106) An Iranian slave in Babylon during the reign of Amēl-Marduk?[1] — In a Neo-Babylonian document (ROMCT 2 3:2) a female slave with the name [f]*Am-ma-ta-ú-ta-a* is sold by Rakal, the son of Ammalemu, to Iltabija, the son of Ammajabibi. The name of the unfortunate slave has only been commented upon by the editor of the text, G.J.P. MCEWAN (1982, 7), who compared it to the names *Am-ma-'-ta-'* (TALLQVIST 1914, 22) and *Am-ma-da-ud-da* (HALLOCK 1969, 666a). The name does not appear in ZADOK's (2009, 77) catalogue of Iranian names mentioned in Neo- and Late Babylonian sources.

The first name, discussed by McEwan, is actually written *Am-me-'-ta-'* (ABL 260 rev.3 = SAA 18 149 rev.3) and refers to an Arab, more precisely the father of a man named Aya-kabar (cf. VILLARD 1998, 104). Here one is dealing with an Arabic name, as already TALLQVIST (1914, 22) noticed.

The second name is the Elamite rendering of the Iranian anthroponym *Amadāta- "given by Ama". This name is also attested in Aramaic (spelled 'Mdt; also in a text from Persepolis) and in Babylonian, where it is spelled *Am-ma-da-a-tú* and *Um-ma-da-a-tú* (TAVERNIER 2007, 103-104 no. 4.2.38).

Unfortunately for McEwan, the name discussed cannot be linked to any of the two names he cited. The main reason for this is the presence of the sign Ú, which implies a /u/ or a /w/ in the original name. Only in his connecting it with an Iranian name McEwan was right, as it is indeed an Iranian anthroponym.

More precisely, [f]*Am-ma-ta-ú-ta-a* is the Babylonian rendering of an Iranian name *Amatavāta- "With the strength of Ama"[2]. More precisely, this name can be split up in three parts: *Ama-, *tavah-, "strength, power" (cf. Av. *tauuah-*) and -*āta-*, a suffix reinforcing the meaning of the word it determines (TAVERNIER 2007, 571). Ama- is a minor Zoroastrian divinity (BOYCE s.d.), who, however, enjoyed some popularity with the common population, given the not so low number of names containing his name (cf. TAVERNIER 2007, 575). This popularity may very well have been connected with the military aspect of Ama-.

Interestingly the text is dated to 29 Ululu, year 1 of the reign of Amēl-Marduk, the king of Babylon. This corresponds with 28 September 561 BC, which puts the presence of this Iranian slave well in the pre-Achaemenid area, when Babylonia was still independent. This makes *Amatavāta- one of the first attestations of an individual bearing an Iranian name in the Babylonian documentation (the oldest being one Median and two Elamites in a ration-list from 592-591, cf. ZADOK 1976, 62 and 66).

In all likelihood, *Amatavāta- was ethnically an Iranian woman. Two reasons plead for this. First of all, it was not yet common for Babylonians to adopt Iranian names in the Neo-Babylonian period. In the Achaemenid period, when Babylonia was ruled by Iranian-speaking Persians, some Babylonians did this in the hope that this would enhance their chances to a career in the Achaemenid administration. Secondly, her status as a slave also induces one to believe that she was ethnically Iranian. Possibly, she had been captured by a Babylonian raid along the Iranian border and was brought to Babylon to be sold as a slave. It is this last phase of which ROMCT 2 3 is a testimony.

2 This analysis has already been briefly mentioned by me in a recently published thorough research on female slave names in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods (HACKL 2013, 181 n.149).

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