

# NABU 1993-41 A.C.V.M. Bongenaar

**The regency of Belšazzar** – As stated in the recently published book « The reign of Nabonidus » by P.-A. Beaulieu (New Haven 1989), the regency of Belšazzar during Nabonidus' absence from Babylonia should have lasted from Nabonidus' third till his thirteenth year. Three texts from the archive of Ebabbar at Sippar show that this regency must have lasted at least one and a half year longer. The first of these is an unpublished text from the British Museum. I am indebted to the Trustees of the British Museum for enabling me to publish the following text.

BM 63917 (82-9-18,3885 ; Bertin copy 1585)

- Obv. 1. [s]i-im-ma-nu-ú šá a-na <sup>10</sup>ERIM<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ  
šá <sup>615</sup>B[AN a-na]
2. <sup>v</sup>La-a-ba-ši <sup>16</sup>AŠGAB SUM-na <sup>kuš</sup>  
gi-l[a-du]
3. hu-ra-tum ù <sup>na</sup>gab-bu-ú ina li[b-bi]
4. 50 [<sup>kuš</sup>me]-e-še-nu! a-na <sup>16</sup>ERIM<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ  
šá <sup>61</sup>[ŠBAN]
5. 6 [<sup>kuš</sup>KI].MIN a-na <sup>16</sup>SIPA.MEŠ ša  
it-ti še[-e-nu il-li-ku]
6. [x <sup>ku</sup>]\*KI.MIN a-na <sup>16</sup>ERIM<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ  
šá ina ANŠE.KUR[.RA.MEŠ]
7. [x <sup>ku</sup>]\*KI.MIN a-na <sup>16</sup>NAGAR.  
[MEŠ?] šá <sup>KUR</sup>La-ban-la-nu
8. [x <sup>ku</sup>]\*KI.MIN a-na <sup>16</sup>A šip-ri  
šá <sup>61</sup>si-il-li tab-ba-ni-tum
9. [a-na pa]-ni DUMU.LUGAL  
iš-šu-ú SUM
10. [x <sup>kuš</sup>KI.MIN a]-na <sup>16</sup>ERIM<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ  
šá ŠUG.ĪI<sup>(sic)</sup> LUGAL šá qu-<sup>r</sup>up-pu<sup>r</sup>
11. [a-na p]a-ni DUMU.LUGAL

	<i>iš-šu-[ú]</i> SUM
12.	[ PAP x ] <sup>kuš</sup> <i>me-e-še-e-nu!</i>
Rev. 13.	[ <sup>p</sup> <i>La-a-b</i> ]a-š[i a-na É.BABB]AR.RA [ <i>it</i> ]-ta-din
14.	[x <sup>kuš</sup> š]a-ri-pu šá a[-na] <sup>kuš</sup> <i>til-lu</i> [-MEŠ?]
15.	[a-na <sup>p</sup> ]La-a-ba-ši id-di-nu ina lib-bi
16.	[x] <sup>kuš</sup> til-lu a[-na] <sup>kuš</sup> ERIM <sub>2</sub> .MEŠ šá <sup>gis</sup> BAN <sup>kuš</sup> it-ta-din
17.	<sup>kuš</sup> til-lu <sup>kuš</sup> šá <sup>d</sup> A-nu-ni-tum šá <i>Sip-par</i> <sup>ki</sup> .A-nu-ni-tum
18.	šá a-na DUMU.LUGAL i-bu-ku 2 <sup>kuš</sup> šal-la-MEŠ
19.	šá UDU.NITA <sub>2</sub> UZ <sub>3</sub> a-na É <i>til-lu u</i> É <sup>gis</sup> BAN
20.	<i>i-te-pu-uš</i>
21.	<sup>kuš</sup> ŠU U <sub>4</sub> .2.KAM MU.15.KAM <sup>d</sup> AG-I
22.	LUGAL TIN.TIR <sup>ki</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> (Working) materials on behalf of the archers <sup>2)</sup> given to Lābāši, the leatherworker : hides, <sup>3)</sup> *hūrātu*-dye and alum. From this <sup>4)</sup> 50 shoes to the archers, <sup>5)</sup> 6 shoes to the herdsmen who [went] with the fl[ock], <sup>6)</sup> x shoes to the men in charge of the horses, <sup>7)</sup> x shoes to the carpenter[s?] of the Lebanon, <sup>8)</sup> x shoes to the messenger who took the « well-arranged basket » <sup>9)</sup> [to] the son of the king, has been given. <sup>10)</sup> [x shoes] to the men in charge of the food supply of the king, who took the box <sup>11)</sup> [to] the son of the king, has been given. <sup>12)</sup> Total : x] shoes <sup>13)</sup> [Lāb]āš[i to Ebabb]ar has delivered. <sup>14)</sup> x (tanned and dyed) hides for the quiver[s?] <sup>15)</sup> [to] Lābāši they gave. From this <sup>16)</sup> x quiver(s) he has given to the archers. <sup>17)</sup> The quiver of Anunītu of Sippar-Anunītu <sup>18)</sup> who was taken to the son of the king (and) two sheep and goat hides <sup>19)</sup> for the quiver and bow-case <sup>20)</sup> he (= Lābāši) has manufactured. <sup>21)</sup> Month Du'uzu, 2<sup>th</sup> day, 15<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus, <sup>22)</sup> king of Babylon.

