

## NABU 1990-93 Paul-Alain Beaulieu

**Cuts of Meat for King Nebuchadnezzar** – The custom of sending to the king a share of the food presented to divine images is well documented for the late periods of Mesopotamian history. Several texts from the archive of the Eanna of Uruk record the periodic trips of the men in charge of taking these provisions to the court. The provisions are referred to by the following collective designations : *rehātu* « sacrificial remains, » *sellu tabnītu* « well arranged basket » and *kurummat šarri* « provisions of the king. » Whether those terms are functionally equivalent or refer to different types of food allowance is unclear. The interest of the document edited below, also from the Eanna archive, lies in the fact that it enumerates the ingredients of a shipment of *kurummat šarri*. Collations have led to several improvements. There is no previous edition of the text.

GCCI 1 238

1. 2 bán *tak-ka-su-ú* ʽ2ʽ ninda ì.giš 2 *sūtu* of cake ; 2 *akalu* of sesame oil ;
2. 1/2 silà zú.lum.ma ni.tuk<sup>ki</sup> 1/2 *qû* of Telmun dates ;
3. 1 silà kaš.<ú>.sa sig<sub>5</sub>-tî 1 *qû* of fine *billatu* beer ;
4. 2 ninda.há mun.há *tu<sub>9</sub>-uq-qu*-\*nu 2 *akalu* of prepared(?) salt
5. ù *mut-ta-qu* and a sweetcake ;
6. 5 uzu \*udu.meš 2 uzu \*zag.\*meš 5 mutton cuts (namely) 2 shoulder cuts,
7. 2 uzu.\*giš.\*kun.meš 1 uz[u \*t]i 2 rumps and 1 r[ib roast] ;
8. 1 tu.\*kur<sub>4</sub>.mušen ʽoʽ [o o o] 1 turtledove ʽoʽ [o o o].
9. \*pap šuk.há lugal \*šá *ina* šu.min Total of the king's provisions which, by
10. I <sup>d</sup>*na-na-a-šeš-mu* a I *ár-rab* Nanaya-ah-iddin descendent of Arrab
11. *u* I sum-šeš a I <sup>d</sup>*in-nin-numun-dù* and Nādin-ahi descendent of  
Innin-zēr-ibni,
12. *a-na* lugal *šu-bu-ul* were taken to the king.
13. iti sig<sub>4</sub> u<sub>4</sub> 7-kám mu 26-kám Month Simānu, 7th day, 26th year of
14. <sup>d</sup>*nà-níg*.du-urì lugal tin.tir<sup>ki</sup> Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

line 4 : I see no other possibility than to assign a phonetic value *tu<sub>9</sub>* to the sign TÚG. On *taqānu* occurring in conjunction with food and drink see *AHW* s.v.

*taqānu* D 4. Note however that *ṭabtu* is feminine ! The question must remain open. The solution of the *CAD* (M s.v. *muttāqu*) is to read ZĪD.x.KUM (*isqūqu*), but collation showing a final *-nu* makes that even more unlikely.

line 7 : Specifically, UZU GIŠ.KUN might refer to the fat tail of the sheep, the choicest part of the animal. At the end of the line, only the final *Winkelhaken* of the sign TI is still visible.

All the ingredients mentioned in the text are well known delicacies served to cultic statues. In *Iraq 45* (1983) 187-98 McEwan edited a large tablet from the Eanna listing the daily offerings of meat to Ištar and Nanaya and the categories of temple personnel entitled to a prebendal share thereof. On lines 25-26 the text specifies that three cuts of the sacrificial sheep (*immer ginê*) are set aside for the king's provisions (*kurummat šarri*) : a shoulder cut (UZU ZAG.LU = *imittu*), the rump (UZU GIŠ.KUN = *rapaštu*) and a rib coast (UZU TI = *šēlu*). It is remarkable that *GCCI* 1 238 follows the prescriptions of that document perfectly, listing the cuts in the exact same order.

The text edited by McEwan is a Neo-Babylonian copy of an old tablet composed probably during the reign of Nabû-apla-iddin (first half of 9th century). The presence of a colophon as well as the absence of any close archival correspondence to the prescriptions of the text led McEwan to assume that it was a mere literary exercise, no longer in force as an actual regulation. The evidence just presented now suggests the opposite. Can we speculate that the tablet was recopied in the Neo-Babylonian period to serve as a source for the reinstatement of the old prebendal system after times of disruptions ? This might have happened during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, whom various sources credit with the restoration of cultic practices at Uruk<sup>1</sup>. The search for old documents such as the one edited by McEwan would be consistent with the intellectual climate of the Neo-Babylonian period.

One may note that the Nabû-apla-iddin tablet assigns the neck cut (*tikku*) to the *kalû* priests (l. 12, 35 and 61). As noted by McEwan (p. 191 n. 19) the neck is still associated with the prebend of the *kalû* in Seleucid Uruk (*BMitt* Beiheft 2, 115, 1), a strong indication of the immutability of some religious practices in Babylonia.

<sup>1</sup>See for instance the discussion of the historical background of the « Uruk Prophecy » in *JAO* 95 (1975) 371-75.

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