

57) Mūtaq ^dBagaruš: Persian element in the sacral space of Babylon* — The death of Cambyses, the short reign of Bardiya, and the rebellions of Nebuchadnezzar III and IV ended eventually with assuming power in the Persian Empire by Darius I, but also resulted in many changes in Babylonia. They affected the administrative structure of the state, limitation of state engagement in cult (including the cessation of *nīqē šarri*),¹⁾ increased tax burden and an obligation to send manpower from Babylonia to Persia.²⁾ Nevertheless, it was judged that the Persians did not attempt to use Babylonian cultic tradition for their own purpose and no element of their own religious belief appeared in public sphere of Babylonia. A breakthrough in this picture was brought about by Caroline Waerzeggers who demonstrated, on previously unpublished document BM 72747, that shortly after the death of Darius, in the first year of his son Xerxes daily sacrificial cult before the statue of Darius was established in Sippar. The cult was organised in the accordance with the Babylonian tradition on the basis the prebendary system, although probably relied on people who did not belong to the hereditary priesthood of Sippar.³⁾ In this short text I wish to draw attention to the possible presence of Persian religious beliefs in the public space of Babylon. This information, to a large extent parallel, is found in two texts. The significance of Dar 82 is that it comes from the very beginning of the reign of Darius I; the second, published here, is about 56 years later. Although Dar 82 is edited in print,⁴⁾ or in internet file,⁵⁾ it is published again here for the convenience of the readers.

Dar 82 = BM 77371 (84-2-11, 107)
16.6.3Dar (519 BC)

- Obv. 1. 2 ma-na kù.babbar *šá* ^mkur-ru-la-a-a ^{lú}gal-la
2. *šá* ^{lú}uš-ta-an-ni ^{lú}nam e^{ki} u e-bir id
3. ina muḫ-ḫi ^{md}amar.utu-mu-dù a-šú *šá* ^mšu-la-a
4. a ^{md}dù^{es}-dingir é-su *šá* da mu-ta-qu
5. ^dba-ga-ru-uš maš-kan *šá* ^mkur-ru-la-a-a
6. ^{lú}tuk^u *šá*-nam-ma ina muḫ-ḫi ul i-šal-laṭ
7. i-dí é ia-a-nu u ur.s.ra kù.babbar
8. ia-a-nu
Rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}ag-dib-ud.da a-šú
10. *šá* ^{md}ag-numun-du a ^{md}da- ^dšú
11. ^mtab-ni-e-a a-šú *šá* ^mli-šir a lú simug
12. ^msi-lim-^den a-šú *šá* ^mlu-è-ana-zálag a ^{md}30-šá-du-nu
13. ^mgi-^damar.utu a-šú *šá* ^mtab-ni-e-a a ^{md}30-šá-du-nu
14. ^{md}utu-gi a-šú *šá* ^{md}utu-mu a ^{lú}gal.dù
15. ^{lú}šid ^{md}en-mu a-šú *šá* ^{md}en-gi a ^{md}dù^{es}-dingir
16. e^{ki} iti.du⁶ u⁴.16.kam <mu>.3.kam
17. ^mda-ri-ia-muš lugal e^{ki} u kur.kur