#### Notes :

1.4 and 12 : *mešēnu* is written *me-e-še(-e)-PAB* twice.

1.7 The *nagāru ša Lab(a)nānu* are attested again in the Sippar archive in CT 56 :

235, CT 57 : 198, Nbn 462 and Camb 359 ; cf. Zadok, « Répertoire Géographique », Bd. 8, pp. 203, 206-7, 210 and 426. The *-la-* in *La-ban-la-nu* is apparently a misspelling for *-na-*.

l.8 *silli tabnīti* « well-arranged basket », cf. CAD S, p. 218b.

l.10 The *quppu* mentioned in this line is to be understood as the *quppu ša šarri*, « (cash) box of the king », occurring frequently in the archives of Uruk and Sippar (cf. CAD Q, p. 308-9).

l.14 [<sup>nasš</sup>]a-ri-pu must be derived from the verb *šarāpu*, « to dye (red) » ; cf. *šarpu*, « tanned and dyed (leather) ; » CAD Š, p. 114.

l.17 *tillu ša Anunītu* is also attested in Nbn 31, CT 55 : 235 and CT 55 : 421.

l.18 Since the verb *abāku* in Neo-Babylonian normally occurs with animate objects, we must assume here that (the statue of) Anunītu and not the quiver (*tillu*) is the object of *ibuku*.

l.19 *bīt qašti*, « bow-case » according to CAD Q, p.155. One would expect the *bīt tilli* to be the equivalent for the arrows, i.e. quiver.

This text is extremely interesting for two reasons. First of all, it lists three occurrences of Belšazzar, acting as regent in Nabonidus' fifteenth year. According to line 8-9 of this text, the *sillu tabnīti* has been sent to Belšazzar. The *sillu tabnīti* undoubtedly was a royal prerogative as can be seen in two other texts quoted below. According to line 10-11, the men in charge of the food supply of the king brought the (royal) box to Belšazzar. Both occurrences belong in fact to the first royal prerogative mentioned in Beaulieu, p.188 : the sharing of the remainders of the sacrificial meals between Nabonidus and Belšazzar. Whereas the texts of the Eanna archive in Uruk use the word *rēḫātu* for the remainders of sacrificial meals (Beaulieu p. 157ff), the Ebabbar archive in Sippar refers to *kurummat šarri*. The officials *ša kurummat šarri* mentioned in line 10 were responsible for bringing these remainders to Belšazzar. Line 17-18 probably refers to the statue of Anunītu, which was sent to Belšazzar – not to Nabonidus – according to the text.

The second interesting aspect in this text is the listing of the groups of people who went outside Sippar. Among these, the herdsmen going with sheep and goats to meadows far outside Sippar (a.o. to Rušapu), are well-attested in the Ebabbar archive. They are normally accompanied by archers for protection. All

these groups, when going on an expedition, received travel provisions (*šidītu*). Part of the travel provisions are the shoes mentioned in the above text.

