

BM 63282 – the Earliest Babylonian Text Dated to the Reign of Nebuchadnezzar IV – Although only a fragment of the original tablet BM 63282 is preserved now, the text deserves special attention for the important chronological data it preserves even though not all the lines can be read with certainty.

BM 63282 (82-9-18, 3251)1 4,9 × 5.0 cm

1. [ZÚ.LUM].MA šá [TA É] NÍG.GA šá GÚ ÍD.UD.[KIB.NUN.KI]
 2. ITI. GU₄ U₄.5.KÁM MU.1.KÁM^{md}AG-NÍG.D[U.ŠEŠ]
 3. [LUG]AL E.KI
-
4. [x x (x x) ZÚ.L]UM.MA *ina* ŠUKU.HI.<A> ITI.GU₄ *a-na*
 5. [úERÍN.MEŠ² šá^ú qí-i-]pi SUM^{na}
-
6. [] x^{md}EN-TIN^ú úSANGA UD.ME.KI
SUM^{na}
 7. [] *pap-p*]a-su^úMU-ú-tu šá É [
 8. [] UGU^mÌR-ja A^mKAR-d[
 9. []^mNi-]din-it^úse-pi-[ru
 10. [] *na*
- Rev.
- 1' []
 - 2' [] †SUM^{na}
 - 3' [] x šá *a-na* ^{md}UTU-TIN†^ú
 - 4' SUM^{na}

Translation of Obverse :

1. The dates from the storehouse at the bank of the Eu[phrates].
2. Month of Aiaru, the fifth day of the first year of Nebucha[dnezzar],
3. [ki]ng of Babylon.
4. [x kur x x x of da]tes from the provision of the month Aiaru for
5. [the workmen of qí]pi (?) was given.

6. [x kur x x x x for] Bēl-uballiṭ, *šangû* of Sippar¹ was given.
7. [..... *pap*]*pasu*, income of the baker's office of the sanctuary of [...]
8. [.....] for Ardiya son of Mušezib-x
9. [..... for Ni]dintu, the *sēpiru*.
10. [..... was giv]en(?)

The text concerns dates given as provisions to different people in the second month of the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The question is to which of the three Neo-Babylonian kings of this name the text should be ascribed. The answer to this question is connected with the answer as to where the tablet itself was written.

There are three different arguments in favor of taking Sippar to be the place of issue of the tablet. Line 1 mentions [*būt*] *makkur šá kīšad* (GÚ) *nār* (ÍD) UD.[...], recalling the phrase *bīt makkur ša kīšad nār Puratti* known from many texts from the Ebabbar archive. The idea that this text might belong to the Ebabbar archive is strengthened by the name [^mNi]-*din-it* ^{lu}*se-pi-r*[*u*]³ (1.9). The latter's activity is attested in Sippar in the 25-year period between Cam 6 and Dar 22⁴. The third, most important argument is deduced from line 6, where we read: Bēl-uballiṭ ^{lu}SANGA UD.ME^{ki}: « [x kur dates] was given to Bēl-uballiṭ Šangû of UD.ME^{ki} ». However, the place-name UD.ME^{ki} is unidentified. Theoretically we can try to read the name as Bar₁₁-sip^{ki}, however such an unusual reading is excluded because in Borsippa the title *šatammu* was used instead of *šangû*. The two above-mentioned arguments suggest that the text was written in Sippar where an individual named Bēl-uballiṭ was the *šangû* of Sippar in the time after 3. XII. Cyr 7 (when his predecessor Marduk-šum-iddin is mentioned for the last time) and before 21[?].II Cyr 8 (when Bēl-uballiṭ is mentioned for the first time as a *šangû*). The last mention of activity of Bēl-uballiṭ so far known has been 5.I.Cam 7⁵. His successor was Ina-Esagila-lilbur, known from texts dated between 18.II.Dar 1 and -.VI.Dar 12. This new text partly fills the gap between the term of office of Bēl-uballiṭ and Ina-Esagila-lilbur. The former was active until the year 521, i.e. in the time of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar IV. In the light of these arguments we should accept the possibility that the scribe has written the sign UD ME in a reverse order and read them as *Sip-par*.

