

## FIELDS OF ENDEAVOUR — LEASING AND RELEASING THE LAND OF ŠAMAŠ

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The wave of privatisation that swept over the Neo-Babylonian temple regimes in the sixth century has been much studied of late<sup>1</sup>. This privatisation took the form of the outsourcing of many of the temples' administrative activities — management of date groves and arable farmland, collection of tithes and of rents from property belonging to the temple, even the husbanding of the temple ducks<sup>2</sup>. But it is the privatisation of land management which has been the subject of the greatest attention in the past two decades. This took place as the result of reforms carried out by the last native Babylonian king, Nabonidus, in the early years of his reign. According to the two great temple archives at our disposal, the privatised regime was introduced into Uruk in the south of Babylonia in his first year, and in Sippar, in the north, in his fourth year. It is virtually certain that similar regimes will have been imposed on the other temples of the land though evidence to demonstrate this is not yet available. But the common characteristic, clearly deriving from a central source, is the leasing out of huge tracts of temple land to one or more private speculators who undertook to manage the estates in return for a fixed annual rent payable to the temple. These entrepreneurs were designated with the title of either *rab sūti* or *ša muhhi sūti*, both essentially meaning “official in charge of rented land”. The head of the temple administration bore the title *šangû*, and he worked hand in hand with a royal inspector with the title *qīpu*; the semi-free labourers tied to the land were termed *ikkaru* (“dependent farmers”).

The following texts belong very much to this arena. The first documents the winding up of a concession which had been granted to a prominent businessman, the second documents the rental of *hanšû* (“fifty”) land to two dependent farmers, while the third relates to the replacement of dependent farmers from concessionary land who had been requisitioned by the *qīpu*.

### No. 1) A *rab sūtu* relinquishes his concession

This text is in the possession of Westminster College, Cambridge, and is part of a collection of six tablets acquired by the Cheshunt Foundation in 1917 from Prof. Rudler of University College, Aberystwyth<sup>3</sup>. The tablets passed into the keeping of Westminster College when the College and Foundation merged in 1967. They are still accompanied by a note from Pinches written in 1905 from his home at “Sippar House” which, however, says little more than that he had not worked on them. The tablets were catalogued in 1977 by Mr. Kinnier Wilson, to whom I am most grateful for alerting me to their existence. I would like to thank

<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my deep thanks to Dr. Cornelia Wunsch for her help in interpreting these texts.

<sup>2</sup> Dandamayev 1996; MacGinnis 1995, 11; 1998/1 nos. 7 and 8 (pp.213-4); 1998/2; 2002/1 no.6 (p.230).

<sup>3</sup> The tablet is filed as Box C9/15/4 No.2.

Mrs. Woodfield the College Secretary and Mrs. Thompson the College Librarian for their help and courtesy. The tablet is published with the kind permission of the Director of the Cheshunt Collection.

