

**15) YOS 6 141 : the account of bird-keepers from Eanna Temple at Uruk**  
 – YOS 6 141, being one of the significant documents concerning poultry breeding belongs to the Eanna temple archives from Uruk. The importance of the document has been noticed by M. San Nicolò, who published its transliteration and translation in one of the series of papers concerning animal husbandry in Uruk. San Nicolò did not explain, however, the importance of the document for the organization of the poultry breeding in the Eanna temple at Uruk. This, in turn, influenced the decision of making it a matter of careful analysis in this paper.

The document is an annual account of income and expenditure in poultry, including detailed information about sex and age of the fowl, in the flocks of Itti-Šamaš-balātu (lines 4-17) and Nannā-iddina (lines 18-30), the sons of Ṭāb-šar-Ištar. The term *puḫalu* and UZ.TUR<sup>mušen</sup> describe drakes, *alittu* she-duck, *lidānu* ducklings (in time when sex cannot be established), and *parrātu* she-ducklings. According to the heading, the text includes two different operations described as *minūtu*, an interim counting, and *nikkassu*, the result of the final inspection made in or shortly before Tašrītu (VII), 10 in the twelfth year of Nabonidus' reign, i.e. 544 B.C.

Although the similarity in the number of birds in both flocks and the method of description is evident, for the clarity of argumentation and the convenience of the readers I will describe each flock separately.

In the 11th year (probably close to its end) the flock of Itti-Šamaš-balātu consisted of 140 birds : [40] drakes and 100 she-ducks (l. 4), however, in l. 5 additional 50 she-ducks are counted, what is evidenced in 150 she-ducks in the second column of l. 7. The separation of these 50 she-ducks from 100 she-ducks cannot be accidental. It seems to me that the reason behind it was that they were also taken from the corral of Lūši-ana-nūr, the brother of Itti-Šamaš-balātu, although the last column of ll. 5-6 informs us merely that Itti-Šamaš-balātu took from the brother only 25 UZ.TUR<sup>mušen</sup> (*ina qa-bu-ut-tum*

ša<sup>1</sup>LÚUD.DU-ana-ZÁLAG). The additional reason to treat these 50 she-ducks separately from 100 she-ducks might have been their age. Although they were already recognized as she-ducks, they were younger than the previously mentioned 100 ducks. I am led to believe this due to the description in the text of the eggs given back to Lūši-ana-nūr as “instead of 50 ducklings” rather than expected “instead of 50 she-ducks”. It also follows from that clearly that these 50 she-ducks were treated as an exchange, while 25 drakes were only borrowed for some time and had to be given back. Probably it was for this reason that 25 drakes taken from Lūši-ana-nūr on Kislimu, 6<sup>th</sup> are not counted in l. 7, col. I because they are not recognized as part of Itti-Šamaš-balātu’s flock. Then, according to line 7 at the beginning of the 12th year of Nabonidus the flock of Itti-Šamaš-balātu amounted to 15 drakes on its own, 150 she-ducks (*alittu*) and 330 ducklings (*lidānu*) and 25 drakes from Lūši-ana-nūr, which are not counted here.

Lines 8-15 explain what happened with the birds till the day of the final inspection on the 10th day Tašritu, the twelfth year of Nabonidus :

- Itti-Šamaš-balātu returned to Lūši-ana-nūr 100 eggs instead of 50 ducklings (*lidānu*), which he had borrowed from him earlier (see l. 5, col. II). Such advantageous exchange was probably a pre-condition for the agreement, because more ducklings could be born from 100 eggs.

- the issue of the 2 drakes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month of Nisannu (I).
- the issue of 3 drakes on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Ayaru (II).
- the issue of 12 ducklings (*lidānu*) on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the month of

Simanu (III).

- between Simanu (III), 6 and Ulūlu (IV), 15 during the counting (*ina muḫḫi minūtu*), 20 ducklings were given (to Lūši-ana-nūr).

- 50 ducklings were delivered to the Esagila temple by Tabnēa.

- the issue of 72 ducklings on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Ulūlu (VI).

The numerals in appropriate columns can be explained only if we accept that :

- 154 ducklings (12+20+50+72) + 50 ducklings, [in fact 100 eggs], total 204, will be taken away from 330 ducklings, which gives 126 ducklings. During the inspection 20 ducklings were shifted to young she-ducks. It means that the remaining (*reḫi*) 106 ducklings were too young to recognize their sex.

The question is how the accountant reached the number of 30 drakes

in l. 16. It should be noted that from the 150 she-ducks mentioned in l. 7 only 130 are counted in lines 16-17, col. II. The missing 20 birds were, in my opinion shifted to drakes what, together with 15 drakes from line 7, gives 35 drakes. However, 5 drakes were already issued on the third and fifth day of Nisannu.

As a result : 204 issued birds, i.e. 154 ducklings + 50 ducklings [in fact 100 eggs] + 5 drakes + 150 birds inspected (*amru*) + 136 (*reḫe*) gives 495 birds as in l. 7, col. IV.