In the light of our text Bēl-uballiṭ can be seen to have held the office of *šangû*

of Sippar during the whole period of instability in Babylonia, i. e. through the time of Bardiya, Nebuchadnezzar III and IV. Earlier I suggested that Bēl-uballiṭ was probably personally responsible for the acceptance of Nebuchadnezzar IV as king in Sippar, and lost his own office after his fall⁶. The text BM 63282 supports that idea. He must have had good relations with all three usurpers and was withdrawn from office by Darius I only after he had suppressed the revolt of Nebuchadnezzar IV. The fact that the activity of his family (*šangû* Sippar) ceased after his removal from office⁷ supports the idea that he was an active supporter both of Nebuchadnezzar III and Nebuchadnezzar IV at least.

BM 63282 is the earliest text dated to the time of Nebuchadnezzar IV. We know now that the uprising of Nebuchadnezzar IV started neither about Abu 16 (August 25) as suggested by Parker-Dubberstein⁸ nor about 27. II (June 8)⁹ but already at the beginning of the month of Aiaru, i. e. before May 17. It gives a new argument for the idea that the uprising of Nebuchadnezzar IV started in Sippar or in its vicinity. The last text dated to the first year of Darius before the outbreak of Nebuchadnezzar IV's uprising is dated only a day earlier (4.II. Dar 1). However, at least one document dated 7.II¹⁰ (that is two days after the outbreak of the uprising) as well as one dated in Simanu¹¹, one in Du'uzu¹² and one in Abu¹³, written in Sippar¹⁴ give evidence that not all people were already prepared to leave Darius I and recognize a new usurper, who was not strong enough to control the situation. As the documents we know so far show, in the south of the country Nebuchadnezzar IV was recognized only later, as late as in mid-Abu ; however, since that moment till the defeat of Nebuchadnezzar IV, no documents dated to the reign of Darius I exist from this part of the country.

1. Published with the kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.
2. The reconstruction [Šarru-ludari], the *qīpu* Ebabbarra between Cyr 6 and Dar 6 is impossible because the title connected with the name was always followed by the name of the temple, i.e. *šá É-babbar-ra*, what is missing in our text.
3. On the writing of this name cf. J. MacGinnis, *Letter Orders from Sippar and the Administration of the Ebabbara in the Late-Babylonian Period*, Poznan 1995 p. 189ff., Appendix : Late Babylonian Orthography.
4. J. MacGinnis, Table 1 and the text No 38 dated 12.10.Dar 22.

5. M. San Nicolò, *Beiträge zu einer Prosopographie neubabylonischer Beamten der Zivil- und Tempelverwaltung*, (*Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-Hist. Kl, Jhrg 1941, Bd II, H.2. München 1941) 35.
6. S. Zawadzki, « Great Families of Sippar During the Chaldean and Early Persian Periods (626-482 B. C.) », *RA* 84 (1990) 23-24 and idem, « Bardiya, Darius and Babylonian Usurpers in the Light of Bisitun Inscription and Babylonian Sources » (to be published in *AMI*).
7. *RA* 84 (1990) 24.
8. R. A. Parker, W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. – A.D. 75*, Providence Rhode Island 1956, p. 16.
9. Cf. S. Zawadzki, « Bardiya, Darius und babylonische Usurpatoren im Lichte der Inschrift von Bisitun und der babylonischen Quellen » in : *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten*, Résumés XXXIX^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Heidelberg 1992, p. 78 (full version in press in *AMI*).
10. Dar 12 (May 19).
11. Dar 13 (14.III = June 25).
12. NBC 6134 (16.IV = July 26).
13. Dar 18 (18.V = Aug. 27).
14. However, only in NBC 6134 the place of issue is mentioned in the text.

Stefan Zawadzki (10-07-95)