

69) Ištar of Babylon in ‘Day-One Temple’* — The aim of the present article is to propose the identity of the É U₄-1-KÁM ‘Day-One Temple’ (hereafter ‘DOT’) as a residence of the goddess ‘Ištar of Babylon’. The existence of a treasury house or sacrarium attached to DOT is also proposed in the course of this investigation.

DOT is often mentioned in cuneiform texts written in Babylon under the Seleucids and Arsacids such as the (Astronomical) Diaries,¹ Chronicles,² and administrative texts from the Raḥīm-Esu archive.³ This last item consists of a group of texts written mainly in 218-219 SE (= 94/3-93/2 BC).

Scholars have assumed DOT to be the house for *akītu*, the New Year Festival of Babylon,⁴ largely on the basis of -204C Rev.14-17, which tells us that King Antiochus III, who was visiting Babylon, came out from the palace to Kasikilla, the main gate of Esagil’s

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1 The Diaries have now been edited in: Abraham J. Sachs, & Hermann Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia* (= ADRTB), Vols. 1-3 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988-1996); Giuseppe F. Del Monte, *Testi dalla Babilonia ellenistica* Vol.1, *Testi cronografici* (Pisa; Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1997), 1-182.

2 Irving Finkel and Robartus J. Van der Spek are preparing a new corpus of the Chronicles after Alexander the Great titled *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period* (= BCHP). A preliminary edition of this corpus can be found at: <http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chron00.html> (top page, accessed November 8, 2008). See also: Del Monte, *Testi* (see Note 1), 183-206.

3 Most of the tablets were edited in: Robartus J. van der Spek, “Cuneiform Documents on Parthian History: the Raḥimesu Archive,” in *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse*, ed. Josef Wiesehöfer, *Historia Einzelschriften* 122 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 205-258; Karlheinz Kessler, “Hellenistische Tempelverwaltungstexte: Eine Nachlese zu CT 49,” in *Assyriologica et Semitica: Festschrift für Joachim Oelsner anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 18. Februar 1997*, ed. Joachim Marzahn & Hans Neumann, AOAT 252 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000), 213-241, esp. 218-223.

For a general discussion taking into account unpublished texts, see: Michael Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents, and Archives* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005), 75-76, esp. 76 n. 502.

4 van der Spek, “Cuneiform Documents (see Note 3),” 225; van der Spek’s commentary on BCHP 15: http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/bchp-gold/theft_2.html Commentary (accessed November 8,

precincts,⁵ and then went to DOT. This took place on Nisānu 8, 107 SE (Seleucid era) = 205/4 BC, whereby it will be remembered that Nisānu 8 was the day of Marduk's annual procession from his temple, Esagil, to *bīt akītu*, the 'New Year Festival House' located outside the northern inner wall of Babylon.⁶ This passage does suggest that DOT was used as *bīt akītu* at least in 107 SE, but it is worth noting that DOT and *bīt akītu* are mentioned separately as the sites of sacrifices in a document from the Raḥīm-Esu archive written in 219 SE, namely in AB 244: 6-12 and 13-17.⁷

In this article, we would like to focus on a hitherto unnoticed aspect of DOT. Some events reported in the Diaries from the Seleucid and Arsacid periods suggest that the goddess 'Ištar of Babylon' resided in DOT. In what follows, we present a brief description of such events and propose some new restoration and reinterpretation of the text of **Case 3**.

1 According to -204C, King Antiochus III entered DOT and then sacrificed to 'Ištar of Babylon' (-204C Rev. 17-18. A part of the passage is referred to above).

2 According to -171B, ^{lú}GALERÍN^{meš} KUR[URI^{ki}] 'General of[Akkad],'⁸ the commander of the Seleucid army in Babylonia, entered Babylon on Abu 11, 140 SE = 172/1 BC ('Rev. 1'-2'). Then, on Abu 13 he entered DOT ('Rev. 4') and made a sacrifice in the following manner:

-171B 'Rev.