Westminster C9/15/4 No.2

7.4 × 5.5 cm

Darius 13/1/8

- 1 <sup>m</sup>BA-šá-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU A-šú šá <sup>m</sup>E-tel-pi-<sup>d</sup>UTU A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>UTU  
 2 *ina mi-gir* [ŠÀ-bi]-šú É.MEŠ NÍG.GA <sup>d</sup>UTU šá a-na  
 3 <sup>š</sup>BÁN *ina* IGI-šú ul-<sup>r</sup>tu<sup>1</sup> <sup>i</sup>BÁR MU 8 KÁM <sup>m</sup>Da-ri-ia-wuš  
 4 LUGAL E<sup>ki</sup> LUGAL KUR.KUR *ina* NÍG.GA <sup>d</sup>UTU *ina* IGI <sup>m</sup>É.SAG.ILA-lil-bur  
 5 <sup>lú</sup>SANGA UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup> u <sup>lú</sup>UMBISAG.MEŠ *un-da-ši-ir*<sup>2</sup>  
 6 *e-lat* 22 ma-na 4 1/2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *re-hi* šá MU 6 KÁM  
 7 u MU '7' KÁM ù 1 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR BABBAR-<sup>r</sup>ú  
 8 ŠÁM 4 GUN SÍG.HI.A šá *ina* IGI-šú 'u'  
 9 1 ME 22 GUR ZÚ.'LUM'.MA 'it-ti'  
 10 <sup>lú</sup>UMBISAG.MEŠ šá É.KI'.TUŠ'.GI.[NA] 'ú'-[šá]-az-za-ma  
 11 a-na <sup>m</sup>É.SAG.'ILA'-li[l-bur] <sup>lú</sup>SANGA UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup> u  
 12 <sup>lú</sup>UMBISAG.MEŠ *i-nam*-[din]  
 13 <sup>lú</sup>mu-kin-nu <sup>md</sup>AM[AR.UTU-MU-DÙ] 'A'-šú šá <sup>m</sup>KAR-<sup>d</sup>ŠÚ  
 14 A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>INNIN E<sup>ki</sup> <sup>md</sup>X X]-MU A-šú šá  
 15 <sup>m</sup>Gi-mil-lu-<sup>d</sup>UT[U A <sup>m</sup>]DÙ-eš-DINGIR <sup>md</sup>UTU-'MU'  
 16 [A]-šú šá <sup>md</sup>EN-A-MU A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>UTU <sup>md</sup>UTU-na-šir A-šú šá  
 17 <sup>m</sup>Mu-šal-lim-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>UTU <sup>m</sup>Ba-su-<sup>r</sup>ú šá *ina* muh-hi qu-úp  
 18 <sup>m</sup>La-ba-ši [A-š]ú 'šá' [<sup>md</sup>]NÀ-na-šir A <sup>md</sup>ŠEŠ<sup>ki</sup>-ú-tu  
 19 u <sup>lú</sup>UMBISAG <sup>md</sup>[UTU-K]ÁD A-šú šá <sup>md</sup>NÀ-DU-A A <sup>lú</sup>PA.ŠE<sup>ki</sup>  
 20 UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup> <sup>i</sup>BÁR UD 23 KÁM  
 21 MU 8 KÁM <sup>m</sup>[D]a-ri-ia-wuš LUGAL E<sup>ki</sup> LUGAL  
 22 'LUGAL KUR'.[KUR]

#### Translation

The fields belonging to Šamaš which were (assigned) for lease at his disposal from Nisānu of year 8 of Darius king of Babylon, king of countries Iqīša-Marduk son of Etel-pī-Marduk of the family Šangū Šamaš has of his own free will relinquished (back) into the property of Šamaš in the presence of Esagila-lilbur the *šangū* of Sippar and the scribes. This is apart from the 22 mina 4 1/2 shekels of silver remaining from year 6 and year 7; and the 1 mina of white silver, the price of the 4 mina of wool which is at his disposal; and the 122 *kur* of dates, which he will register with the scribes of the Etušgina and give (the receipt) to Esagila-lilbur the *šangū* of Sippar and the scribes. Witnesses. Sippar. Date.

#### Notes

<sup>1,5</sup> viz. *un-da-(áš)-ši-ir*.

<sup>1,10</sup> The reading of this line has been most problematic despite repeated collation. It is not helped by the fact that a fragment which flaked off the tablet has been glued back incorrectly. (I have copied this fragment exactly as it appears now in its wrong alignment). But I am

confident that the correct solution has been reached, and would like to again thank Cornelia Wunsch for her help. See further in the commentary below. For a discussion of the phrase *ušazzazma.....inamdin* see Weszeli 1997, 233-236; for the writing *ú-šá-az-za-ma*, cf. *ú-šá-az-za-a'* in BM 74554.9, Stolper, *JNES* 48 (1989) 282 with note on p. 287.

<sup>1,13</sup> For the restoration see Bongenaar 1997, 438.

<sup>1,17</sup> Basuru is well attested as *ša muhhi quppi* in the Darius years 6-10 (Bongenaar 1997, 108).

<sup>1,19</sup> For the restoration see Bongenaar 1997, 496-7.

