

15) The Colophon of the Sippar Text of the “Weidner Chronicle”¹ — In his edition princeps of the copy of the “Weidner Chronicle” from the library of Ebabbar at Sippar,² F.N.H. Al-Rawi read the colophon (rev. 41) of the tablet as follows:

- *ṭup-pi* ^{1d}AMAR.UTU-*ēṭir*(SUR) A-šú šá ¹KAR-^dx [x x x] x-*ḫa-a-a pa-liḫ* ^dAG *ḫal-qa* GUR.
- “Tablet of Marduk-*ēṭir*, son of *ēṭir*-[...] of ...; a worshipper of Nabu. Return if lost.”

That edition has been adopted by J.-J. Glassner in his editions of Mesopotamian chronicles, with minor changes in the translation.³ I think, the reading and interpretation of the colophon can be improved, as follows:

- *dub-pi* ^{1d}amar.utu-sur a-šú šá ¹kar-^den¹ du[^{mu} ¹s]u-*ḫa-a-a pa-liḫ* ^dnà *ḫal-qa gur*
- *ṭuppi Marduk-ēṭir mār(ī)šu ša Mušēzib-^dBēl m[ā r S]uḫāya - pālīḫ* ^dNabû *ḫalqa litir*
- “Tablet of Marduk-*ēṭir*, the son of Mušēzib-Bēl¹, s[on of S]uḫāya. – May he who reveres Nabû restore the loss!”

I propose to identify the scribe’s father mentioned in the colophon with the scribe (*ṭupšarru*) Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Lâbâši, descendant of Suḫāya, who was active in Sippar during the years 17-25 of Dareios, i.e. 505-497 BCE. Furthermore, he is mentioned in texts dated from Dareios 10 to 32, i.e. 512-490 BCE.⁴ If Marduk-*ēṭir*, the scribe of the tablet extant, is

¹ I am very grateful to Caroline Waerzeggers (Amsterdam) for kindly commenting on an earlier version of this note.

² F.N.H. Al-Rawi, “Tablets from the Sippar Library, I. The ‘Weidner Chronicle’: A Supposititious Royal Letter concerning a Vision”, in: *Iraq* 52, 1990, pp. 1-13.

³ J.-J. Glassner, *Chroniques mésopotamiennes* (Paris 1993), p. 218. J.-J. Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*. Society of Biblical Literature. Writings from the Ancient World 19 (Leiden 2005), pp. 268-269.

⁴ A.C.V.M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and its Prosopography*. PIHANS 80 (Leiden 1997), p. 490: active in Sippar in Dareios 17-25, mentioned in texts from Dareios 10 and 32. M. Jursa, *Das Archiv des Bēl-rēmāni*. PIHANS 86 (Leiden 1999), p. 282 (index); mentioned in texts from Dareios 20[+x²] and 24: p. 173: BM 42397, 11f: Dar. 24; p. 197: BM 42548, 11: Dar. 20[+x²]; p. 212: BM 42591+, 11f: date broken. – From the colophon of another tablet from the Sippar library we also know a certain Mušēzib-Bēl, [son of] Šamaš-mukīn-apli (Heessel and Al-Rawi, in: *Iraq* 65, 2003, p. 232, ll. 45f). There is also a Mušēzib-Marduk, son of Šillāya, descendant of Suḫāya attested in Sippar in the early years of Dareios, who is however to be kept apart from Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Lâbâši, descendant of Suḫāya, see C. Waerzeggers, in: *Akkadica* 122, 2001, pp. 65, 68.

indeed his son, he would probably have been active in Sippar during the first decades of the fifth century, i.e. up to the period of the “end of the archives” after the suppressed revolt in the second regnal year of Xerxes (484 BCE).⁵ Since the copy of the “Weidner-Chronicle” he prepared seems not to be the work of an experienced scribe, and since there are apparently no tablets extant which can be attributed to him as a professional scribe, he may have still been an apprentice when he copied that text. According to Pedersén,⁶ the latest dated tablet from the Sippar library is reported to be from the reign of Cambyses II (529-522 BCE). If the dating of Marduk-ēṭir is correct, it could lower the dating of the library by some 3 decades:

Suḫāya	(ancestor)
Lâbâši	
Mušēzib-Bēl	ca. 512-490 BCE (Dareios 10-32)
Marduk-ēṭir	(ca. 490 - 484 BCE ?)

The interpretation of the pious wish at the end of the colophon should be adjusted, too. I understand the phrase /*ḫal-qa gur*/ as a request (*ḫalqa litir* “may he restore the loss”) to restore the many breaks and losses, that are marked by the comment *ḫepi* “broken / lost” or visibly by hatchings throughout the text. The request is directed towards some future scribal colleague, who would of course also worship Nabû (*pāliḫ* ^d*Nabû*), the god of the scribal art. Al-Rawi’s and Glassner’s interpretation of the phrase as “return if lost” is probably dependent upon the request *litiršu* “may (the scholar who has borrowed the tablet from the library) bring it back again” found in some colophons of the first millennium.⁷ There is however a much closer resemblance to the virtually identical request (*šuma*) *ḫepâ lišallim* “may he restore the broken (line)”, equally found in colophons.⁸ And in view of the

⁵ C. Waerzeggers, “The Babylonian Revolts Against Xerxes and the ‘End of Archives’”, in: *AfO* 50, 2003/2004, pp. 150-173. Heather D. Baker, “Babylon in 484 BC: the Excavated Archival Tablets as a Source of Urban History”, in: *ZA* 98, 2008, pp. 100-116.

⁶ O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500-300 B.C.* (Bethesda 1998), p. 197.

⁷ H. Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone*. AOAT 2 (Kevelaer / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1968), p. 13, and in nos. 91, 96, 97.

⁸ Hunger, *Kolophone*, p. 13, 135, no. 498, l. 3: *ḫepâ lišallim*; and see nos. 383-384 for the request: mu BE-a li-[š]al-lim (var.: gi; *STT* no. 174 rev. 11’, no. 177 rev. 11), which is probably to be understood as: *šuma *ḫepâ lišallim* “may he restore the broken line”, see also *CAD* Š/1, p. 223, s.v. *šalāmu* 8e and *CAD* Š/3, p. 296, s.v. *šumu* 5e, with slightly differing readings.

many breaks and losses marked on the tablet by the ancient copist, this interpretation is certainly the choice to make.

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