

05) A Late-Babylonian fragment of the Venus tablet of Ammišaduqa – BM 32107 (76-11-17, 1834) is a small, previously unknown Late-Babylonian fragment of Tablet 63 of the celestial omen series Enūma Anu Enlil, also known as the Venus tablet of Ammišaduqa. It was not included in the standard edition of the Venus tablet by Reiner and Pingree (1975; henceforth RP75) and it is not in the list of fragments of Enūma Anu Enlil published by Reiner (1998). BM 32107 is inscribed on one side which is assumed to be the obverse; the reverse is destroyed. The fragment measures 5.3 x 7.5 x 2.0 cm. It does not preserve any edge of the tablet, but not much clay is missing from the top and left sides. The lot 76-11-17 includes numerous Late-Babylonian astronomical tablets (diaries, mathematical astronomy) from Babylon. The same origin may be assumed for BM 32107 and for seven other, published fragments of the Venus tablet in the British Museum (RP75 E, F, H, J, K, N, O). BM 32107 does not physically join any of these, but it might belong to the same tablet as RP75 E, F, H, K, N or O. In the transliteration each x enclosed in square brackets represents approximately 1 missing sign, MN stands for a missing month name, n for a day number. In the translation, initial vertical wedges (DIŠ) are, as usual, represented as ¶.

Transliteration

Obverse

Omen 1

1' [xxxxxxxxxxxx] 'x AN? x' [xxxxxxxxxxxx]

Omen 2

2' [DIŠ ina ITI.MN U₄.n.KAM^dNin-si₄-an-na ina^dUTU.†E₃¹ [it-bal xxxxxxxx]

3' [xxxxxx ina] ITI.AB U₄.18.KAM^d[Nin-si₄-an-na ina^dUTU.ŠU₂.A IGI.DU₈ xxxxx]

Omen 3

4' [DIŠ ina ITI.MN U₄.n].†KAM¹^dNin-si₄-an-na ina^d[UTU.ŠU₂.A it-bal xxx]

5' [xxxxxx]-ma ina ITI.DU₆ U₄.13.KAM[†]U₄?¹ [xxxx^dNin-si₄-an-na]

5a' ina^dUTU.E₃ IGI.D[U₈ xxxxxxxxxxxx?]

Omen 4

6' [DIŠ ina ITI.MN U₄.n].†KAM¹^dNin-si₄-an-na ina^{†d}[UTU.E₃ it-bal xxxxxxxx]

7' [xxxx ina] ITI.<KIN> U₄.3.KAM^{d†}Nin¹-[si₄-an-na ina^dUTU.ŠU₂.A IGI.DU₈ xxxxx]

Omen 5

8' [DIŠ ina ITI.GU₄] †U₄¹.2.KAM^dNin-si₄-an-†na¹ [ina^dUTU.ŠU₂.A it-bal xxxxxxxx]

9' [ina ITI.MN U₄.n].†KAM¹^dNin-si₄-an-[na ina^dUTU.E₃ IGI.DU₈ xxxxxxxxxxxx]

9a' : [xxxxxxxxx?]

Omen 6

10' [DIŠ ina ITI.MN U₄.n].†KAM^dNin¹-[si₄-an-na ina^dUTU.E₃ it-bal xxxxxxxxxxxx]

Translation

Obverse

Omen 1

1' [...] '...' [...]

Omen 2

2' [¶ In month MN day n Ninsi]anna [disappears] in the East [...]

3' [... in] month X day 18 [Ninsianna appears in the West ...]

Omen 3

4' [¶ In month MN day n] Ninsianna [disappears] in [the West ...]

5' [...] and in month VII day 13, 'day?'¹ [... Ninsianna]

5a' appears in the East [...]

Omen 4

6' [¶ In month MN day n] Ninsianna [disappears] in [the East ...]

7' [... in] month <VI> day 3 Nin[sianna appears in the West ...]