#### Commentary

Iqīša-Marduk/Etel-pī-Marduk/Šangū Šamaš is well known as a prominent businessman, owner of temple prebends and possibly temple scribe, attested from Nabonidus 16 to Darius year 12 (Bongenaar 1997, 452, 522). He is known to have owned a field in Cyrus year 8 (Jursa 1995, 232). His concession as such is mentioned in no other source (cf. the list of general rent farmers, Jursa 1995, 86), though he is known to have been involved in the collection of *sūtu* around Darius year 2 (Jursa 1998, 48). There is no clear indication whether, when he relinquished his concession, at the beginning of Darius year 8, the land was immediately farmed out again. As far as I am aware this is the only known example of the relinquishing of a *sūtu* concession from Sippar. We do not know the reason for Iqīša-Marduk giving up his concession though it may be imagined he found himself unequal to the task or unable to find sufficient workers.

The Etušgina was the temple of Bēl-šarbē in Baš<sup>4</sup> and this is crucial to the correct understanding of the text. Baš was a satellite of Sippar. Its temple was administratively dependent on Sippar, with the Ebabbara supplying silver, commodities, tools, cultic equipment and personnel to the smaller temple. Regarding the present text it is therefore not at all surprising to find an interface between the temple administrations of Baš and Sippar; it may also of course suggest that the fields in question were in the vicinity of Baš. It would appear that Iqīša-Marduk had a pre-existing commitment to pay the specified silver and dates to the Etušgina; our text directs that he shall register these payments with the scribes of the Etušgina and give proof of this to (Ina)-Esagila-lilbur. The exact administrative reasons for this arrangement remain opaque — it may be that the Etušgina was owed the money by the Ebabbara or had simply been promised it; or it may be a function of the conditions governing the lease of the land, or some other aspect of Iqīša-Marduk's business.

#### No. 2 An award of a concession of *hanšū* land

This text comes from the British Museum and deals with the lease of allotments of *hanšū* land.

BM 64697

7.5 × 6.0 cm Cyrus 9/4/-

- 1 ŠE.NUMUN NÍG.GA <sup>d</sup>UTU É *me-r*[e-ši ŠE.NUMUN]  
 2 *tap-<sup>r</sup>tu-ú* 50-<sup>e</sup>meš *ki* [X X X]

<sup>4</sup> MacGinnis 1997 with references to previous literature; evidently George's suggestion that the *é.ki.tuš.gi.na* and the *é.dúr.gi.na* were the same is correct (George 1993 No.623).

