

82) Neo-Babylonian texts in CUSAS 15* — In NABU 2014/55, Victor Gysembergh offered significant improvements to the editions of several of the Neo- and Late Babylonian tablets published in CUSAS 15: nos. 14, 43, 48, 67 and 184. He observed that in two of these texts, 67 and 184, a certain Tattannu, son of Talīmu, appears as protagonist, and added that the same man is mentioned as addressee in the letter no. 69 (attributing this observation to J.-M. Durand). The purpose of the present note is to offer a new edition of the letter on the basis of the photo on CDLI (where the text has the number P270698) and of photographs kindly provided by David Owen and Elena Devecchi, to whom I am profoundly grateful. (Note that in the following edition, exclamation marks designate unorthodox sign forms; departures from the original edition are not indicated as such.)

CUSAS 15, 69

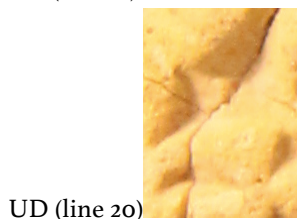
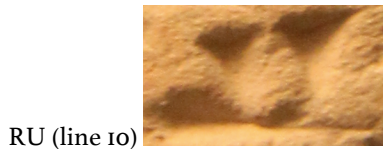
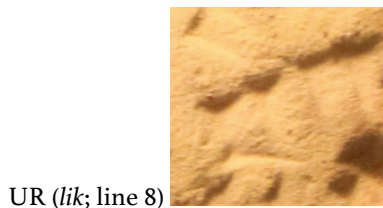
- 1 im^{ld} ag-mu-mu
 a-na^l ta-at-tan-nu
 šeš-ía en^{sic} u^d ag šu-lum
 u tin šá šeš-ía liq-bu-ú
- 5 5 mu.an.na^{mes} a-ga-a
 ul-tu muh-hi šá a-na-ku
 ú^l gu-za-na a-na pa-ni-ku
 ni-il-lik^l io-ta buru₄
 garim-ia ul tar^{la}-re^l-e^r šī^r (partly overwritten by rev. 21)
- 10 ul šu-gar-ru-ú-a
 ú-gam^l-me-<er>-ka iš-te-en-n[a]
 en-na a-mur^{ld} ag-numun-pab
 [u]^{r1} mu-^rd ag^r dumu-^ršú^r
- l.e. al-tap-rak-^rka^r
- rev. buru₄ ina šu^{ll}-šú-nu
- 16 šu-^rbi-la^r en u^d ag
 lu-^rú i-du^r-u
 le-^re-pu-šú^r a-na
 lú^l di.kud^{mes} a-na^r muh-hi
- 20 lu-ud^l-bi-bu
 ši-pir-ta-a šá áš-pur-rak-ku
 lu-ú
 lú^l mu-kin-ni-ia
 ia-a-a-nu-ú a-na^l
- 25 bar-sip^{ki} it-ti-šú-nu
 al-^rka^r

Letter of Nabû-šumu-iddin to Tattannu, my brother. May Bēl and Nabû ordain my brother's health and well-being.

These five years, ever since I and Guzānu came to you, have you not taken (lit.: grown) ten harvests from my land, and have I not given you in full every single remuneration payment I owed? Now look, I have sent you Nabû-zēru-ušur and Iddin-Nabû, his son; send me the harvest through them. Bēl and Nabû know for certain: I shall take action and talk to the judges about this. Let my letter I sent to you be my witness. If you choose to do otherwise, come to Borsippa with them.

On the basis of the other texts belonging to the dossier, the letter should be dated to the reign of Cambyses. The issue here is an arrangement by which some land belonging to the sender was ceded to Tattannu who undertook to cultivate it against a fixed remuneration (*šugarrû*) but failed to deliver the proceeds (two harvests per year: barley and dates, presumably) to the land owner. The tone of the letter is emphatic: this is shown by the rhetorical questions, by the invocation of the gods (followed by a precative rather than by an oath), the threat of going to court and the statement that the present letter should bear witness to the fact that the addressee had been warned – a phrase that is used in the context of strong reproach.

Note some unusual or plainly incorrect sign forms:



With its unevenly distributed lines and occasional aberrant sign forms the letter displays a clear 'provincial hand' – the type of handwriting one does not normally find in the large temple archives or in the private archives from the capital but which occurs not infrequently in Nippur archives and, for instance, quite regularly in the tablets of the (usually Nippurean) scribes who worked in the countryside with the deported Judeans (CUSAS 28). This fits the setting of the other known texts of the dossier in the town or village of GaDibat, known to be in the hinterland of Nippur.¹⁾

I take the occasion to add brief observations to other late texts in CUSAS 15 (and to Gysembergh's corrections to the editions).

No. 37: (1) 11 gur *a-na* é (2) 5 bán *a-na* ^{lú}hun.gá (3) 4 bán ^{šá} *a-na* ^{en}en-mu (4) 5 bán ^{ki} *na-a a-na* ^{gis}ban[?] (5) 2 bán *a-na* anše (6) 2 pi *a-na* ^{lú}hun.gá ^{mes} (7) *šá* é im *iš-ku-nu* (8) 2 bán *a-na nu-ú-ni* (9) pab 11 gur 4 (pi) 4 bán (10) *te-lit a-na* é

This is a private account of household expenses. While there is no definite proof, it might also belong to the Tattannu dossier. A rural background is in any case

likely given the fact that the expenses listed here – payment for hired workers (some of whom had renewed the mud coating of a house), for a donkey, for a tax, for fish – are made entirely in kind rather than in silver.

No. 43, re-edited by Gysembergh, is another of the tablets belonging to Nebuchadnezzar's 'Palace Archive' that 'went missing' during or after the first World War. It is Bab 28361, listed as no. 271 in Pedersén's *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon* (2005), p. 126.

No. 48: the date is the second year of *kur-ra-šu* lugal kur.kur – Cyrus, not Artaxerxes.

No. 82 is neither Neo-Assyrian (CUSAS 15, p. vii) nor does it refer to cultic topography (p. 79), it is a fragment of a sale contract from Hellenistic Uruk.

^{*} This note was written under the auspices of the Austrian Science Fund's Project P 26104, "Diplomatics and Palaeography of Neo- and Late Babylonian Archival Documents."

¹ The place name is normally spelled ^{uru}ga-..., hence it is advisable to read ^{uru}gaD-Di-bat in CUSAS 15, 184 rather than ^{uru}qa-..., as proposed by Gysembergh. W. Farber will publish another promissory note belonging to this dossier.

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