

A Verb Reread (TCL 12 122:20) – The series of Neo-Babylonian tablets Nbn. 314, TCL 12 122, and Nbn. 668 has been identified by E. W. Moore (*New-Babylonian Business and Administrative Documents*) as chronicling the various phases of a single legal case, the clearing of a debt incurred by the cosigner to a loan after the deaths of the married couple who had been the principal borrowers; Powell (*ArOr.* 40: 124-129) has added Nbn. 626 to this set, and Matthew Stolper has kindly pointed out to me that the two borrowers also figure in Nbn. 359. TCL 12 122, addressed by the cosigner Bēl-rimanni to the kings judges, includes the record of a statement in which the relatives of the deceased borrowers waive any claim to the slaves left by the borrowers (cf. Nbn. 668: 7ff.). This statement is immediately followed (line 20) by a passage read by Moore as *ù ʔup-pi ip-ʔu-ra-a-ma* («And the document they canceled,» p. 119); this reading is also adopted by Meissner («Sie lösten den (auf) eine Tafel (geschriebenen Vertrag) auf,» *AfO* 11: 154), Petschow («Und sie lösten die Tafel auf,» *Revue d'histoire du droit* 19: 34 fn. 1), and the *AHw.* sub *paʔārum* 11c («Urkunde *ip-ʔu-ra-a-ma* machten sie ungültig»). Since in this context the subjects of the verb are presumably the individuals who are identified as the heir (*ia-a-ri-tú*) and the sister-in-law of the deceased man, it remains to be explained why the verb shows the feminine plural ending *-ā*.

A more grammatically felicitous interpretation is possible if the first sign of the verb is read as *taš* (UR) rather than as IB. In the published autograph, the sign in question differs from a clear IB in that its central vertical stands as close to the vertical on the left as it does to the righthand vertical. In fact, the sign is virtually identical to the *taš* found in the name of the slave Ana-Tašmētu-atkal (*ʔana-ʔtaš-me-tu-at-kal*) in line 23. Taking the verb to be in the second person (*tašturā* «you (pl.) wrote») relieves us of the difficulty posed by the ending *-ā*, and is in agreement with several other passages in the text in which the judges to whom the letter is addressed serve as the verbal subject (*tāmurā* (line 11), *tušaršāšuma* (line 12), *tušahhisāḫinni* (line 13), *tāmurāma* (line 17)). Once the relatives of the deceased had made their declaration, the judges seem to have provided Bēl-rimanni with a tablet recording the waiver.

15. ^mU.GUR.TIN-iṭ ia-a-ri-tú šá ^mĪR.^dgu-la ù ʔri-min₄-ni-^aiš-tar
16. NIN šá ^ddam-qa-a al-ti ^mĪR.^dgu-la a-na maḫ-ri-ku-nu ub-lam-ma
17. [rik]-sa-a-tu-ú-a ta-mu-ra-a-ma ^mU.GUR.TIN-iṭ ù ʔri-min₄-ni-^a15
18. [...] -ku-nu-ši (erasure) um-ma ia-a-ri-tu-tu šá ^mĪR.^dME.ME ul
ni-ip-pu-uš
19. [...] ar-ki šá DUB šá ^mĪR.^dgu-la LÚ a-me-lut-tu₄ É maš-ka-ni-
šú
20. [amēl]-ut-su i-na ŠĀ-bi liš-lim ù ʔup-pi taš-ʔu-ra-a-ma

«I brought Nergal-uballiṭ, the *iāritu* of Arad-Gula, and Rīminni-Ištar, the sister of Damqā wife of Arad-Gula, before you ; you examined my [con]tracts, and Nergal-uballiṭ and Rīminni-Ištar [...] to you as follows : “We shall not exercise the *iāritūtu* of Arad-Gula, [...] according to the tablet of Arad-Gula, the slaves of his pledge are his [slav]es, let him be satisfied therewith,» and you drew up a tablet (to that effect)... »

Evidently this is the same tablet that is mentioned in line 24 (*[ar]-ki šá tu-pi šu-a-tú... i-na pa-ni-ia [š]ú-nu* ([accor]ding to this tablet... «they (i.e., the slaves listed) belong to me »).

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