(1) Final short vowels (after a single consonant or after two similar consonants) were not pronounced, although they could be preserved in the script. Sometimes the preserved vowels were historically justified.

(2) Final short vowels alter two different consonants were normally dropped in the pronunciation, but it is possible that a vowel was pronounced between the two consonants.

(3) Final long vowels were also not pronounced unless there was a psychological reason for retaining them. Such a reason could be the distinction between singular and plural forms.

(4) Final circumflexed vowels are most likely pronounced, since they always appear explicitly in the script, by means of a vowel sign or of the sign expressing ‘.

The Old Iranian vowels too were at least weakened in the Achaemenid period². In this context, it would seem useless to conduct a research on the rendering of Old Iranian vowels by the Babylonian scribes, since one could only expect a complete chaos of -a, -i and -u used without any apparent system.

Various examples indeed seem to corroborate this chaotic situation: the sign KU may render */ka/ (Ka-at-pa-tuk-ku for Katpatuka-), MU denotes */ma/ (Ar-šam-mu for Aršāma-), NI may correspond with */na/ (A-bi-ig-ni for *Abigna-) or */nā/ (As-pa-ši-ni for Aspačānā), ṚI may render */ra/ (Mi-it-ri for Mitra- in two inscriptions of Artaxerxes II), ṢI and ṢU are expressions of */sa/ (Ū-mi-is-si and Ě-mi-is-su for Vaumisa-), ṢO may correspond

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with -/ša/ (Ba-ga-bu-uk-šú for Bagabuxša-) and -/ši/ (Da-da-ar-šú for Dādaršiš), etc. The Old Persian name Vištaspá- is rendered by Uš-ta-as-pa, Uš-ta-as-pl and Uš-ta-as-pu.

Even signs followed by a mater lectionis can deviate from the corresponding Iranian vowel, e.g. Ka-pi-šá-ka-na-' for Kāpišakāni-. Reference can also be made to the examples below. In many cases the Babylonian scribes used a sign expressing their own nominative (ending in -u) to express Iranian final /a/. Remarkably no signs whose phonetic value ends in -a can render Iranian final -/u/.

Nevertheless, this chaos is not general. For instance, Iranian short and especially long final /i/ are mostly rendered by Babylonian signs ending in -i (Gu-su-ri for *Gausūri-), sometimes accompanied by a mater lectionis (e.g. A-ḫa-ma-an-ni-iš-ši-) for *Ḫaḫimanišši-, Gu-su-ri- for *Gausūri-). Only a few times a- or u-signs express Iranian /i/. This indicates that the Babylonian scribes had still some sense of how to render the Iranian final vowels accurately. This pattern naturally is also valid for the Babylonian renderings of Iranian final -ti and -tī, which is mostly rendered by –ti (Ar-ra-ma-ti for *Ārmati-, A-ru-ḫa-at-ti for *Ḫaḫxatī-, A-ti-mu-uš-ti for *Āθimūšti-, etc.) or -ti’ (A-ru-ḫa-at-ti’ for *Ḫaḫxatī-, Parna-uḫ-ti’ for *Farnauxti-, Si-ku-ú-ma-at-ti’ for Sikayuvatī-, etc.).

Therefore it is utterly surprising that the Babylonian renderings of Old Iranian loanwords ending in -/ti/ do not correspond with this pattern: ten times -/i/ is rendered by TU₄, two times by TA and five times by TI. The examples are:

(1) *Aspastī-: (once), as-pa-as-tu₄ (twice) and as-pa-sa-tu₄ (once).
(2) *Gēθapatī-: ge-te-pa-tu₄ (once).
(3) *Grdapati-: ga-ar-da-pa-ta (once), ga-ar-da-pa-tu₄ (once) and ga-ar-du-pa-tu₄ (three times).
(4) *Upadēti-: ap-pa-de-tu₄ (once), up-pa-de-e-ti (four times) and up-pa-de-tu₄ (once).

In addition, the proper name *Xšēti- is spelled Aḫ-šē-e-tu₄ (once) and Aḫ-šē-ti’ (once), so again the sign TU₄ appears as equivalent of Old Iranian final -/ti/. The only proper name where -/ti/ is not rendered by TI, -ti’ or TU₄ is Višpaužāti-, spelled Ú-mi-iš-pa-za-tu (DB 65).