- 3 ŠE.NUMUN 50-e šá<sup>md</sup>UTU-ú-še-zib [a-di?]  
 4 ma-kal-le-e šá 50.MEŠ 'EN' 2' [GUD.MEŠ]  
 5 '1-et'sik-kat AN.BAR 1-et ap-pa-tu<sub>4</sub> AN.BAR '1-et' [X (X) šá]  
 6 <sup>md</sup>EN-ŠEŠ.MEŠ-BA-šá<sup>lú</sup>qí-i-pi É.BABBAR.[RA u]  
 7 <sup>md</sup>AMAR.UTU-MU-MU <sup>lú</sup>SANGA UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup> 'a'-[na]  
 8 <<a-na!>> MU.AN.NA 50 GUR ŠE.BAR a-di-i <sup>lú</sup>ENGAR.[MEŠ]  
 9 a-na <sup>m</sup>Haš-da-a A-šú šá<sup>md</sup>UTU-ú-še-zib u  
 10 <sup>md</sup>UTU-a-a A-šú šá<sup>m</sup>Pa-ṭe-e-su id-din-n[u]  
 11 ŠE.NUMUN i-di-ik-ku-ú i-pa-áš-šá-ru ù  
 12 i-zaq-qa-pu ina MU.AN.NA 50 GUR ŠE.BAR  
 13 ina É.GUR<sub>7</sub>.MEŠ ina ma-ši-hi šá 1 (PI) 1-BÁN 3 SILA<sub>3</sub>  
 14 ki-i pi-i 4 ma-ši-hi a-na 1 GUR  
 15 a-na <sup>d</sup>UTU i-nam-din-nu ŠUK.HI.A.MEŠ  
 16 <sup>lú</sup>EN.NAM <sup>lú</sup>qí-i-pi <sup>lú</sup>DUB.SAR u <sup>lú</sup>man-di-di  
 17 u <sup>lú</sup>Ī.DUH i-nam-di-nu MU.AN.NA 50 ma-ak-[ša-ru]  
 18 šá IN.NU i-nam-din-nu ŠE.NUMUN ù ŠUK.HI.A šá [mX X X]  
 19 u <sup>lú</sup>ENGAR.<MEŠ> šá 1-et MU.AN.NA <sup>md</sup>EN-ŠEŠ.MEŠ-BA-[šá]  
 20 <sup>lú</sup>qí-i-pi u <sup>md</sup>AMAR.UTU-MU-MU <sup>lú</sup>SANGA Sip-par<sup>k[i]</sup>  
 21 a-na <sup>m</sup>Haš-da-a u <sup>md</sup>UTU-a-a i-nam-din-nu  
 22 <sup>lú</sup>mu-kin-nu <sup>md</sup>NÀ-MU-SI.SÁ A-šú šá<sup>m</sup>Ba-lat-s[u]  
 23 A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>INNIN TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup> <sup>md</sup>EN-A-MU A-[šú šá]  
 24 <sup>md</sup>ILLAT-ú A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA Sip-par<sup>ki</sup>  
 25 <sup>m</sup>ŠEŠ.MEŠ-MU-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU A-šú šá<sup>m</sup>APIN-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU [A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>INNIN  
 TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup>]  
 26 <sup>md</sup>EN-TIN-ī A-šú šá<sup>m</sup>Ki-rib-ti A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA [UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup>]  
 27 <sup>lú</sup>UMBISAG <sup>md</sup>AMAR.UTU-na-šir A-šú šá<sup>m</sup>GAR-[MU A <sup>lú</sup>SANGA <sup>d</sup>INNIN TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup>]  
 28 UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup> i<sup>ii</sup>ŠU UD 9 KÁM [MU X KÁM]  
 29 <sup>m</sup>Ku-raš LUGAL TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup> [LUGAL KUR.KUR]

#### Translation

Bēl-ahhē-iqīša the *qīpu* of the Ebabbara and Marduk-šum-iddin the *šangû* of Sippar have given to Hašdāya son of Šamaš-ušēzib and Šamšāya son of Paṭēsu the field(s) belonging to Šamaš, cultivated land (and) newly opened [land], the *hanšû* allotments [...], the *hanšû* allotments of Šamaš-ušēzib [as far as?] the drainage ditch of the *hanšû* allotments, including 2 [oxen], 1 iron ploughshare, 1 iron *appatu* (and) 1 [...] for a yearly rent of 50 *kur*, including the dependent farmers. They will *clear*, loosen and plant this land. Yearly they shall pay to Šamaš 50 *kur* of barley into the *bīt karê* using the 45-litre measure at the rate of 4 measures to a *kur*. They will pay the rations of the governor, the *qīpu*, the scribe, the measurer and the porter. They will give 40 bales of straw per year. Bēl-ahhē-iqīša the *qīpu* and Marduk-šum-iddin the *šangû* of Sippar will give Hašdāya and Šamšāya the seed and rations of [PN] and the farmers. Witnesses. Sippar. Date.

#### Notes

<sup>14</sup> According to van Driel the *makallû* was a “drainage ditch down the levée of a canal or river” (1988, 139). See also Jursa 1995, 184.

<sup>1.10</sup> Šamšāya son of Paṭēsu is already attested as an *ikkaru* in the time of Nabonidus<sup>5</sup> and it is clear that he followed his father in this profession. Paṭēsu itself is an Egyptian name and he was almost certainly a prisoner of war deported from Egypt. An *ikkaru* of this name is known to have been active in the village of Ša-muhhi-bitqi around Nabonidus year 11 (Jursa 1995, 230) and the name is also attested in lists of Egyptian workers on the books of the Ebabbara (Bongenaar & Haring 1994, 68). It would not be surprising if all these references are to the same individual.

<sup>1.11</sup> The meaning of *i-di-ik-ku-ú* is not entirely clear. That the verb had a specific agricultural usage is acknowledged by *CAD* (*dekû* 4) without however elucidating what the meaning may have been. Another meaning given by *CAD* is “to clear away” (*dekû* 1.2'.b): conceivably this might have meant something along the lines of clearing stones from the field but if so we would probably expect the object to be explicitly expressed.