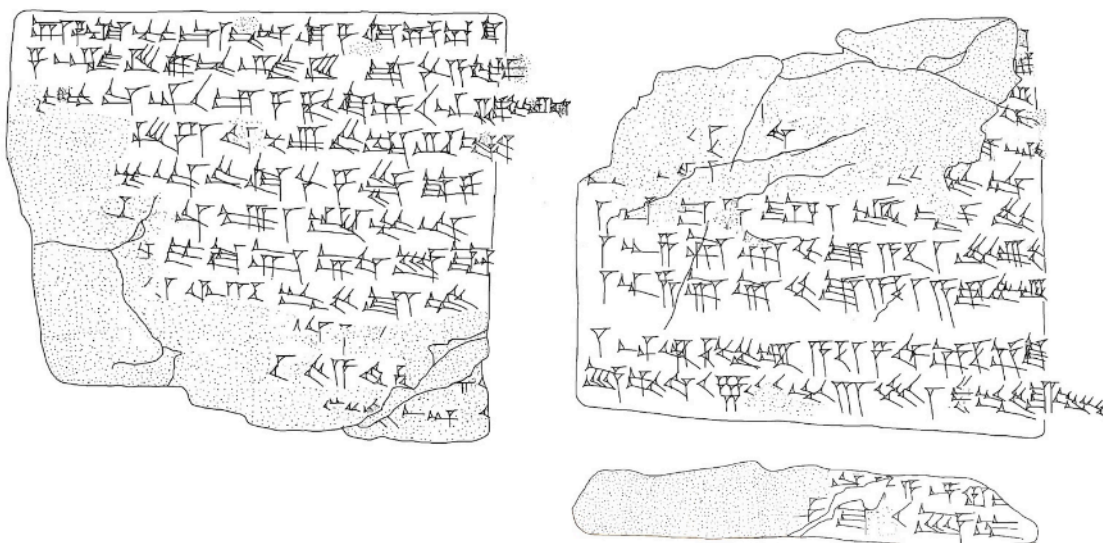
Translation

- 1-4. 2 minas of silver belonging to Kurrulaya, the slave of Uštānu, the governor of Babylon and Across-the River, owed by Marduk-šum-ibni, son of Šulaya, descendant of <Ea>-eppeš-ilī family.
4-5. His (debtor's) house adjacent to the passage of Bagaruš is security of Kurrulaya.
6-8. No other creditor has a right to it (the pledge and) there is no rent of (the pledged) house and no interest on the silver.
9-14. Witnesses:
Nabû-mušētiq-uddē, son of Nabû-zēr-ukīn, descendant of Lē'i-Marduk family
Tabnēa, son of Līšīr, descendant of Nappāḫu family
Silim-Bēl, son of Lūši-ana-nūr, descendant of Sīn-šadūnu family
Mušallim-Marduk, son of Tabnēa, descendant of Sīn-šadūnu family
Šamaš-ušallim, son of Šamaš-iddin, descendant of Rab-banē family
The scribe, Bēl-iddin, son of Bēl-ušallim, descendant of (Ea)-eppeš-ilī family.
Babylon, month Tašrītu, sixteenth day, third year of Darius, king of Babylon and Lands.

BM 33339 (Rm III, 12)
 6.5 x 5.7 cm
 18.2.3Art (462 BC)

- Obv. 1. é šá kiⁿ uru gibil^{ki} šá qé-reb e^{ki}
 2. šá ina gi.meš lib-bi gi.meš da sila a-šu-^rú¹
 3. ^rmu-taq¹-qa ^du+gur šá ha-di-e u ^d{sig}ba-gu-ru-^ruš¹
 4. [...] meš šá ^mpar²¹-nu-ú ^{lú}ka-ri-^rx¹-tú
 5. [^{md}x]-mu^{na} ^{lú}di.kud šá ká dumu šá
 6. [x x] ^rx¹ [(x)]-qa-ú ^{md}en-mu^{na}
 7. [x (x) a-n]a i-di é ta iti.bár
 8. [u⁴.x kam mu.3[?].ka]m ^mar-tak-šat-su lugal
 9. [...]-^rna x¹ [...]
 10. [...i]d-din a-^{hi} k[ù.babbar ina ri-e]š [mu]
 11. [u a-^{hi} kù.babbar ina] ^rmi-šil mu¹ ina-an-d[in]
 Edge 12. [ú-ru i-šá-an-na bat]-qa ^ršá¹ a-sur-ru-^rú¹
 13. [i-šab-bat iti.bár it]i.šu u iti.gan
 Rev. 14. [nu-up-tu⁴ i-na-pu...] ^rx¹
 15. [...] ^rlu¹
 16. [...] ^rri¹
 17. [...] ^rši[?]¹
 18. [...] ^rx¹ [x] ^rx¹ [...] ina-an-din
 19. [lúmu-kin-nu... ^{md}]en²¹-mu-du
 20. ^mš^ru-la-a¹ dumu šá ^{md}en-^rad¹-ùru
 21. ^{md}za-ba⁴-ba⁴-tin-su a-šú ^mšeš-ú-nu
 22. ^{md}za-ba⁴-ba⁴-tin-su a-šú ^ma-da-^r'- ^den
 One blank line
 23. ^{md}en-šú-nu lú šid a-šú <šá> ^mšá-pi-e-šú e^{ki}
 L.e. 24. iti.gu⁴ u⁴.18.^rkam¹ mu.3.kam ^mar-tak-šat-su lugal kur.kur

Up.ed	L.h.e	l.e.
na ⁴ .kišib	na ⁴ .kišib	[...]
Seal	Seal	[...]
^{md} za-ba ⁴ -ba ⁴ - tin-su	^m a-a- mu	[^m x]-mu- [x]-na



upper edge

L. h. e.

l. e.