It may be assumed that the two spellings ending in TA are reflections of the loss of the final vowel in the pronunciation, resulting in /grdapat/ and /vṛzanapat/. The high number, however, of spellings ending in TU₄ suggests that this sign may have had a value ti. This idea is strengthened by the complete absence of the sign Tū in the renderings of Old Iranian final /ti/. If the spellings in TU₄ would be historical spellings, reflecting a Babylonian
nominate, then TÚ also should have been used in these contexts. This is the case in the Babylonian renderings of final -ta, where TÚ is used 148 times. In the same position TU₄ is used 51 times. The other ways to render final -ta are used less frequently: -ta (41 times), -ta’ (23 times), -ti (14 times), -du (9 times), -t (7 times), -da (5 times), -tu’ (2 times), -da (2 times), -tu (1 time) and -ta-a (1 time)³.

In two personal names it looks as if the signs TA and TÚ exceptionally and explicitly render /ti/. *Paurušātiš is spelled Pu-ru-’-šá-ti-iš (3 times), Pu-ru-šá-a-tú (1 time), Pu-ru-uš-šá-a-tú (3 times), Pu-ru-uš-ti-ši (3 times), Pur-ru-šá-a-ta (2 times) and Pu-ur-šá-a-tú (5 times). The other name, *Ṛtašātiš, appears as Ar-ta-šā-a-ta (2 times), Ar-ta-šā-a-tú (1 time) and Ar-ta-šā-a-ta (1 time). However, these two names had probably two forms: one ending in -s (fr. nominative ending) and one with a disappeared Iranian nominative ending and with an unpronounced final vowel (ta / tú), resulting in /Pauruš/ and /Ṛtaš/. They rather illustrate the Babylonian ambiguity, also noticeable in other examples in their dealings with the Iranian nominative in -s.

It seems thus very likely that, at least in the Babylonian renderings of Old Iranian proper names and loan words, the sign TUM (TU₄) can be transliterated as ti. It is more difficult, albeit rather logical, to accept the same for the internal Babylonian expressions, due to the loss of the final vowels in that language.

Clearly TU₄ is regularly attested in situations where syntactically a genitive ending or a construct state in -i is expected. This could mean that TU₄ serves here as a historical spelling for that genitive or construct state and was perceived by the Babylonian scribes to have a value ti. Some examples are: ina naš-šar-tu₄ (CTMMA 3 13:1; 3 Neriglissar), ina na-dš-par-tu₄ (CTMMA 3 30:3; 16 Nabonidus), ša na-dš-par-tu₄ (CTMMA 3 50:8; 6 Nabonidus), a-di te-lit-tu₄ (CTMMA 3 76:3 [8 Nabonidus]), a-di dš-kut-tu₄ (RA 97 62-63:5; 16 Darius II), i-na kīn-tu₄ (RA 97 62-63:26), i-na na-dš-par-tu₄ (RA 97 62-63:33), a-kī-i šī-pir-tu₄ (EE 59:2 [no date]; IMT 40:4 [40 Artaxerxes I]); cf. a-kī-i šī-pir-ti in IMT 55:7 [no date]).

The phenomenon is also attested in personal names. The name Nidinti-Bēl is written mNi-din-ti-En⁴, but most frequently mNi-din-tu₄-En⁵. Although /i/ is the final vowel

of the first element of this name, it is not a final vowel anymore in the whole of the name. Accordingly it was most likely pronounced. These spellings suggest clearly a value /ti/ and tu₄. Sometimes the name appears as mNi-din-ti₄-En (Dar. 297:13). Other examples are šTaš-
me-tu₄- dam-qāt (Cyr. 264:3) and šLi-mi-tu₄-Be-lit (EE 100:3:10) - šLi-me-ti-Be-lit (EE 100:8).

It should also be noted that, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus, the sign τi was still used in the same situations: a-na man-di-ti (CTMMA 100:2), a-na šim-ti (Mich. 37:9) ma sa-ar-ti (Mich. 26:1). Consequently tu₄ can be seen as the successor of τi, at least in this position. Nevertheless variation within one or more texts existed already in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, cf. Bu-na-ni-ti and Bu-na-ni-tu₄ (Mich. 32:10 and 12) and is attested throughout the Achaemenid period, as can be seen in er-bet-tu₄ - er-bet-ti (EE 19:7 and 17), ga-mir-tu₄ - ga-mir-ti (IMT 48:1 and 5) and mi-ši-ih-tu₄ - mi-ših-ti (RA 97 62-63:9,15 and 16).

In conclusion, when tu₄ is used by the Babylonian scribes to render Old Iranian final -/ti/ this should not be considered a Babylonization of the Iranian name by turning it into a Babylonian nominative. It is rather proposed here to ascribe a value ti₁₁, a value not yet known for this sign⁶, to the sign officially known as TUM.

Jan TAVERNIER
Jan.Tavernier@uclouvain.be, UCLouvain, Centre d’Etudes Orientales
Place Blaise Pascal 1, B-1348 LOUVAIN (BELGIQUE)