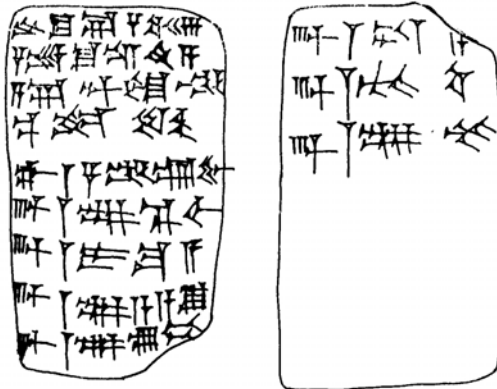


08) A Neo-Babylonian text concerning the work in the Ninmah temple – In 1997 P.-A. Beaulieu published a new inscription concerning the restoration of the Ninmah temple at Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and discussed carefully all previously known data.¹ It seems probable that the below-published administrative note concerns the same work, although the lack of date and the quite common names of the workers make it impossible to suggest any precise dating. The tablet belongs to the British Museum collection called the “Budge collection” bought by Budge in 1889. Budge suggested that the tablets come from Abu Habbah and Der, but according to Christopher Walker there is “any evidence apart from Budge’s claims”.² Additionally, although many temples of Ninmah are known in Babylonia,³ her temple and her cult in Sippar and Der is till now not known.

BM 79370 (Bu 89-4-26, 667)⁴

3.0 x 5.3 cm

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| 1. | | lúHUN.GÁ šá U ₄ .26.<KAM> |
| 2. | | šá ITI.DU ₆ SAHAR.HI.A |
| 3. | | šá ¹ (T: a) ^d Nin-mah |
| 4. | | iz-bil-li |
| ----- | | |
| 5. | MAR | ^m Šá- ^d EN- ^{tup-pu} |
| 6. | 3 1/2 | ^{md} AG-si-lim |
| 7. | 3 1/2 | ^m I-ba-a |
| 8. | 3 1/2 | ^{md} AG-a-a-lu |
| 9. | 3 1/2 | ^{md} AG-ú- ^{šur} |



¹ P.-A. Beaulieu, “A New Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II Commemorating the Restoration of Emah in Babylon”, *Iraq* 69 (1997) 93-96.

² See *The Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, vol. VIII: Tablets from Sippar 3* (ed. by E. Leichty, J.J. Finkelstein and C.B.F. Walker, London 1998, p. XIX).

³ A. R. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 5, Winona Lake 1993), pp. 119-120 (Nos. 713-730).

⁴ Published with the kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

- R.10. 3 1/2 mDU^a
 11. 3 1/2 mNUMUN-tú
 12. 3 1/2 m^dAG-MU

The hirelings who were carrying dust from the Ninmah temple.

Spades (of) Ša-Bēl-ṭuppu
 Three and half Nabû-silim
 Three and half Ibā
 Three and half Nabû-ayalu
 Three and half Nabû-ušur
 Three and half Kīnā
 Three and half Zērūtu
 Three and half Nabû-iddin

L. 8) For Nabû-ayalu, “Nabû is my help”, see *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. 2/II, (ed. by H.D. Baker, Helsinki 2001), p. 803.

Ša-Bēl-ṭuppu, mentioned first, is the only person for whom no spades are prescribed, which makes it possible to identify him as a chief of the whole team working under his supervision. The job of removing dust, i.e. earth and rubble from the broken part of the Ninmah temple was probably the last step before the commencement of its rebuilding.

According to the text each worker received three and half spades, but the equipment of each worker with *half* spade makes no sense. The possible solution is that the size of the spades was taken into account and that each person received three large and one small spade, comparable by shape or weight to half a large one. Accordingly, the different spades might have been used for different work, i.e. for digging, shifting the soil, loading, etc.

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