Two other texts in the Ebabbar archive mention Belšazzar in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus : CT 56,429 and Nbn 824. They are listed in Beaulieu, Table 7 (p. 156-7 : Texts mentioning Belšazzar) and discussed at pp. 204-205. The beginning of CT 56,429 (date : Nbn 15-XI-14) reads : <sup>1</sup>[Travel provisions] which have been given to Dannu-Nergal <sup>2</sup>[and Bunē]ne-ibni who took the « well-arranged basket » <sup>3</sup>[to] the son of the king (*šá sil-lu tab-ni-ti [a-na] IGI DUMU.LUGAL iš-šu-ú*). The beginning of Nbn 824 (date : Nbn 16-[x]-19) reads : <sup>1</sup>Travel provisions which [have been given] to [Dannu-Nergal] <sup>2</sup> and Šamaš-iqīša, who to[ok] the food supply of the k[ing] <sup>3</sup> to the son of the king (*šá ŠUG.ĪI.A L[UGAL] a-na IGI DUMU.LUGAL iš[-šu-ú]*). The people mentioned in both texts : Dannu-Nergal, Bunēne-ibni (not Amurru-ibni as Beaulieu translates on p.204) and Šamaš-iqīša, occur regularly in the Sippar archive as *ša kurummat šarri* officials (see my forthcoming dissertation on the prosopography of Neo-Babylonian Sippar). On p. 204, note 42, of Beaulieu's book the assumption is made that the *sillu tabnīti* could have contained remains of sacrificial meals (*rēhātu*), but probably contained *kurummatu*, sent by temples to the king and other important persons. Although *kurummatu* indeed is a very common word in archival texts, meaning a food supply which was given to all kind of workers regularly, the *kurummat šarri* was an exclusively royal prerogative, as was the *sillu tabnīti* (cf. passages quoted in CAD S, p. 218b). It seems rather weak to use NBC 4505 (forthcoming YOS XIX : 256, see Beaulieu p. 157) and GCCI 1 : 405 (Beaulieu p. 158), in which travel provisions are given to people who took the *rēhātu* to the son of the king (*šá re-ḥa-a-tú a-na DUMU.LUGAL iš-šu-ú*), as a decisive reason for Belšazzar's regency, whereas CT 56 : 429 and Nbn 824, using the phrase *šá sil-lu tab-ni-ti/kurummat šarri a-na IGI DUMU.LUGAL iš-šu-ú*, are regarded non-decisive (Beaulieu p. 204), presumably because they fall out of the chronological range Beaulieu reconstructed for Belšazzar's regency (Nabonidus year 3-13). It should be noted that there are significant differences in terminology between the archives of Eanna and Ebabbar, which could be a reason why the word *rēhātu* does not seem to occur in Sippar.

Both texts, CT 56,429 and Nbn 824, list the contents of the travel provisions (*šidītu*) given to the officials, among which we find leather shoes again (CT 56,

429 : 8 and Nbn 824 : 13). Thus, Beaulieu's speculation that the mention of travel provisions suggests that Belšazzar was at a significant distance from Sippar in Nabonidus fourteenth year (p. 205), is unfounded. Everyone going outside Sippar on an expedition received travel provisions, as can be seen in BM 63917/Bertin 1585 discussed above.

One of the reasons to assume that Belšazzar's regency ended in the thirteenth year of Nabonidus, is the general replacement of officials at Uruk and perhaps at Sippar in that year (Beaulieu pp. 160-2 and 187-8). However, this is certainly not the case at Sippar. The *qīpu* of Ebabbar at the time, Bēl-aḥḥē-iqīša, is attested from Nbn x-x-06 (PSBA 9, p.272) till Cyr 03-V-04 (Cyr 170). The *šangû* of Sippar, Mušēzib-Marduk, is attested from Nbn 17-VIII-02 (Nbn 79) till Nbn 12-VII-15 (Nbn 893), a few days before Marduk-šum-iddina must have taken over the office. The last text in which Mušēzib-Marduk occurs with his title is Nbn 852 (date : Nbn 04-III-15), which reads as follows : « (sesame for the *sattukku* of Simanu given to) » Šamaš-erība, son of [...], [the *ēpi*]šānu of [Mušēzib-Marduk], » the *šangû* of Sippar, so[n of] » Šamaš-zēr!-ibni. (The text has been collated). The two last occurrences of Mušēzib-Marduk show him in a similar context (Nbn 859 and 893), where he acts as the prebend holder of an oilpressers prebend.

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