49 and Schmidl 2019: 35.

4. Disregarding Levavi 2018, no. 156 (TCL 9, 117): 29, where we are dealing with *ṭābtu* ‘salt’, and no. 35 (BIN 1, 11): 21 and no. 177 (YOS 21, 27): 29, which refer to a form of *ṭābu* ‘to be good’. I thank Yuval Levavi for discussing the latter two texts as well as Levavi 2018, no. 30 (BIN 1, 40) with me.

5. Cf. also Levavi 2018, no. 29 (YOS 21, 172): 13, where a subordinate addresses a superior, using *ṭābtu* with rhetorical intent, which is actually given as a quotation of something the superior had said before.

6. From the time of Nabonidus onwards, the office of *ṭupšar bīti* was held by several officials at the same time, who all served as temple scribes, see Kleber 2008: 28. For changes at the top of the temple hierarchy of the Eanna temple in Uruk from Nabopolassar until Darius, see Kleber 2008: 26.

7. See Schmidl 2017 for a discussion of such changes and their possible meanings in letters by Eanna officials.

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**127) The sign *maK*** — The MA<sub>5</sub>-sign (KA × KU/ŠĒ) is attested with the syllabic value *maK* in a Late Babylonian manuscript of the Love Lyrics and in a Late Babylonian bilingual lamentation, as pointed out by Jursa (1995, 57 n. 110). A further example of the sign with this syllabic value occurs in a letter from the Babylonians to a Middle Elamite king, ll. 12' and 14', where it is used to write *imaggar* (in context: “will (it) agree?”). The relevant lines run as follows:<sup>1)</sup>

10'. <i>su-gúl-lum u barbaru</i> (UR.BAR.RA) <i>ḫab-ba-a-tú i-ma-ag-ga-[ru</i> (... .. )]
11'. <i>kun</i> <sup>1</sup> (AḪ)- <i>šil-lu</i> <sup>1</sup> (KU) <i>ki-i-nu a-re-bi mut-tap-ri-šu i-ra-m[u</i> (... .. )]
12'. <sup>1</sup> <i>i</i> <sup>1</sup> - <i>mag-gàr a-re-bi šerru</i> (MUŠ) <i>mut</i> <sup>1</sup> (ḪU)- <i>tab-bi-ik mar-tum</i> [(... .. )]
13'. <sup>1</sup> UR <sup>1</sup> .GI <sup>7</sup> <i>ka-si-is ešemti</i> ( <sup>1</sup> GĪR <sup>1</sup> .PAD.DA) <i>i-ma-ag-ga-ár šikká</i> ( <sup>d</sup> NIN[.KILIM) (... .. )]
14'. <i>i-mag-gàr mušḫuššu</i> (MUŠ.ḪUŠ) <sup>16</sup> <i>ḫab-ba-a-tum ta-bi-ik d[a-mi</i> (... .. )]
10'. Will livestock and thieving wolf ag[ree? (... .. )]
11'. Will the firm thorn(-bush?) and winged crow lov[e] one other? [(... .. )]
12'. Will the crow agree with the snake that constantly spits poison? [(... .. )]
13'. Will the dog that gnaws bones agree with the mon[goose? (... .. )]
14'. Will the <i>mušḫuššu</i> agree with the b[lood]-shedding thief? [(... .. )]

The letter from the Babylonians to a Middle Elamite king is known from one manuscript, BM 35404, that probably dates to some point in the last three centuries BCE.<sup>2)</sup> Since all known attestations of MA<sub>5</sub>-sign with the value *maK* are found in Late Babylonian manuscripts, the value probably represents an invention of scholars of the Late Babylonian period. Another syllabic CVC value that seems to be an invention of Late Babylonian scholars is the value *pašx* for the GÍN-sign, which is attested in several colophons on Late Babylonian scholarly tablets.<sup>3)</sup> As pointed out by Finkel (2007, 30-31), the value is probably derived from that the equation GÍN = *pāšu* (“axe”).

The choice of the MA<sub>5</sub>-sign to represent the value *maK* is perhaps due to the reversal of the first two root consonants of its Akkadian equivalent, *qamû*, “to grind.”<sup>4)</sup> On the use of “retrophony” in cuneiform see Beaulieu (1995, 6-7).

#### Notes

1. Earlier editions read *i-ma<sub>5</sub>-gàr* (Brinkman 1968, 80-81; Lambert in Reynolds 1994, 574-579) while the earliest (mis)read *i-nak-kar* (Pinches 1897, 51-57; Jeremias 1917, 92-95).
2. Both the manuscript’s museum consignment, Sp. 2 987, and the fact that its signs LU, KU and ŠAR lack a top horizontal wedge are consistent with a date in the Hellenistic or Parthian eras: see Clancier (2009, 418-429) for the dates of the astronomical texts in the consignment and Frame & George (2005, 266) on the absence of a horizontal wedge as “suggestive of a date of writing somewhere in the twilight of cuneiform.”
3. Finkel (2007, 30) identifies four colophons in which the value appears in the formula *lâ i-pašx-šit*. Frame & George (2005, 265-270, see 270 ad l. 23) add a fifth one, Jiménez (2016, 228 n. 3) points out three more, and Reynolds (2019, 112 and 117 with n. 49) publishes a ninth example.
4. For the equation in lexical lists see CAD Q 78b.

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