

34) A Note on a Neo-Babylonian Stone Tablet – BM 130827 (N.M. Nikolskiy, *Drevnosti vostocniya* 1, 2 [Moscow 1891], 143ff. and pl. 60 = C.J. Gadd, *British Museum Quarterly* 16 [1951], 44 ; E.F. Weidner, *AfO* 16 [1952-53], 35ff.) is a black stone tablet without reliefs. It is a deed of sale of a roofed house in good repair situated within the city of Uruk. It was issued in Uruk in 10.IV.2 Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (666/5 B.C.). K.E. Slanski, who has recently edited this document (*A Study in the Form and Function of the Babylonian kudurrus*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University [Cambridge, Mass., 1997], 222ff. ; cf. eadem, *JCS* 52 [2000], 95ff.), states (232) : “It is unique in the corpus [of Babylonian entitlement *narûs*, the so-called kudurrus] in having a series of divine textual representations (curses) but no divine visual representations (sculpted images)”. The curses are indeed as in contemporary clay tablets recording deeds of transfer of real estate (cf., e.g., H. Petschow, *Die neubabylonischen Kaufformulare*, [henceforth : Petschow *Kaufformulare* Leipzig 1939], 39f. ; M. San-Nicolò, *BR* 8/7, 3, 5 ; Zadok, *WdO* 25 [1994], 150 ad *CBS* 8083 ; F. Pomponio, *Formule di maldizione della Mesopotamia preclassica* [Brescia 1990], 75ff. :10.11). The erection of such stone tablets can be considered a publicity act, as is expected in any deed of transfer of real estate (immovables, cf. Petschow, *Kaufformulare*, 12f. with n.22). A+A-²-da-a, the buyer who probably kept this stone tablet, and his father *S/Šag/klq-ra-nu* have West Semitic names. The seller, Nabû-aḫḫē-šullim son of *Ḫaš-di-ia* has an Akkadian name like his father, but it is not indicated whether he belonged to one of the Urukean clans. Typically ancestral names are not indicated in the witnesses’ list ;, perhaps with one exception (*Gi-lu-u* < *Gilū’*a, cf. presently). There are no less than 22 witnesses : 17 have Akkadian filiations including the first two, namely the governor (*šākin māti*) of Uruk and the chief temple administrator (*šatammu*) of the Eanna temple of Uruk, as well as the son / descendant of *Gi-lu-ú* (the 15th witness), a non-Semitic ancestral name common in Babylonia from the early 1st millennium B.C. (with a hypothetical earlier cognate, cf. MB *Ki-li-ia*, M. Hölscher, *Die Personennamen der*

Kassitenzeitlichen Texte aus Nippur [Münster 1996], 124a). The remaining five (17th, 19th-22nd) have West Semitic names. They might have represented the buyer's party. The 18th witness (line 19) in Nabû (^d+AG)-ú-si-pí A KA-MU.AN.NA, normalized as *Pî-šatti*, cf. NA *Pi!-šá-at-ti* from the same period (mid. 7th century B.C., *ADD* 741+ = L. Kataja and R.M. Whiting, *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period* [Helsinki 1995], 27, 26) - a rare name. Three paternal names are damaged. Most of the filiations 17th-22nd have only a West Semitic paternal name : the given names are overwhelmingly Akkadian, unlike the case of the buyer. Given the West Semitic (Aramaean or Arabian) extraction of the buyer, I would like to draw attention that the same phenomenon, namely the erection of stelae (generally without sculpted images) recording sale of immovables by commoners¹ with the same motivation, is well-attested in a West Semitic region, namely South Arabia. It is impossible to prove any direct connection between the Babylonian stelae and the South Arabian ones, the more so in view of the considerable chronological gap (the South Arabian monuments are several hundred years later). The comparison is at best typological.

It is stated that the Sabean monumental inscription Glaser 1433 (M. Höfner, *Sammlung Eduard Glaser* 8 [Vienna 1972], 29ff.) is a duplicate of the (original) deed (*mšdq*). A.F.L. Beeston, M.A. Ghul, W.W. Müller and J. Ryckmans, *Sabaic Dictionary* (Louvain 1982), 141, s.v. ŠDQ register the noun *mšdq*, pl. *mšdqt* "title, documentary proof of ownership", with reference to Y. Abdāllah, An-nūquš al-yamaniyya al-qādīma. *Dirāsāt Yamaniyya* 3 [1979], YMN 11/3. J.C. Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic, Sabaean Dialect* (Chicago 1982), 418, s.v. lists also *CIH* 376, 16f. and *RÉS* 2695/6. That such deeds are engraved on stone and wood is explicitly stated in Glaser 1548/15 49 (signed by one person) and Glaser 1606, 21, see N. Rhodokanakis, *Der Grundsatz der Oeffentlichkeit in den südarabische Urkunden. Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, phil.-historische Kl. 177/2* (Vienna 1915), 24ff., esp. 28 ; cf. 6ff : Hal. 49 = Glaser 890 = *CIH* 376 11ff. : OS 4 = *CIH* 74 (signed y one party) ; 16ff. : Hal. 51+ = Glaser 904 (signed by ten people, a royal decree). The inscriptional records appear to be duplicates (a form of publication) of original documents made of soft (or relatively soft) signable,² materials (see recently A.V. Korotayev, *Pre-Islamic Yemen : Socio-Political Organization of the Sabaean Cultural Area in*

the 2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D. [Wiesbaden, 1996], 67, n. 70), most probably wooden sticks (for such documents see, e.g., J. Ryckmans, W.W. Müller and Y.A. Abdallah, *Textes du Yemen antique inscrits sur bois* [henceforth *TYAIB*; Louvain 1994]; A.J. Drewes and J. Ryckmans, *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* [= *PSAS*] 27 [1997], 225-230; all Sabaic). Glaser 1433 is witnessed by four signatories. As is expected, each of the two parties is represented by two witnesses, cf. e.g. Müller, *Archaologische Berichte aus dem Yemen* 3, 97-100. A deed written on a wooden stick is signed by two witnesses, one of whom explicitly belongs to one of the two parties (see S. Weninger, *PSAS* 31 [2001], 242; cf. J. Ryckmans *et al.*, *TYAIB*, 58f. : 10, 61 and 63f. *ad loc*; F. Bron, *Maʿīn. Fasc. A : Les documents. Inventaire des inscriptions sudarabiques* 3 [Paris, 1998], 38 : Maʿīn 1, 5).

1. *VS* 4, 39 = *NRV* 13 (Babylon, 15.XI.552/1 BC) records 11.5 shekels of silver “gift” (*qīṣtu*) for a stele (*asumītu*), given by Nabū-ēṭer/ Šākin-šumi to Šāpik-zēri // Šangū-Sīn (also the scribe of the deed *VS* 4, 39); the latter gave Nabū-ēṭer also a copy (*GAB.RI*) of the stele. San Nicolò and Ungnad (*NRV* 24 *ad* 13) comment on the transaction: “Wirtschaftlich liegt hier ein Kauf bzw. Werkvertrag vor. Die Einkleidung in Form einer Schenkung mag nicht zuletzt aus religiösen Gründen erfolgt sein”.

2. W.W. Müller, *Archaologische Bericht aus dem Yemen* 3, (1986), 99 has *ʿlm bhw tʿlm* (Sab.) “Dokument, welches unterzeichnet hat” (also *CIH* 74, 16f.).

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