<sup>1.18</sup> The personal name (or whatever else was written) would have had to be written over the edge of the tablet.

<sup>1.26</sup> For the restoration of the family name see Bongenaar 1997, 518.

<sup>1.29</sup> For a similar restoration of the title *šar mātāti* see Weszeli NABU 1999/4 No.106.

#### Commentary

This contract deals with the allocation by the temple of *hanšû* land to Hašdāya son of Šamaš-ušēzib and Šamšāya son of Paṭēsu. It is of great interest that the fathers of both these individuals are known — Šamaš-ušēzib was responsible for the upper *hanšû* in Til-gubbi in the reign of Nabonidus<sup>6</sup> while Paṭēsu was a dependent farmer active in the village of Ša-muhhi-bitqi around Nabonidus year 11<sup>7</sup>. Consequently it may be that this contract was an instrument for transferring the control of these *hanšû* allotments from fathers to sons. As regards *hanšû* land itself, this has been dealt with by Jursa and Da Riva 2002<sup>8</sup>. Another contract dealing with *hanšû* land may be found in *CT* 55 87.

#### No. 3 Replacing farmers conscripted for state service

This text, also from the British Museum, is inconspicuous in appearance but its contents are of extraordinary interest. It documents an occasion on which dependent farmers from the concession of Birūqāya had been drafted for state service, and subsequently this deficit was made up from prisoners.

BM 61583

8.1 × 6.8 cm Darius 12/3/28

- 1 [7 <sup>lú</sup>ENGAR šá<sup>md</sup>UTU-a-a [<sup>lú</sup>TIL.GÍD É.BABBAR.RA  
 2 'i-na' i<sup>ii</sup>BÁR MU '26' KÁM <sup>m</sup>Da-ri-ia-'wuš LUGAL'  
 3 [I]a-pa-ni <sup>m</sup>Bi-ru-qa-a [<sup>lú</sup>GAL gisBÁN šá<sup>d</sup>UTU'  
 4 i-bu-uk-ku <sup>lú</sup>ENGAR-àm 7 ku-um <sup>lú</sup>ENGAR.MEŠ-àm

<sup>5</sup> Jursa 1995, 33 and 230.

<sup>6</sup> Jursa 1995, 50, 55, 156, 158-9, 231.

<sup>7</sup> Jursa 1995, 230.

<sup>8</sup> Jursa 1995, 12-13; Da Riva 2002, 85, 87f, 100+n.259.

- 5 7 šá la-pa-ni <sup>m</sup>Bi-ru-qa-a' ab-ku-u'  
 6 [b]a-ab-tu<sub>4</sub> TA pa-'x'-du šá 7 <sup>lú</sup>ENGAR  
 7 <sup>[m]</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>UTU-TIN <sup>lú</sup>ší-rik <sup>d</sup>UTU ina qí-bi šá  
 8 <sup>[m]</sup>dNÀ-'ba'-lat-su-iq-bi <sup>lú</sup>KID.BAR UD.KIB.NUN<sup>ki</sup>  
 9 ki-i ú-šal-lim-mu a-na <sup>m</sup>Bi-ru-qa-a'  
 10 <sup>lú</sup>GAL <sup>giš</sup>BÁN šá <sup>d</sup>[UTU] it-ta-di-in e-lat  
 11 <sup>lú</sup>SIMUG-u-[t]i [u] <sup>'lú</sup>NAGAR  
 12 šá 'a-na' <sup>[m]</sup>'Bi-[ru]-qu'-qa-a <sup>lú</sup>mu-k[in-nu]  
 13 <sup>[mX]</sup>-NUMUN DUMU šá <sup>m</sup>KAR-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU DUMU <sup>m</sup>E-t[el-KA]  
 14 <sup>[m]</sup>'dEN'-MU DUMU šá <sup>m</sup>dNÀ-MU DUMU <sup>lú</sup>KID.BAR <<sup>d</sup>INNIN> TIN.TIR<sup>ki(i)</sup>  
 15 <sup>[m]</sup>A-a <sup>m</sup>Ni-din-tu<sub>4</sub> u <sup>m</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>NÀ-TIN <sup>lú</sup>am-ma-ri-ka-ra  
 16 <sup>m</sup>La-q[í-p]i A-šú [šá] <sup>m</sup>dNÀ-na-šir A <sup>m</sup>dŠEŠ<sup>ki</sup>-ú-tu  
 17 <sup>m</sup>dEN-DÙ A-šú šá <sup>m</sup>dNÀ-LUGAL-ŠEŠ DUMU <sup>m</sup>Ga-hal  
 18 <sup>m</sup>dEN-it-tan-[nu DUMU] <sup>m</sup>'TIN-su'-<sup>d</sup>ME.ME <sup>lú</sup>SANGA TIN.TIR<sup>ki</sup>  
 19 <sup>m</sup>Šu-zu-bu DUMU [šá <sup>m</sup>d]Za-ba<sub>4</sub>-ba<sub>4</sub>-ŠEŠ-MU A <sup>m</sup>D[A]-<sup>d</sup>ŠÚ  
 20 <sup>m</sup>Ba-nu-nu-<sup>[d]</sup>'AMAR.UTU' DUMU šá <sup>m</sup>Da-bi-bi  
 21 'UD.KIB'.NUN<sup>ki</sup> <sup>[iii]</sup>SIG<sub>4</sub> UD 12 KÁM  
 22 [MU] 28 KÁM <sup>m</sup>Da-'ri-ia'-wuš LUGAL [E<sup>ki</sup>]