Omen 5

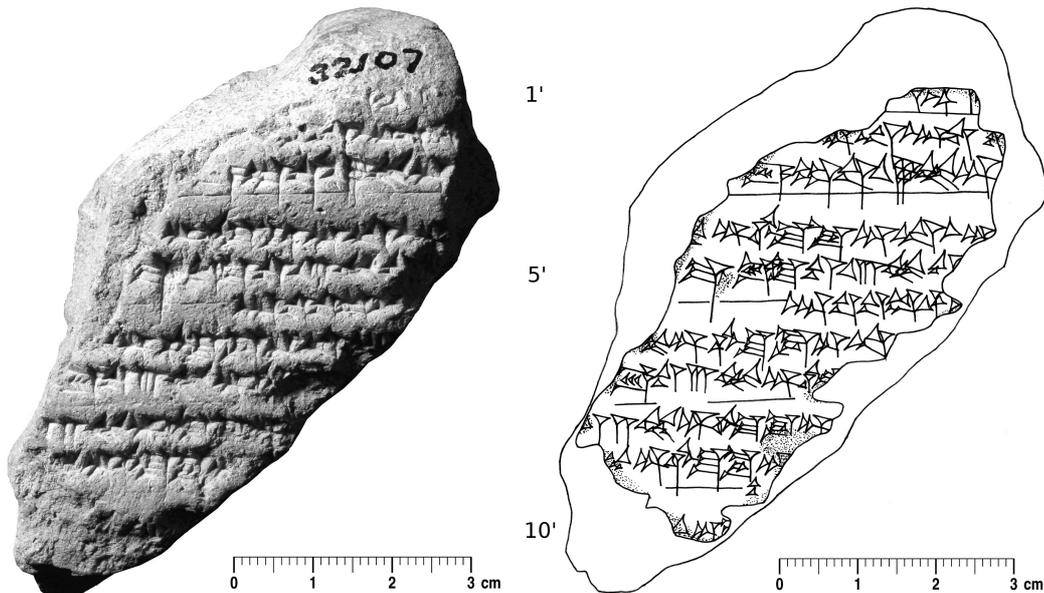
8' [¶ In month II] day 2 Ninsian^{na} [disappears in the West ...]

9' [in month MN day n] Ninsian[na appears in the East ...]

9a' : [...?]

Omen 6

10' [¶ In month MN] 'day'¹ [n] 'Nin'¹[sianna disappears in the East ...]



Critical commentary:

1': Perhaps AN x belongs to ^dE₂-a (cf. Omen 1 in RP75).

3', 'day 18': The only duplicate preserving the second date of Omen 2, RP75 B, has 'day 19'.

5': There is more space available at the end of this line, perhaps 4 signs, than needed for restoring the expected text (cf. RP75 A, B). Indeed it appears that 'day 13' is here followed by an alternative date or, if one interprets 'U₄'¹ as a separation mark (:) followed by traces, perhaps a glosse.

7': KIN: the scribe forgot to write down this month name.

9a': As in 5a', line 9' seems to continue over the ruling below 9' in 9a', of which the first sign, perhaps a separation

mark (:), is partly preserved. If so, there is more space available for Omen 5 than needed for restoring the expected text; perhaps there is an alternative apodosis or a glosse.

Various scholars have analysed the data reported on the Venus tablet for the purpose of establishing an absolute Mesopotamian chronology of the second Millennium BCE; for the latest such attempt cf. Mebert (2010). Since the fragment does not preserve any significant variants, it basically confirms the textual stability of the Venus tablet. The only variant of interest concerns Venus's First Appearance in the West (Evening First) in Omen 2, which occurs on 18 X instead of 19 X. As reported by J. Mebert (private communication), this date is at least equally compatible with his favored chronology (Hammurapi year 1 = 1720 BCE). I wish to thank the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to study and publish this tablet, and C.B.F. Walker for making available his catalogue of astronomical fragments.

Bibliography

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