Transliteration

5' ʾina^l IGI šá^d INNIN TIN-TIR^{ki} AGA^{meš} DINGIR^{meš} GAL^{meš}

6' ʾšá^l ina lib-bi šak-nu 3 SISKUR.SISKUR^{meš} ana^d EN dGAŠAN-ía^d INNIN TIN-TIR^{ki}

2008); Tom Boiy, *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon*, OLA 136 (Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 85-86; cf. Gilbert J. P. McEwan, "Arsacid Temple Records," *Iraq* 43 (1981): 131-143, esp. 135.

5 For the position of Kasikilla, see: Boiy, *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon* (see Note 4), 83; cf. Andrew R. George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts*, OLA 40 (Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 421-422.

6 For the program of *akītu* in the Seleucid and Arsacid periods, see: Marc J. H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practices*, CM 25 (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill-Styx, 2004), 79-86; Boiy, *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon* (see Note 4), 277-279.

The exact position of *bīt akītu* is still now under discussion. For this problem, see: Arno Kose, "Kritische Bemerkungen zum vermeintlich gefundenen Bīt Akītu von Babylon," *BaM* 35 (2004): 39-57; cf. Jürgen Schmidt, "Das Bīt Akītu von Babylon," *BaM* 33 (2002): 281-317.

7 McEwan, "Arsacid Temple Records (see Note 4)," 132-134 (copy, transcription, and translation); van der Spek, "Cuneiform Documents (see Note 3)," 234-235 (transliteration and translation).

8 The restoration is highly probable because the title occurs frequently in the Diaries (-144 ,Obv. 36'; -137D Rev.' 26; *et passim*).

7' 𒀭DINGIR^{meš} GAL^{meš} u ana bul-ṭu šá LUGAL^{meš} DÙ-uš

Translation

5' Before Ištar of Babylon and tiaras of the great gods

6' which were placed inside (of DOT), three (sheep) offerings to Bēl (Marduk), Bēltiya (Marduk's divine consort, Šarpānītu), Ištar of Babylon

7' and the great gods, and for the life of the kings (Antiochus IV and his co-king and nephew, Antiochus) he sacrificed.

3 According to -187A 'Rev. 4'-18', King Antiochus III visited Babylonia again in šabātu, 124 SE (= 188/7 BC). This time he visited Babylon, Borsippa and Seleucia on the Tigris. On Šabātu 4, he entered DOT of Babylon and made a sacrifice. These events are recorded in lines 'Rev. 10'-11'. Although about a half dozen signs are lost at both ends of each line, the phrase referred to in **Case 2** above helps us to restore these lines as follows:

-187A 'Rev.

Transliteration

10' U₄ BI ana É U₄-1-KÁM KU₄ GU₄^{meš} u UDU-SISKUR.SI[SKUR^{meš} ma-ru-tú?]

11' [ina IGI ^dINNIN T]IN-TIR^{ki} AGA KÙ.GI [u] pi-šá-an-nu KÙ.GI šá ^dGAŠAN-ía u TÚG SÍG. SAG šá ^{md}PA-NÍG.DU-ŠEŠ LUGAL šá ina É bu-[še-e šak-nu DÙ-uš]

Comments

10' *ma-ru-tú*: *marātu* 'fattened' is used in the Dairies and the Chronicles several times as an epithet for offering animals (-144 Rev.' 18; -124A 'Rev.' 20'; BCHP 12 [= ABC13b] 3'-8').

11' The location of the sacrifice: [ina IGI ^dINNIN T]IN.TIR^{ki} '[before Ištar of] Babylon' can be restored on the basis of -171 B 'Rev.5' (see **Case 2** above).

É bu-[še-e]: *bīt bušê* 'treasury house' is also attested in line 12' of the same Diary. For the restoration, see also: Del Monte, *Testi* (see Note 1), 67.