Notes

Cf. Nisaba 28, 54, no. 259 and 193, F. 226 and F 227. The seals are kindly copied by R. Tarasewicz

L. 1. The *šá* is written over *ina*. For *Ālu-eššu šá qēreb Bābili*, see texts cited in George 1992, 376.

L. 2. The expression concerning houses, field, reeds (i.e., measure of plot) occur in many documents, quoted among other in CAD L 173, entry b' where the meaning "a field (which was before) part of the (same) field" is suggested, but the entry quotes a few other texts where such meaning is rather difficult to use. For the meaning of the idiom, see Steinmetzer 1934, 205 according to him it concerns the field which was sold shortly before or at the same time.

L. 3. *ba-gu-ru-uš* is written on the right edge and the signs *ba* and *ru* signs are squeezed looking almost as one sign. I hesitated between reading of *ba-gan* or *ba-gu*, and eventually I decided to read and copy it as *gu* because the writing *bu-gu* is attested (Tavernier 2007, s.v. 4.2.296, no. 3, and Zadok 2009, 147, s.v. 221) while *ba-gan* is not. I wish to thank R. Tarasewicz for discussion on the writing of this sign.

Ll. 4-5. The poor condition of the tablet does not allow to ascertain what the role of [GN/PN]-iddin "the judge of the gate" and whether it can be identified with Bēl-iddin from l. 6.

L.5. Regarding the gates as a place of exercising court proceedings, see Jursa and Stolper 2007, 261 and n. 58. Note, however, that expression *dayyān ša bābi* – except of this example – occurs only in BM 54091: 18 (Stolper, RA 85, 55- 56, written in Babylon, month Nisannu, fourth year of Artaxerxes I, 461 BC), where certain Aḥḥē-iqīša, son of Aplaya is first witness.

L. 9. In this line we can expect the time (years) for which the house was leased but maybe also the name of the tenant if we accept in Bēl-iddin from l. 6 the owner of the house.

The name Apla-iddin on the stamp on l.h.e. is probably a hypocoristic of [DN]-apla-iddin, however he is not present in the preserved lines of the tablet.

As two men of the same name Zababa-bullissu occur in the tablet, it is not known who of them impressed his stamp.

Translation

The house in the district of Newtown (Ālu eššu) which is inside of Babylon, in the inner part of the plot, of adjacent to the through street, passage of Nergal-ša-ḥadē and Bagaruš, [...s of Parnū?, the [...GN]-iddin, the judge at the gate, son of [x]-qū, Bēl-iddin [...] rented it from the month Nisannu [day x, third? year] of Artaxerxes, the king [(to PN?)... for x shekels of silver].

He will pay half of sil[ver at the beginn]ing of the year [and half of silver in] the middle of the year.

[He will seal the roof and repair] the (cracks) of the wall footing.

[In the month Nisannu], Du'ūzu and Kislīmu [he will pay nūptu payment].

(Four lines are damaged)

[Witnesses]:

[PN, son of] Bēl-šum-ukīn

Šulaya, son of Bēl-aba-ušur

Zababa-bullissu, son of Aḥūnu

Zababa-bullissu, son of Ada'-Bēl

One blank line
Bēlšunu, the scribe, son of Šapēšu
Babylon, month Ayaru, eighteenth day, third year of Artaxerxes, king of Lands.
Up. Edge
Stamp of Zababa-bullissu
L.h.e
Stamp of Apla-iddin
L.e.
[Stamp of x]-šum-[x]na

Commentary

The conditions of transaction in both documents are typical. In Dar 82 the creditor, Kurrulaya, the slave of Uštānu, the governor of Babylon and Across-the-River,⁶⁾ takes the house as a pledge until the debtor settles the debt of two minas of silver. Kurrulaya will not receive the interest from the silver but will pay neither rent nor interest to Marduk-šum-ibni, the debtor for the pledged house given at his disposal. Similarly, in BM 33339, the text concerning rental of a house, the conditions of transaction are typical: the tenant should pay house rent in two instalments (although the sum is not preserved), is responsible for repair of damages and for paying *nūptu* three times a year. Since lines 9, 15-18 are almost destroyed, the other terms of the contract remain unknown.⁷⁾