#### Translation

[(Concerning) the seven] farmers whom Šamšāya the *qīpu* of the Ebabbara took away from Birūqāya the *rab sūti* of Šamaš in the month of Nisānu of Darius year 26: in place of these seven farmers taken away from Birūqāya, Itti-Šamaš-balātu the *širku* of Šamaš has, on the orders of Nabû-balassu-iqbi the *šangû* of Sippar, replaced the remainder..... of the seven farmers and given them to Birūqāya the *rab sūti* of [Šamaš]. (This is) in addition to the smiths and the carpenter (given) to Birūqāya. Witnesses. Date.

#### Notes

<sup>1.5</sup> Taking *abāku*.... *lapān* PN as “to assign”.

<sup>1.6</sup> *pa-'x'-du*: it is hugely tempting to interpret this as a writing of *pasa'du*, a Persian word used as an equivalent of Babylonian *dullu* in its meaning of the obligation to perform conscripted service for the state<sup>9</sup>. Such a reading would fit the context perfectly. However, even if this is correct the orthography remains obtuse.

<sup>1.15</sup> See below for comments on <sup>lú</sup>*am-ma-ri-ka-ra*.

<sup>1.19</sup> For Šūzubu/Zababa-ah-iddin/Ile”i-Marduk (a scribe) see Bongenaar 1997 p.538.

<sup>1.20</sup> The scribe evidently wrote another DUMU and changed this into a DA.

#### Commentary

The whole set up here is highly interesting. Birūqāya is a well known *rab sūti* of Šamaš. The essential background is the fact, now well established, that when a *rab sūti/ša muhhi sūti* rented temple lands the associated dependent farmers were still liable to be called up for military service or corvée duty<sup>10</sup>. This being the case, the most plausible scenario for the current

<sup>9</sup> For the latest on this term, and the performance of *corvée* labour in Elam, see MacGinnis 2002/2.

<sup>10</sup> Jursa 1995, 103; MacGinnis 1998/3.

situation is that (1) the *qīpu* had requisitioned seven *ikkaru* from Birūqāya's land, (2) Birūqāya found that the reduced manpower left him unable to work his holdings effectively, so that (3) he then petitioned the *šangû* for replacements. It is striking that the individual who supplies the replacements is not the head of the temple dependents (*rab širkē*) as might be expected. Instead the individual in question, Itti-Šamaš-balātu, was in fact the head of the prison (*rab bīt kīli*)<sup>11</sup>. We may therefore conclude that the replacements were prisoners.