The text does not include any precise information when Itti-Šamaš-balātu gave the borrowed drakes back to his brother, Lūši-ana-nūr. However, the only possibility is to suggest that he received 5 drakes (2+3) in Nisannu and Ayaru and next 20 ducklings during the interim counting (*ina minūtu*).

The description of the flock of Nannā-iddin is similar to that of Itti-Šamaš-balātu. Lines 18-19 give the number of birds in his flock including drakes and 50 ducklings borrowed from the brother.

Lines 22-28 describe what happened with the birds till the day of the final inspection :

- instead of 46 ducklings (*lidānu*), Lūši-ana-nūr received 92 eggs.
- the issue of 5 drakes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month of Nisannu (I).
- the issue of 12 ducklings (*lidānu*) on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Simanu (III).
- during the counting 20 ducklings (*lidānu*) were given (to Lūši-ana-nūr).
- 50 ducklings (*lidānu*) were delivered to the Esagila temple by Tabnēa.
- the issue of 108 ducklings (*lidānu*) on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Ulūlu.

The problem is why Lūši-ana-nūr received only 92 eggs instead of 46 ducklings (*lidānu*) although he gave 50 young birds to his brother which were counted in l. 19 as she-ducks. Most probably 4 birds died and the obligation of Nannā-iddin was reduced appropriately. The other problem concerns drakes. For 20 drakes, which Nannā-iddin received from Lūši-ana-nūr he returned him most probably 20 ducklings during the interim counting (l. 25) ; it means that 5 drakes mentioned in l. 23, unlike drakes from ll. 9-10, were given for a different aim.

As a result : 241 issued birds, i.e. 46 ducklings [in fact 92 eggs] + 5

drakes + 12+20+50+108 and 152 birds inspected and 102 (*rehe*) gives again 495 birds as in l. 21, col. V. Additionally, in both countings the number of she-ducks, ducklings and total number of birds is the same. In both of them 20 birds recognized as she-ducks were shifted to the group of drakes. These regularities strongly suggest that such a shape of the flock is not the result of natural processes but rather results from the sheperds' activities which succeeded in meeting the requirements of the temple administration. Such an interpretation is strongly confirmed by the agreement of the temple to move 20 birds from she-ducks to drakes, which was caused by the fact that determining ducklings' sex was extremely difficult. Obviously a sheperd had to take his own birds if there were more than 20 drakes among the ducklings. It seems to be a proof for the situation being similar to sheep sheperds who looked after both temple and their own flock at the same time.

Two things should be additionally noted :

- the first ducklings were issued already at the beginning of the month Simanu. It seems that new-born birds were too small to give them for offerings or to different aims.

- the fact that only a part of the flocks were inspected suggests that, just like sheep, at least during some period of time they were bred quite far from the temple.

The text also confirms the fact that although the brothers were taking care of separate flocks, they tended to co-operate closely and practiced exchange, in order to ensure proper composition of the flock with regard to number, sex and age of birds.

1. This article is part of the master's thesis (The Poultry Breeding in the Neo-Babylonian and Early Persian Periods) written under the supervision of Prof. Stefan Zawadzki.