Most important is the location of the house in these documents.⁸⁾ In Dar 82 dated to 16.7.3Dar (519 BC), it is said that the house was located *mūtaq* ^d*ba-ga-ru-uš*, and – because it was written in Babylon – it is rather sure that the passage should be in the capital city, although the quarter of the city is not given. This can be established based on BM 33339 as it is said there that the house was in a quarter of Babylon called Newtown,⁹⁾ and laid *itā* (da) *sūqu ašū mūtaq* ^d*u+gur šá ha-di-e u* ^d*sig ba-gu-ru-uš*. Importance of BM 33339 lays in that the text relates *mūtaq* ^d*u+gur šá ha-di-e* with ^d*ba-gu-ru-uš*. The *mūtaq* ^d*u+gur šá ha-di-e*, “passage of Nergal-of-Joy,” i.e., ceremonial road of Nergal in Babylon leading from his temple Lugalirra, located probably in Kullab,¹⁰⁾ to his principal temple at Kutha through the Gate of Marduk is well known.¹¹⁾ According to Unger the road went through three quarters of Babylon, i.e. Kullab, Te-e,¹²⁾ and Kāšir.¹³⁾ Similar is George’s view, but according to him it is probable that Te-e might be identified with Kāšir.¹⁴⁾ BM 33339 is important as in light of it ceremonial street of Nergal reached also the city quarter of Newtown (Ālu eššu).¹⁵⁾ All in all, it suggests that going to or back from Kutha the procession with Nergal went through all quarters of Babylon laying on the east bank of the Euphrates.

Some doubt concerns the width of the road. The section in Newtown is described in BM 33339 as through street (*sūqu ašū*), i.e., with a transition to another street;¹⁶⁾ in Kullab,¹⁷⁾ as well as in Te-e,¹⁸⁾ as broad street (*sūqu rapšu*), while in Kaširi as narrow street (*sūqu qatnu*).¹⁹⁾ In light of these data the width of its north distance is unknown, while its central part going through Kullab and Te-e was wider than that in Kaširi in the south.²⁰⁾

They are two differences in writing of the Iranian word in both tablets. In BM 33339 the determinative precedes sig. The comparison with Dar 82 suggests that it should be placed not before sig but after it, however, question arises whether sig is not completely redundant, and that we must read “adjacent to the through street, passage of Nergal-ša-ḥadē and Bagaruš.” If we accept sig, the only sense in this content has Akkadian *qatnu*, and the reading “adjacent to the through street, passage of Nergal-ša-ḥadē and narrow (passage) of Bagaruš.”

Tavernier and Zadok interpret ^dBagaruš as personal name,²¹⁾ what seems doubtful in this context because in Dar 82 and in BM 33339 ^dBagaruš it is related to *mūtaqu*, “passage, thoroughfare.” In Babylon, *mūtaq ilī u nišē*, *mūtaq bēl rabi* ^dMarduk, *mūtaq* ^dNabū u ^dNanaya, *mūtaq* ^dUraš are known.²²⁾ However, *mūtaqu* is never combined with personal names, even the king or member of highest royal administration,²³⁾ but with god(s). Presumably the relation of ^dBagaruš with *mūtaqu* in both texts prompted the scribes to precede Bagaruš with determinative before divine names instead of determinative before personal names.²⁴⁾ Additionally, the presence in Babylonia of many Persian names with *baga* element²⁵⁾ must have raised questions about the meaning of the term at least among educated people, to which scribes belonged. So, it seems likely that the scribes knew that the *baga* was Persian generic term for god,¹⁶⁾ and this might lead to treat wrongly the name Bagaruš as a name of Persian god.

The conjunctive *u* between *sūqu qatnu mūtaq Nergal ša ḥadē* and ^d{sig} *ba-gu-ru-uš* in BM 33339 suggests that both *sūqu* and *mūtaq* refer to the location of a house. This seems suggest that part of *mūtaq Nergal ša ḥadē* was named “Passage of Bagaruš” and that the house laid adjacent to the passage of Nergal. The minimal distance of 56 years between Dar 82 (519 BC) and BM 33339 (462 BC, the earliest possible date),²⁷⁾ shows clearly that the tradition of naming part of “Passage of Nergal of Joy” as “Passage of Bagaruš” was well established. It means that in the central city sector, recognised as sacral space with temples and streets that were witness of many cultic ceremonies, the Persian element has appeared, recognised at least by two scribes as honoring the Persian god. The new data – scanty as they are – show that from one side the Persians tried to take advantage of the Mesopotamian tradition (as demonstrated by Waerzeggers), but from

the other some people were convinced that the term *mūtaq*^d Bagaruš expressed in some way the Persian belief, although there is no reason to think that this was the result of deliberate Persian policy.