The appearance of the title *ammarakarra* in 1.15 is most unexpected. This is a word for bookkeeper and is Persian in origin<sup>12</sup>, though its use here may be via a loanword into Aramaic. In any case it is the first attestation in the Sippar material. The three men designated — Aplāya, Nidintu and Itti-Nabû-balātu — all have good Babylonian names. There are attestations of scribes with all three of these names in the Sippar material: a scribe Itti-Nabû-balātu is so far known only in Cambyses year 2<sup>13</sup> but there are at least five different scribes named Nidintu late in the reign of Darius<sup>14</sup>, and although there is no Aplāya as such attested for this period, it is a common hypocoristic and there was a temple scribe by the name of Marduk-mukīn-apli active around this time<sup>15</sup>. It is therefore possible, if not certain, that these three individuals were scribes based in Sippar. An alternative would be that they were accountants from the central state civil service, but while this might explain the use of the term *ammarakarra*, it does not square well with their place in the list of witnesses, which is any case anomalous. We are therefore left with the alternatives that either (1) the scribe who wrote this document used the term on a whim, (2) there had been a central directive ordaining a change in nomenclature, or (3) *ammarakarra* had in effect become the normal Aramaic word for a cuneiform scribe and its appearance here is part of the established phenomenon of the Aramaic vernacular creeping through into cuneiform documentation. If we are correct about interpreting the word in line 6 as *pasa'du*, the occurrence of two Persian terms in an otherwise robustly Babylonian document may well be due to the fact that the issue dealt with involved negotiation with the state authorities.

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<sup>11</sup> Bongenaar 1997, 125.

<sup>12</sup> CAD H, 59f. s.v. *hamarakarra*, AHW 44a s.v. *ammarakarra*.

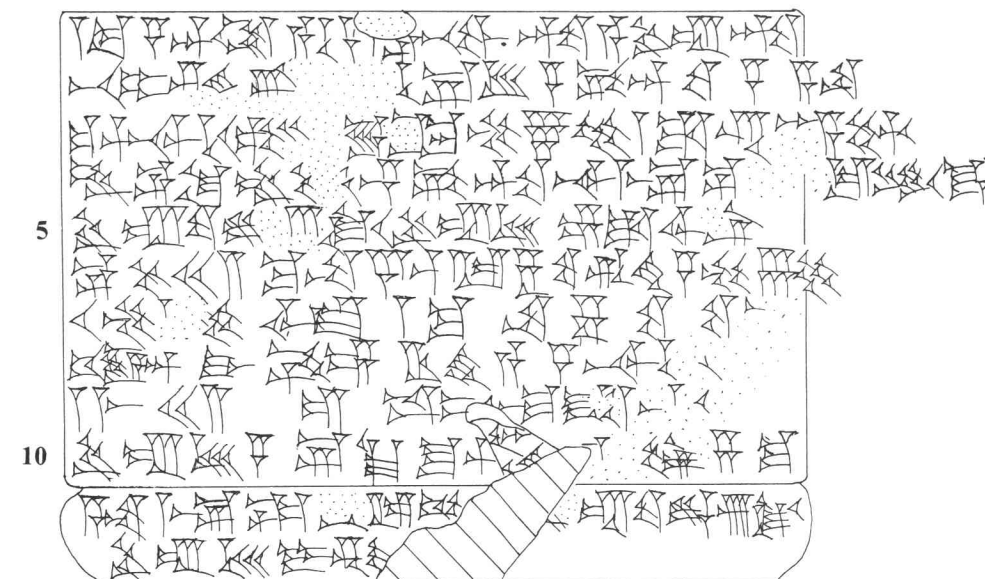
<sup>13</sup> Bongenaar 1997, 487.

<sup>14</sup> Bongenaar 1997, 494.

