

89) YOS 15 9 (PTS 2178): a sealed archival tablet from late Hellenistic Uruk¹⁾ — The cuneiform tablet PTS 2178 was purchased in 1915 by O. T. Allis for the Princeton Theological Seminary from A. T. Clay, Curator of the Babylonian Collection at Yale University, with funds raised by individual donations from members of the Board of Trustees and others and from a special appropriation by the Board of Trustees²⁾. A hand copy of the cuneiform text was prepared by the late A. Goetze (d. 1971), and published recently as no. 9 in *Cuneiform Texts from Various Collections* (Yale Oriental Series Babylonian Texts vol. XV), edited by B. R. Foster (2009)³⁾. The tablet is largely complete but with significant surface damage to the reverse, including the loss of much of the scribe's date formula: previous suggestions for the dating of this tablet range from ca. 122–161 S.E. (OELSNER 1986: 161 [e]) to after 209 S.E. (VAN DER SPEK 2009).

YOS 15 9 records the sale of a built-upon urban lot, designated “tenured property” (*bīt ritti*: see BAKER 2005: 30–37; CORÒ-CAPITANIO 2012), consisting of two adjacent quadrangular areas of indeterminate size fronting to the west on a common public street in the Rēš district (“Village of the Temple of the Gods”) of Uruk; thus the tablet was more than likely drafted at Uruk. The statement of the purchase price of the property sold— $8\frac{1}{2}$ *šiqil u erbet maḥat kaspu qalū babbanū* (ll. 17f.)—is unusual in at least two respects. Most noticeably absent here is the qualifying formula, “stators (*istaterānū*) of RN in good condition (*babbanūtu*)”, first introduced during the co-regency of Seleucus I and Antiochus. Although the reigning monarch's name would appear on the coins themselves, Alexander III's name appeared in the payment formula in cuneiform sale documents at Uruk until nearly a decade after Seleucid mints began to issue coined silver bearing Antiochus I's own portrait shortly after 278 BCE. The practice of inserting the reigning king's name into the payment formula in Uruk archival documents was continued by Antiochus' successors throughout the remainder of the Seleucid period at Uruk, with the most notable exceptions being several archival tablets drawn up in the brief period between 68 and 71 S.E., during the Third Syrian (Laodicean) War (WALLENFELS 2001: 222)⁴⁾, and several more from the reigns of Demetrius I and Alexander I at the end of the period. Although cuneiform archival scribes active into the reign of Alexander I were perfectly capable of writing the full formula, e.g., BiMes 24 12 8f. (162 S.E.), several abbreviations and variations are in evidence⁵⁾. The same abbreviated formula as seen here in YOS 15 9, which omits the RN, is also found in CM 12 IX 12 (153 S.E.) and is readily restored in OECT 9 61 14f. (153 S.E.); these two later Seleucid tablets were written by Anu-uballit/Ina-qibit-Anu//Ekur-zākir (see further, below). This abbreviated formula might also be restored in the early Arsacid tablet BRM 2 52 (109 A.E. = 173 S.E.)⁶⁾, written by one Anu-aḥḥē-iddin/Nidintu-Anu//Sin-lēqi-unnīni (see further, below).

The second unusual feature in YOS 15 9 is the use in the statement of the purchase price of the writing *ma-ḥat*, denoting 1/12 shekel (Aram. מַחַת). Its occurrence here was taken by VAN DER SPEK 2009, basing himself solely on tablets from Babylon dated to the reign of Mithridates II (OPPENHEIM 1973), to suggest that this tablet might be dated to the early first century BCE; however, this term appears significantly earlier at Uruk in BiMes 24 49 r.3, datable to the reign of Demetrius I (cf. SARKISIAN 1983: 133), and earlier yet throughout YOS 20 35 (NCBT 1066), dated 71 S.E. (for the *editio princeps*, see BEAULIEU 1989 no. 1). Thus, contra van der Spek, the appearance of the term *maḥat* in YOS 15 9 has no immediate bearing on the tablet's dating.