Translation

10' On this day (i.e. Šabātu 4), he (= Antiochus III) entered the Day-One Temple. Bulls and [fattened (?)] sheep offer[ings]

11' [before Ištar of] Babylon, a gold tiara [and] a gold casket of Bēltiya, and a purple garment of King Nebuchadnezzar, which were [placed] in the trea[sury] house [he sacrificed.]

4 According to -126A Rev.' 4-5, the sacrifices, which had been interrupted for a certain time, were performed (?) 'to Bēl, Bēltiya and Ištar of Babylon' in DOT on Araḥsamna 25, 185 SE (127/6 BC). The interruption was probably caused by the war between Arsacids and King Aspasinê of Mesene, who had occupied Babylon from Arsacids. According to the same Diary

(‘Obv. 6’-9’), Timarchus, the former Arsacid garrison commander (of Babylon?), entered (probably recaptured) Babylon with a Median corps on Araḥsamna 4.

Case 2 and **Case 3** (though partly restored) attest to sacrifices performed ‘before Ištar of Babylon’ (probably one of her statues). This suggests that DOT was one of the residences of the goddess (Eturkamma in the precincts of Esagil is also known as her residence⁹) at least in the first half of the 2nd century BC.

These cases also provide evidence that divine or ceremonial goods were separated from their owner gods and stored in DOT. In addition, we have another attestation for goods being stored in DOT in one Diary from the Arsacid period.

5 According to this Diary, -124B ‘Rev.’ 14’-16’, King Aspasinê of Mesene took a throne from the royal palace in Babylon and dedicated it to Marduk. This dedication was probably performed in 184 or 185 SE (128/7 or 127/6 BC), during his occupation of Babylon. On Ṭebētu 15, 187 SE (= 125/4 BC), however, the ‘Governor of Babylon (*pāḥāt Bābili*)’ and *puliṭê ša ina Bābili*, i.e. the Greek citizens in Babylon, seized and took away the throne from DOT.¹⁰ Until that time, the throne had probably been kept in DOT.

Case 3 suggests, furthermore, that there was a *bīt bušê*, i.e. treasury house attached to DOT for the keeping of goods. The goods stored in DOT belonged to Bēl-Marduk (**Case 5**), Bēltiya-Šarpānītu (**Case 3**), ‘the great gods’ (**Case 2**), and King Nebuchadnezzar (**Case 3**). This Nebuchadnezzar is probably to be identified with the well-known Nebuchadnezzar II of the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty, who may be seen as representing the glorious past of Babylonia. The others are the usual gods of the Babylonian pantheon as depicted in the Diaries and Chronicles in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. According to these sources, sacrifices performed in Esagil and its precincts are usually dedicated ‘to Bēl, Bēltiya, and the great gods.’¹¹ It is only in the case of the sacrifices in DOT that ‘Ištar of Babylon’ is

⁹ The restoration is highly probable because the title occurs frequently in the Diaries (-144 ‘Obv. 36’; -137D Rev.’ 26; *et passim*).

¹⁰ For the details of this event, see: Robartus J. van der Spek, “The Theatre of Babylon in Cuneiform,” in *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. W. H. van Soldt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 445-456, esp. 451-453.

¹¹ BCHP 12 (= ABC 13b) 3’-8’ (performed in 88 SE = 224/3 BC); -178C ‘Rev. 18’-22’; -144 Rev.’ 17-20; -137D Rev.’ 26-28; *et passim*.

mentioned instead of, or in addition to these gods (See **Cases 1, 2 and 4**).¹² One explanation for this would be, once again, that DOT was being used as a residence of 'Ištar of Babylon' from the end of the 3rd century BC to the latter half of the 2nd century BC.

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12 There is one further attestation of a sacrifice 'to Bēl, Bēltiya and Ištar' in the Diaries (-163B Obv.' 17). This attestation, however, does not contain any information about the location of the sacrifice.