2. San Nicolò M., *Materialen zur Viehwirtschaft in den neubabylonischen Tempeln. III*, Or XX (1951), 129-132.

1)	[ <sup>mu</sup> en <sup>pu</sup> - <sup>hal</sup> <sup>mu</sup> en]a-lit-tu <sub>4</sub> <sup>mu</sup> en li-da-nu <sup>mu</sup> en par-rat PAP UZ.TUR <sup>mu</sup> en šá ŠID <sup>sum</sup>			
2)	[ù NIG.ŠI]D <sup>hi</sup> šá-tam Ê-an-na ù <sup>hi</sup> šID.MEŠ šá Ê-an-na i-pu-šu ITI.DU <sub>6</sub> UD.10.KAM MU.12.KAM			
3)				<sup>d</sup> AG-I LUGAL TIN.TIR.KI
4) [40]	1 me		PAP 1 me 40	<sup>m</sup> KI- <sup>d</sup> UTU-TIN A <sup>m</sup> DÜG.GA-IM- <sup>d</sup> INNIN MU.11.KAM
5)	50		PAP 50	ina qa-bu-ut-tum šá <sup>mlu</sup> UD.DU-ana-ZÁLAG A <sup>m</sup> DÜG.GA-IM- <sup>d</sup> INNIN
6)				25 UZ.TUR <sup>mu</sup> en ITI.GAN UD.6.KAM IGI <sup>ir</sup>
7) 15	1 me 50	3 me 30	PAP 4 me 95	MU.12.KAM <sup>d</sup> AG-IM.TUKU LUGAL TIN.TIR.KI
8)				ina lib-bi 1 me NUNUZ ku-um 50 li-da-nu IGI <sup>ir</sup>
9)				2 UZ.TUR <sup>mu</sup> en ITI.BÁR UD.3.KAM
10)				3 UZ.TUR <sup>mu</sup> en ITI.GU <sub>4</sub> UD.24.KAM
11)				12 li-da-nu ITI.SIG <sub>4</sub> UD.6.KAM
12)				20 li-da-nu ina UGU mi-nu-tu IGI <sup>ir</sup>
13)				50 li-da-nu ina ŠU <sup>ll</sup> <sup>m</sup> Tab-ni-e-a
14)				A <sup>md</sup> ŠÁR-NUMUN-DÜ a-na Ê-sag-il šap-ru
15)				72 li-da-nu ITI.KIN UD.15.KAM
16) 30	1 me		20 PAP 1 me 50	MU.12.KAM am-ra
17) re- <sup>he</sup>	30	1 me 6	PAP 136	ina pa-ni <sup>m</sup> KI- <sup>d</sup> UTU-TIN A <sup>m</sup> DÜG.GA-IM- <sup>d</sup> INNIN
18) 35	1 me		PAP 135	<sup>md</sup> Na-na-a-MU A <sup>m</sup> DÜG.GA-IM- <sup>d</sup> INNIN MU.11.KAM
19)	50		PAP 50!	ina qa-bu-ut-tum šá <sup>mdlu</sup> UD.DU-ana-ZÁLAG A <sup>m</sup> DÜG.GA-IM- <sup>d</sup> INNIN ina IGI-šú
20)				20 UZ.TUR <sup>mu</sup> en ITI.GAN UD.6.KAM
21) 15	1 me 50	3 me 30	PAP 4 me 95	MU.12.KAM <sup>d</sup> AG-IM.TUKU LUGAL TIN.TIR.KI
22)				92 NUNUZ ku-um 46 li-da-nu IGI <sup>ir</sup>
23)				5 UZ.TUR <sup>mu</sup> en ITI.BÁR UD.3.KAM
24)				12 li-da-nu ITI.SIG <sub>4</sub> UD.6.KAM
25)				20 li-da-nu ina UGU mi-nu-tu IGI <sup>ir</sup>
26)				50 li-da-nu ina ŠU <sup>ll</sup> <sup>m</sup> Tab-ni-e-a A <sup>md</sup> ŠÁR-NUMUN-DÜ
27)				a-na Ê-sag-il šap-ru
28)				1 me 8 li-da-nu ITI.KIN UD.15.KAM
29) [30]	1 me	22	PAP 1 me 52	MU.12.KAM am-ra
30) [re- <sup>he</sup> ]	30	72	PAP 1 me 2	ina IGI <sup>md</sup> Na-na-a-MU A <sup>m</sup> DÜG.GA-IM- <sup>d</sup> INNIN

1) [drakes.] she-ducks, ducklings, young she-ducks, total ducks, which were counted

2) [and inspect]ed (by) the *šalanmu* of the Eanna and the scribes of the Eanna. Month of Tašritu the 10<sup>th</sup> day 12 year

3)

Nabonidus king of the Babylon

4)	[40]	100			total 140	(Il. 4-6) Itti-Šamaš-balātu, son of Tāb-šar-Ištar received 25 ducks
5)		50			total 50	from the corral of Lūši-ana-nūr, son of Tāb-šar-Ištar
6)						on the 6 <sup>th</sup> day of the Kislīmu 11 <sup>th</sup> year.
7)	15	150	330		total 495	12 <sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus king of the Babylon:
8)						Out of it 100 eggs instead of 50 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) Lūši-ana-nūr received:
9)						2 drakes the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day of the Nisanu;
10)						3 drakes the 24 <sup>th</sup> day of the Ayaru;
11)						12 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) the 6 <sup>th</sup> day of the Simanu;
12)						20 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) he [Lūši-ana-nūr] received during the counting;
13)						(Il. 13-14) 50 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) were delivered
14)						to the Esagila temple by Tabnēa, son of Aššur-zēr-ibni;
15)						72 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) the 15 <sup>th</sup> day of the Ulūlu.
16)	30	100		20	total 150	They were seen (in the) 12 <sup>th</sup> year.
17)	rem.	30	106		total 136	The remaining amount at the disposal of Itti-Šamaš-balātu, son of Tāb-šar-Ištar.
18)	35	100			total 135	(Il. 18-20) Nannā-iddin, son of Tāb-šar-Ištar, received (in the text: "to his disposal") 20 ducks
19)		50			total 50	from the corral of Lūši-ana-nūr, son of Tāb-šar-Ištar
20)						on the 6 <sup>th</sup> day of the Kislīmu 11 <sup>th</sup> year.
21)	15	150	330		total 495	12 <sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus king of the Babylon:
22)						(Out of it) 92 eggs instead of 46 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) he [Lūši-ana-nūr] received:
23)						5 drakes the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day of the Nisanu;
24)						12 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) the 6 <sup>th</sup> day of the Simanu;
25)						20 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) received during the counting;
26)						(Il. 26-27) 50 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) were delivered
27)						to the Esagila temple by Tabnēa, son of Aššur-zēr-ibni;
28)						108 ducklings ( <i>lidānu</i> ) 15 <sup>th</sup> day of the Ulūlu.
29)	[30]	100	22		total 152	They were seen (in the) 12 <sup>th</sup> year
30)	[rem.]	30	72		total 102	The remaining amount at the disposal of Nannā-iddin, son of Tāb-šar-Ištar.

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