

## Notes on the Dates of Late Seventh-Century Babylonian Economic Texts –

In ZA 81 (1991) 244 nn. 3-4, N. Na'aman remarks on discrepant readings of dates on Neo-Babylonian economic texts from the late seventh century – the divergences occurring between the British Museum catalogues (Leichty et al., *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, vols. 6-8) and the lists of dated texts published by Brinkman/Kennedy (*JCS* 35 [1983] 1-90 ; 38 [1986] 99-106) and by Kennedy (*JCS* 38 [1986] 172-244). Na'aman offers a set of collations, obtained by letter, to resolve the discrepancies.

Since Kennedy had access to the British Museum catalogues in manuscript before any of the above-cited *JCS* articles was published (mentioned for his final article in *JCS* 38 [1986] 174) and checked all divergences in dates, it is not surprising – though unremarked – that the collations presented by Na'aman confirm the *JCS* readings in all but two cases. These two cases merit review.

In the first instance (BM 67313), Na'aman changes the king's name in the date from Sîn-š[ar-iškun] to Sîn-šu[mu-lišir], reading the middle element of the RN as -M[U]-. This is a miscorrection, as the subjoined copy of the pertinent line (Fig. 1) illustrates. The RN reads <sup>md</sup>30-LU[GAL-...]; and the reading can readily be verified by comparing the full forms of MU and LUGAL which occur earlier in the line. It should be noted that the two wedges at the upper left of each LUGAL in this line are quite close together and that the second LUGAL is slightly more compact than the first ; but the upper wedges in the second sign are much too far to the left to support a reading -M[U]-.

### Illustration

In the second instance (BM 79253), Na'aman changes the day number in the date from « 25 » to « 24. » This divergence in units is more difficult to resolve, since only three of the wedges among the digis have prominent heads (Fig. 2).

Nonetheless « 5 » (in « 25 ») may be considered to be preferable because of the differing angles of the farthest-left tail in the top and in the bottom rows of the sign.

In the case of the duplicate texts BM 54153 and BM 54608, it should be noted by way of clarification (to ZA 81 [1991] 244 n. 3) that the place name, year, and RN in the date formula of BM 54608 can be read with reasonable assurance, but that the month and the day are damaged beyond recovery. The duplicate BM 54153 has traces of the GN, month, day, year, and RN ; but all of them, except the day, ʿ15(?)<sup>1</sup>, are very worn and could hardly be established without reference to BM 54608.

It may also be worth remarking, pace Naʿaman, that dates B.C. are usually given in terms of the Julian calendar, not the Gregorian (the latter affecting dates only in A.D. 1582 and later).

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to C. B. F. Walker (the collator of these texts for Naʿaman in 1989) who was kind enough to sit with me in the British Museum, reexamine the date formulae dealt with above, and confirm the readings presented here.

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