The seller and guarantor of the sale is one Aḥīya-Anu/Anu-yəḥab/Ana-rabūtīka-Anu *ēpiš dullu ḫīdi ša bīt ilānī ša Uruk*. The buyers are Antu-ṭābat(?)/Anu-yəḥab/Ana-rabūtīka-Anu—apparently the seller's sister, although this is nowhere stated in the preserved text—and another individual, one Kidin-Anu/Nidintu-Anu/Anu-uballit *atū ša bāb!* (tablet: sum) *iltāni*, likely Antu-ṭābat's husband (JURSA 2009: 49), though this too is nowhere stated in the preserved text. Compare the possibly analogous situation in TCL 13 235 (43 S.E.) wherein two brothers “sell” a house to their sister in the presence of their mother; MCEWAN (1995: 21) speculated that the mother was recently widowed and provided the funds for the fictive sale to provide a means for the continued maintenance of her unmarried daughter.

Among the owners of the immediately neighboring properties, all designated *bīt ritti*, are the seller's acknowledged brother, Rīḫat-Ninurta (l. 7: *šEŠ-šū*); Raḫūmā/Rīḫat-Anu, who gives the name of his paternal grandmother, Ḥannā-lātā, in his patronymic; and Idā-atāya/Ḥānīnāḥ⁷⁾ *ēpiš dullu ḫīdi ša bīt ilānī ša Uruk*, a construction worker like the seller.

On the basis of the preserved seal impressions and their distribution on the tablet edges (serviceable images may found at <https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P414464.jpg>), there appear to have been eight witnesses. None of the preserved seal impressions appear on other tablets known to this writer, however, at the same time, none would appear out of place on a tablet or ring-bulla dated to the Seleucid era; nonetheless, the motif of a goatfish confronting a draped herm (B2) is novel. Because of the damage to the witness list on the tablet reverse (ll. 28ff.), not all of the personal names given in the seal captions can be located in the witness list, where, further, it cannot always be decided with certainty where one witness' personal name and patronymic ends and the next begins. Notwithstanding, note the following:

WI #2, Nidintu-[Anu]/Tanittu-Anu/Uppul//Aḥ-ūtu (ll. 29f., L1), was active between 130 and 154 S.E.⁸⁾ Impressions of two different seals are known for this sealer, but neither appears impressed here⁹⁾.

WI #3: [AŠ]-qi-bit-[^d60 A šá¹ ...-M]U A šá^{1d}60-[ik(?)-su]r(?) A¹kur-i (ll. 30f., B3); compare one Ina-qibīt-Anu/Anu-aḥ-iddin/Anu-ikšur//Kurī, active 138–161 S.E.¹⁰⁾ The impression of neither of the two seals known for this sealer, (1) A19 707 (138 S.E.) and (2) A19 49 (139 S.E.), appears here.

WI #4: Anu-šum-līšir/Anu-aḥ-ittanu/[...]/Luštammar-Adad (ll. 31f., [L2]); compare the similarly named figure, grandson of Balātu, active 138–159 S.E.¹¹⁾ None of the three different seals known for this sealer appears here¹²⁾.

WI #5: [¹...]-^d60 A šá [¹...].MEŠ-MU A šá¹BAD₄-^dGAŠAN A.MEŠ [¹]lu-uš-tam-[mar-^dI]M (ll. 31f.); compare one Illūt-Anu/Anu-aḥḥē-iddin/Dannat-Bēlti//Luštammar-Adad, active during the reign of Demetrius I¹³⁾. One seal impression is known for this sealer, A20 *20-8 (156 S.E.), but does not appear here.

WI #7: [I ... A šá¹...]-MU A^{1d}30-TI-ÉR (ll. 33f.), might, in light of the seal caption at T3, be compared with one Tāb-Anu/Illūt-Anu/Anu-zēr-iddin//Sîn-lēqi-unnīni, active 155–159 S.E.¹⁴⁾ The impression of neither of the two seals known for this sealer, (1) A20 *43-6 (155 S.E.) and (2) A19 283 (159 S.E.), appear here.

