

**Dating in early Hellenistic Babylonia: evidence on the basis of CT 49 13, 1982.A.1853 and HSM 1893.5.6<sup>1</sup>** — The date of CT 49 13, a fragmentary ration list from Hellenistic Babylon, has been interpreted in various ways by several scholars since its publication in 1968. Despite the fragmentary state of the tablet there are two indications for a possible date : first of all the name of Alexander in Obv. 1 and secondly mu.2.kám in Rev. 11'. These two data seem incompatible: the normal scheme of dating formulas in early Hellenistic Babylonia does not include the years 1-5 both for Alexander the Great and for his son Alexander IV. The regnal years of Alexander the Great were counted starting from his first year as king in Macedonia. Since Alexander conquered Babylonia in his 6<sup>th</sup> year, no earlier years are attested in the cuneiform sources. The early years of Alexander IV do not appear in the cuneiform documents because at that time Antigonus Monophtalmus ruled in Babylonia and the tablets were dated with his name. Only after Seleucus' return to Babylon (311 B.C.) this method was replaced by a date according to the regnal year of the legitimate king and the cuneiform tablets start with the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Alexander IV.

Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Alexander seemed impossible, Ölsner tried to solve the dating problem in CT 49 13 by proposing a scribal error <1>2<sup>2</sup> or a reading error 1<sup>1</sup>1<sup>3</sup>. Joannès<sup>4</sup> accepted the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Alexander IV, whereas Van der Spek<sup>5</sup> did not believe that « Alexander » in Obv. 1 belonged to a dating formula. Because the name appears in the beginning and not at the end of the text, he thinks it must be interpreted as « [staters of] Alexander » and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year must be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Philip or Antigonus. We can not agree with this last point of view. All ration list from late Achaemenid and early Hellenistic Babylon were both obverse and reverse are preserved do bear a date twice : in the first lines of the obverse and in the last lines of the

reverse<sup>6</sup>. Although these last two dates can be excluded there still are several dating possibilities: Alex. III 2, Alex. III 11, Alex. III 12, Alex. IV 2, Alex. IV 11 and Alex IV 12.

Jursa published in a recent article in Iraq<sup>7</sup> a ration list from Hellenistic Babylon where for the greater part the same persons appear (n° 50 = 1982.A.1853). This text is dated in the 9th year of Alexander IV. By comparing both texts Jursa concluded that CT 49 13 was the older of the texts because more persons(? ?) were mentioned in the later texts and in two cases the amount of sons has increased. This already excludes Alex. IV 11 and Alex. IV 12 as a possible date for CT 49 13. Because the lists of persons in both texts are so much alike, it is more likely according to Jursa that CT 49 13 dates from Alex. IV 2 than Alex. III 11 or Alex. III 12 as was proposed by Ölsner.

HSM 1983.5.6, a large tablet from the Harvard Semitic Museum mentioned by Zadok<sup>8</sup> a few years ago, contains another ration list from the Esagil archive. A closer examination of the text revealed that also HSM 1893.5.6 contains the same persons as CT 49 13 and 1982.A.1853. The text is dated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Philip and is the key to the datation of both the other texts. When the two persons with a different amount of sons are considered, we can see that one of them ([ ]šū/ Mušēzib-Marduk) does not appear in the Birmingham text and that the other (Uballissu-Bēl/Bēl-ušēzib) has no son, as is the case in CT 49 13 while he does have a son in 1982.A.1853. As far as the chronology of the texts is concerned, this means that both HSM 1893.5.6 and CT 49 13 are older than 1982.A.1853. A comparison of the complete lists of the personal names also shows that 1982.A.1853 has more names in common with CT 49 13 than with HSM 1893.5.6 which means CT 49 13 is younger than HSM 1983.5.6. This means that CT 49 13 must be dated before Alex. IV 9 and after Phil. 2, which only leaves Alex. IV 2 as possible date for CT 49 13.

HSM 1893.5.6 (l. 3-11)	CT 49 13 (l. 2-9)	1982.A.1853 (l. 3-10)
Phil. 2	Alex. IV 2	Alex. IV 9
Bēlšunu/Bēl-ittanna		
Bēl-apla-iddin/Bēl-bullissu		
Ta[nittu]-Bēl/Nabû-kuşurşu		
Bēl-[ittan]na/Tanittu-Bēl		
Mušēzib-Bēl/Nabû-nādin-aḫi	[...]/Nabû-nādin-aḫi	[...]/Nabû-nādin-aḫi
Ina-Esagil-lilbir/Murān	[...]/Murānu	
Nabû-kuşurşu/Bēl-uballiṭ	[...]/Mušēzib-Marduk	[...]şu/Mušēzib-Marduk
	[...]/Bēl-ibni	[Ta]nittu-Bēl/Bēl-ibni
	[...]/Bēl-ittanna	Bēlšunu/Bēl-ittannu
	[...]/Bēl-bullissu	Bēl-apla-iddin/Bēl-bullissu
Ea-udammiq/Bēl-uballiṭ	[...]/Bēl-uballiṭ	Ea-udammiq/Bēl-uballiṭ
Uballissu-Bēl/Bēl-ušēzib	[ ]/Bēl-ušēzib	Uballissu-Bēl/Bēl-ušēzib

Even though the date of CT 49 13 seems quite certain, it is more difficult to draw conclusions from this dating formula as far as the political situation in Babylonia is concerned. If we accept that only Seleucus dated according to the regnal years of the only legitimate Hellenistic king, as he did after his return to

Babylon in 311 B.C., we might conclude that Seleucus was still in command in Babylonia in June/July 315 B.C. It is on the other hand not impossible that tablets were still dated according to the regnal year of Alexander IV at the beginning of his command in Babylonia and that after some time this habit was changed. The earliest known tablet dated by Antigonus is CT 49 34 (December 315/January 314 B.C.).

1) My thanks are due to the Penn/Leuven Exchange Program and the Fund for Scientific Research-Flanders for providing a travel grant and to Prof. Dr. P. Steinkeller for the permission to quote an unpublished tablet from the Harvard Semitic Museum.

2) J. ÖLSNER, in ZA 61 (1971), p. 162.

3) J. ÖLSNER, in AoF 1 (1974), p. 131 n. 8.

4) F. JOANNÈS, in *Anatolica* 7 (1979-80), p. 102 and 107 and TÈBR p. 333.

5) R.J. VAN DER SPEK, *Nippur, Sippar and Larsa*, in *Nippur at the Centennial* (RAI 35; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14), p. 246.

6) See CT 44 84, CT 49 24, 1982.A.1853 (in Iraq 59 (1997), pp. 170-171) and OECT 12 B7.

7) M. JURSA, *Neu- und spätbabylonische Texte aus den Sammlungen der Birmingham Museums und Art Gallery*, in Iraq 59 (1997), pp. 130-133.

8) R. ZADOK, in *N.A.B.U.* 1997/6, p. 5.

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