

**Qipu's receive** – Like so many cuneiform texts, BM 68777 would be of like interest but more use were it but complete. As it is, it is a document that allures but whets the appetite without satisfying. There is no explicit date, but as the text comes from the Sippar collection of the British Museum we can be reasonably sure in assigning it to sometime from late in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the second year of Xerxes. It is just preserved to its full width (in line 6) and the reverse is uninscribed.

**BM 68777**

6.8 x 5.0+ cm.

- 1'    ina lib-bi 10 LIM gu<sup>1</sup>-zu-[ul-lu šá GI.MEŠ]  
 -----  
 2'    ʿ3 ME<sup>1</sup> [a-na] ʿ<sup>m</sup>Ki<sup>1</sup>-na-a a-n[a X X X X]  
 3'    3 ME ʿ<sup>1a1</sup> [qí-i-pi]i šá É.ZI.D[A a-na X X X]  
 4'    1 ME ʿ<sup>1a</sup>qí-i-pi šá É.AN.K[I a-na X X X]  
 5'    2 ME ʿ<sup>1a</sup>qí-i-pi šá É.SAG.ILA [a-na X X X]  
 6'    1 ME ʿ<sup>1a</sup>qí-i-pi šá É.MES.LAM ʿ<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-n[a X X X]  
 7'    2 ME ʿ<sup>1a</sup>qí-i-pi šá É.AN.KI.KÙ.GA<sup>1</sup> [a-na X X X]  
 8'    ʿ2 ME ʿ<sup>1a1</sup>qí-i-pi šá <šu>-bat <sup>d</sup>ʿX<sup>1</sup> [a-na X X X]  
 9'    [X ME ʿ<sup>1a</sup>qí-i-pi]i šá ʿÉ<sup>1</sup> [X X a-na X X X]  
 (rest broken off)

1.8 As it seems unlikely that there would have been a *qīpu* of a shrine of *šubtu* status we are justified in wondering whether this line should not be read some other way, and I pass on the attractive suggestion made to me by J. Black that perhaps we should read BAD.AN.ʿKI<sup>1</sup>, taking it to be a variant for BÀD.AN.KI = Dēr.

## Translation

- 1' from this 10,000 *bundles* [of reeds]
- 2' 300 [to] Kināya for [...]
- 3' 300 (to) the *qīpu* of Ezida [for ...]
- 4' 100 (to) the *qīpu* of Eanki [for ...]
- 5' 200 (to) the *qīpu* of Esagila [for ...]
- 6' 100 (to) the *qīpu* of Emeslam for [...]
- 7' 200 (to) the *qīpu* of Eankikugga [for ...]
- 8' 1200<sup>1</sup> (to) the *qīpu* of *the shrine* of ... [for ...]
- 9' [x (to) the *qīpu* of [... for ...]

The text is a list of payments to the *qīpu*'s of the major temples of Babylonia. Those whose names are preserved are the Ezida of Borsippa, Eanki of Uruk, Esagila of Babylon, Emeslam of Kutha and Eankikugga of Ur ; as the text probably comes from Sippar it is highly likely that the Ebabbara of Sippar was also included (and it may be that the Kināya in line 2 was acting on this behalf) and as noted above it may be that Der is intended in line 8. It is unfortunate that all the names are not preserved, but even so this text is of exceptional interest in that it provides a rare example of a co-ordinated distribution of resources to the major temple cities. Clearly we would wish to know where these resources came from, who authorised their distribution, who supervised, and for what purpose. Unfortunately, in the present state of the text, we are not able to answer any of these questions. As for the subject of these payments, the reading of the crucial word that specifies what is being delivered is made difficult by a sign that is either incorrect or written over an erasure. Thus the commodity in question is written X-zu-[...]: we read this *gu<sup>1</sup>-zu-[ul-lu šá GI.MEŠ]* « bun[dles of reeds] » and three lines of argument support the reading : (i) the first sign is consistent with a *gu* over an erasure, (ii) the word *guzullu* is known in Neo-Babylonian administrative texts, (iii) reeds are one of the few commodities which we find being delivered in large even numbers (*i.e.* exact hundreds and thousands) and that such quantities are attested for bundles of reeds (*CAD guzullu s.v.*). The restoration therefore seems strong. I only add that it is possible that in this context « reeds » actually means « arrows ».

In summary, in its present condition the chief interest of BM 68777 is in attesting a centralised allocation of materials to the temples of Babylonia. We have little way of knowing how regular such payments were and as a result how important they were to the temple economies. We do not know who authorised the payments or for what purpose. Nevertheless, the fact that the payments were made to the *qīpu*'s of the temples (and not to the *šatammu*'s and scribes) suggests that the distributor may have been the state. This does not tell us where the reeds actually came from, nor does it imply that the authorising party was the palace in Babylon. Imperfect as our text is, it is noteworthy that there is no mention of the Ebabbara (of Sippar) whence the text is likely to have come, and this could be because the Ebabbara was itself the source of these reeds. It is also worthy of speculation, if little more, that the reeds could have been intended for projects carried out by state sponsored *corvée* labour. Alternatively, if they really were arrows, it is relevant that the *qīpu* had contingents of troops under his command.

John MacGinnis (18-12-93)  
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