The two-line scribe's subscription at the bottom of the tablet reverse (ll. 36f.) is largely lost, leaving only the scribe's family name, Ekur-zāki[r]. During the nearly two decades spanning the reigns of Antiochus V, Demetrius I, and Alexander I, at least nine different archival scribes from the Ekur-zākir family practiced at Uruk to the virtual exclusion of all others, writing in total some sixty tablets. Two exceptions here include Anu-aḥḥē-iddin/Nidintu-Anu//Sîn-lēqi-unnīni¹⁵⁾, who was also the scribe of five of the six-known dated early Arsacid tablets¹⁶⁾, and a Gimil-Anu-family scribe who wrote four other tablets¹⁷⁾. The situation was quite different, however, prior to those last twenty years of Seleucid rule at Uruk: throughout the first century of the Hellenistic period at Uruk through the reign of Seleucus III, archival scribes overwhelmingly claimed descent from Sîn-lēqi-unnīni. However, during the reigns of Antiochus III and Seleucus IV, Ekur-zākir-family scribes appear to predominate, until displaced once again by Sîn-lēqi-unnīni scribes during the reign of Antiochus IV. Very much smaller numbers of sealed archival tablets were also drawn up at Seleucid Uruk by a few members of the Kurī¹⁸⁾, Gimil-Anu¹⁹⁾, and Aḥ-ūtu²⁰⁾ families as well as by a dozen or so predominantly earlier scribes prior to 43 S.E. who did not regularly include an ancestor name in their patronymics. Curiously, in the Arsacid period at Uruk, no one from the Ekur-zākir family is to be found acting in any capacity whatsoever in any of the six extant tablets. Although there have been several recent individual case studies (e.g., OSSENDREJVER 2011; STEVENS 2013; ESCOBAR & PEARCE 2018), a comprehensive examination of the Seleucid Uruk archival and canonical scribes—from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives—remains a desideratum.

In light of the above, despite the equivocal evidence from the seal impressions, YOS 15 9 (PTS 2178) appears not to be the latest sealed archival tablet from Uruk, but rather to have been written during the reign of Demetrius I or Alexander I in the decade and a half or so prior to the Seleucid withdrawal from Uruk in 166 S.E.

¹⁾ This communication stems from a paper entitled, "Parthian-period sealed archival cuneiform tablets from Uruk", read at *The EDFU Connection: Hellenistic Sealings and Archives. International conference, 23–24 January 2018*, Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.

²⁾ Courtesy Kenneth W. Henke, Curator of Special Collections and Archivist, Princeton Theological Seminary (pers. com.).

³⁾ Note the following copy errors (collated): l. 11, for "meš-ḥat a-tu⁴" read "meš-ḥat II-tu⁴"; l. 20, for "NÍG].SUM.MU-GUR" read "NÍG].SUM.MU^{-d}60"; l. 31, for "^d60-NUMUN-GIŠ" read "^d60-MU-GIŠ".

⁴⁾ For evidence suggesting that the withdrawal of Ptolemaic forces from West Asia, bringing the Third Syrian War to a sudden close, was due to revolts in Egypt associated with famine precipitated there by volcanically-induced diminished summer flooding ("Nile failure"), see MANNING *et al.* 2017.

⁵⁾ *kaspu qalū* (BRM 2 41 22//BiMes 24 35 r.3: 152 S.E.; BIN 2 136 15: 163 S.E.; STUBM 105 14f.: –); *kaspu babbanū* (Jursa Iraq 59 164f. 38 14//STUBM 109 15: 162 S.E.; cf. STUBM 104 12: 160 S.E.); *kaspu qalū ša Alexander* (BRM 2 49 9: 166 S.E.); *kaspu qalū ša Alexander babbanū* (YOS 20 82 11//CM 12 X 11: 162 S.E.).