Notes

* The draft of this text was kindly read and commented by Tytus Mikołajczak, Małgorzata Sandowicz and Radosław Tarasewicz, however, the responsibility for current version lies solely with the author. BM 33339 is published with kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

1. According to MacGinnis 1994, 214, the last mention of *nīqē šarri* is dated to seventh year of Darius I.
2. Jursa 2009, esp. 266 (“a cumulatively growing burden of tax and service obligation (...) imposed on the Babylonian elite during his [Darius] reign”); Jursa 2011; Jursa and Schmidl 2017; Kleber 2017, 708-709; Sandowicz 2018 (on changes in administration of justice) and Waerzeggers 2015, esp. 197-99.
3. Waerzeggers 2014, 323-29. I agree with her that interpretation of other documents that could indicate the existence of such a cult of Nabonidus is rather unacceptable, because Babylonia did not know the cult of the king during his lifetime.
4. Unger, KB 4, 304; Dandamaev 1985, 330 (translation) and 702-03, no. 76 (transliteration).
5. Joannès in *achemenet.com*.
6. The governor of the province in the period 521-516 BC, see Stolper 1989, 290.
7. The text is destroyed in crucial place and it is not clear who was the owner and who the tenant of the house.
8. Although the house in both texts was located probably in the same vicinity, there is small likely that both texts concern the same house, as time distance of 56 years – even if we identify third year of Artaxerxes with first king of this name – would be quite long. Probably two different houses located along the same street are meant, but it cannot be excluded that the old house was demolished and rebuild.
9. For location of Newtown, see George 1985, 16 and plan on p. 24, and George 1992, 375-377 (location and references).
10. George 1992, 223 and 362, where it is suggested that *mūtaq Nergal šá ḥadē* might be another name for the street *Marduk-rē'ī-mātišu*. For references, see George 1992, 362 and 377; add Wunsch 2003, no. 18: 3 (22.8.28Dar) and BM 33980 (Zawadzki 2018, no. 133).
11. See Unger, Babylon, 113 with new references in George 1992, 362 and probably also in Cyr 361: 7-8 (according to reading by Joannès in *achemenet.com*).
12. George 1992, 377 and add Sandowicz 2019, no. 14 (BM 61432): 2.
13. Unger 1931, 71 and 113.
14. George 1992, 377.
15. For Newtown, see George 1992, 376, and add CTMMA 3, 36: 6 and 141: 14'.
16. However, if sig = *qatnu* is not written mistakenly this might be interpreted also that section of the street located at Newtown was narrow, i.e., that both ends of the street were narrower than that in Kullab and Te-e.
17. BR 8/7, no. 32: 9.
18. Cam 423: 3 and presumably in Liv 18: 4 ('*silā rap¹-šū*).
19. Dar 275: 2.
20. George 1992, 377 considered identification of Te-e quarter with Kaširi quarter, but the different width of the road in both quarters speaks rather against this idea. It is not excluded that only this part of the road which was close to the gate was narrower.
21. Tavernier 2007, 139: „light of Baga”; Zadok 2009, 143: “Possessivkompositum **baga-raučah-*, der das Licht des Gottes hat”.
22. CAD M2, 297-298, where also *mūtaq nīšē* is mentioned. Add *mu-taq* un.[meš] in BM 46420 (2.10.2[KN]) and Weisberg, OIP 122, 9: 8; 10: 10. Although the place of writing of BM 46420 is missing, the mention of the gate of Uraš make rather certain that it was written in Babylon, where this passage should be located. The writing *mūtaq nīšē* is surprising because by their very nature the streets or passages are meant for people to walk. There are two possibilities, the first that *mūtaq nīšē* is an abbreviated form of *mūtaq ilī u nīšē*, but this is unlikely because in such a case we would rather expect an abbreviation to *mūtaq ilī*. The second possibility is that it is a part of a street, where usually crowds of people gathered to watch the processions of the gods, for example during the *akītu* festival.
23. This stands in contrast to the canals such as Nār-Nabū-kudurri-ušur (CTMMA 4, 4; Nbk 104 and VS 6, 230) later known as Nār-šarri (Jursa 2010, 86 and 326); Nār-Kuraš (Zawadzki 2010 and MacGinnis 1995, 163) and Nār-ša-Gubarri (RGTC 8, 92 and Joannès 1982, no. 89).
24. In NB texts the personal determinative is consciously abandoned merely before the king's names.
25. For these names, see Tavernier 2007, and Zadok 2009.
26. Cf. Schmitt 2014, 149 *baga* is “das normale Wort für Gott”. For the meaning of *baga*, see also Zimmer 1984a, and Zimmer 1988b, 402-406.
27. Note, however, that Altavilla and Walker 2016, 54. s.v. no. 259, date the text to Artaxerxes II/III. With such dating the distance between Dar 82 and BM 33339 would be 117 years (third year of Artaxerxes II) or 162 years (third year of Artaxerxes III).

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Stefan ZAWADZKI <Stefanzawadzki@wp.pl>
ul. Szeherazady 21 60-195 Poznań (POLAND)