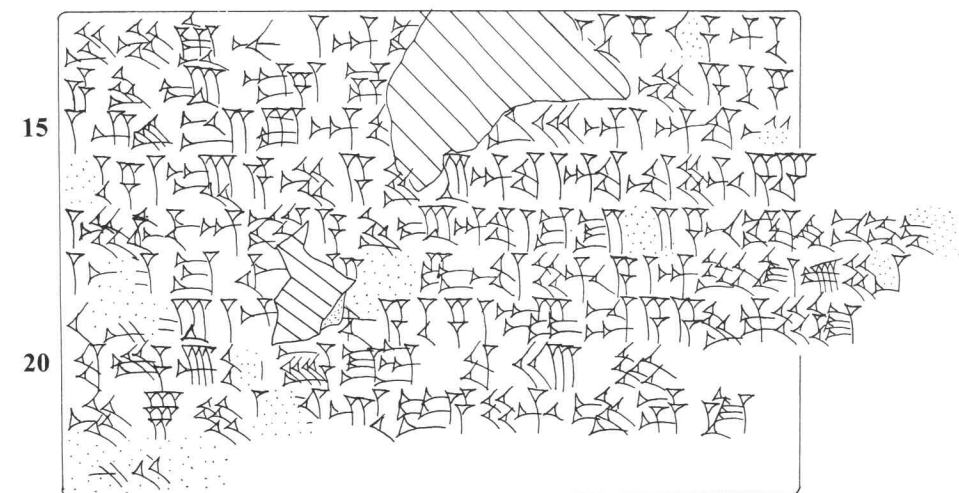
<sup>15</sup> Bongenaar 1997, 80.

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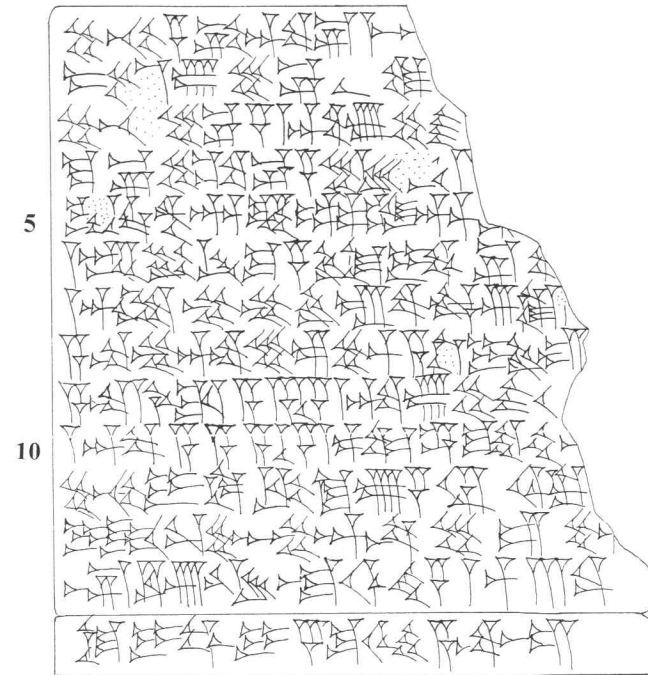
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## No. 1 (reverse)



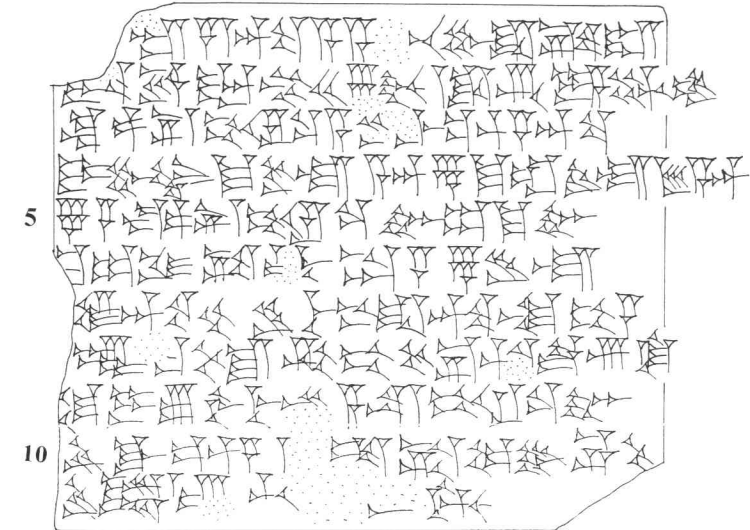
No. 2 (obverse)



No. 2 (reverse)



No. 3 (obverse)



No. 3 (reverse)