- ⁶⁾ BRM 2 52 12 [...] *bab-ba-nu-ú*.
- ⁷⁾ Reading ¹*ha-nin!*(tablet: kid)-*na-a*.
- ⁸⁾ VAS 15 12//Boissier Babyl. 8 27f. (130 S.E.); TCL 13 244//STUBM 94 (132 S.E.); VAS 15 39//40//49 (132 S.E.); BRM 2 45 (154 S.E.).
- ⁹⁾ (1) A19 326C: A20 *29-8//Boissier Babyl. 8 27f. L1 (130 S.E.) = RUTTEN 1935, pl. II, no. 29//SS III 733c (132 S.E.) = A20 *32-1//*33-1 (132 S.E.); (2) A19 542 (154 S.E.).
- ¹⁰⁾ YOS 20 69 r.5 (138 S.E.); BRM 2 38 23 (139 S.E.); VAS 15 33 22 (145 S.E.); YOS 20 76 26 (156 S.E.); Rutten Bab. 15 188f. VII 20 (161 S.E.).
- ¹¹⁾ YOS 20 68 r.6' (138 S.E.); BiMes 24 32 r.9f//37 r.9' (140 S.E.); BRM 2 40 31f//Sarkisian FuB 16 30f. 9 r.10' (150 S.E.); CM 12 IX 27f. (153 S.E.); Sarkisian VDI 1955/4 146f. III 5f. (159 S.E.).
- ¹²⁾ (1) A19 722 (138 S.E.) = A20 47-4 (ring-bulla; n.d.); (2) A19 1014 (150 S.E.); (3) CM 12 28 (153 S.E.); cf. STUBM 104 B1 (SS III 744f) (160 S.E.).
- ¹³⁾ OECT 9 60 31 (153 S.E.); VAS 15 27 33, B2 (156 S.E.); Oppert-Ménant Doc.jur. 315f. 5 35f. ([151–161] S.E.).
- ¹⁴⁾ Sarkisian FuB 16 26f. 2+Sarkisian AoF 5 82 (W 15034 i+k) 33//Sarkisian FuB 16 34f. 16 (155 S.E.); YOS 20 77 (159 S.E.).
- ¹⁵⁾ STUBM 102 (157 S.E.); RIAA 2 297 (160 S.E.); YOS 20 78 (160 S.E.); BIN 2 136 (163 S.E.).
- ¹⁶⁾ VAS 15 37 (107 A.E. = 171 S.E.); BRM 2 52 (109 A.E. = 173 S.E.); BiMes 24 44 (115 S.E. = 179 S.E.); BRM 2 53 (180 S.E.); BiMes 24 43 (120 A.E. = 184 S.E.). The sixth tablet, Kessler BaM 15 274f. (139 A.E. = 203 S.E.), was written by one [...]Anu/Riḫat-Anu/[...].
- ¹⁷⁾ Corò-Capitanio St. Fales 157ff. (139 S.E.); STUBM 97 (144 S.E.); Wallenfels JANEH 2 72ff. (149 S.E.); BiMes 24 25 (155 S.E.).
- ¹⁸⁾ Anu-eṛība/Rabi-Anu (53–72 S.E.: BRM 2 20//YOS 20 34; OECT 9 15; STUBM 27) and his son Ištar-šumeriš (75–101 S.E.: BiMes 24 18//48, 21, 34, 45; BRM 2 21, 22//BiMes 24 1, 23//YOS 20 38, 24//YOS 20 40, 26, 27//CM 12 III, 29; OECT 9 18, 21, 24, 25, 36–38; RIAA2 293, 298//300; VAS 15 35; VDI 1955/4 154f. VII//STUBM 68; YOS 20 39, 47).
- ¹⁹⁾ Anu-aḥḥē-iddin/Anu-ab-ušur (17 S.E.: YOS 20 10); [...]Nidintu-Anu ([32–45] S.E.: Doty Uruk 416f.).
- ²⁰⁾ Anu-uballit/Enlil-aḥ-iddin (15 S.E.: STUBM 3).

A(UWE) = Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka Endberichte 19. WALLENFELS, R. 1994. *Uruk: Hellenistic Seal Impressions in the Yale Babylonian Collection I. Cuneiform Tablets*. Mainz am Rhein, 1994. 20. G. Lindström, *Uruk: Siegelabdrücke auf hellenistischen Tonbulln und Tontafeln*. Mainz am Rhein, 2003.

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Ronald WALLENFELS<rw35@nyu.edu>
New York University