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NOTES BRÈVES

01) In Support of Joachim Oelsner's Identification of LBAT 1500¹ – This short note is in support of Joachim Oelsner's identification of LBAT 1500 (BM 34387) as an astrological fragment relating to the Amurru-stars hitherto known from *The Great-Star List*,² and in my opinion the *mukallimtu* of *Nabû-zuqap-kēnu*, 81-7-27, 81.³ In his previous note, J. Oelsner demonstrated that the stars of LBAT 1500: 2'-8' match Amurru stars V-XI, and suggested that LBAT 1500 1' and 10' too matched the list of Amurru stars IV and XII: ^{mul}KAK.SI.SÁ and ^{mul}KA₅.A. During recent work on my Astrolabe project at The British Museum,⁴ I had the opportunity to re-examine LBAT 1500 and I can now verify that the traces of signs in lines 1' and 10' correspond to Amurru-stars IV and XI. The following collations, edition, and table make these synchronisms clear:

Collations:

LBAT 1500 1':

LBAT 1500 10':

Edition:

1'	[^l MU]L. 'KAK.SI'. [SÁ ...	1'	['Th]e Arro[w ...
2'	^l MUL.MAŠ.TAB.BA.[GAL.GAL ...	2'	'The [Great] Twins [...
3'	^l MUL.BIR a-n[a ...	3'	'The Kidney,' fo[r ...
4'	^l MUL.NIN.M[AH ...	4'	Nin[ah ...
5'	^l MUL.LUGAL a-[na ...	5'	'The King,' f[or ...
6'	^l šal-bat-a-nu 'a'-[na ...	6'	Mars, f[or ...
7'	^l MUL.AL.LU[L ...	7'	'The Cra[b' ...
8'	[^l] MUL.SI[M.MAH ...	8'	'The Swal[low' ...
9'	[(x)] DIŠ KUR DIŠ x [... ⁵	9'	[(.)] ... [...
10'	[^l MU]L. 'KA ₅ .A' [...	10'	['Th]e Fox' [...

Line/Star in BM 34387

1'	[^{mu}] 'KAK.SI'. [SÁ]	Great Star List Amurru-Star ⁶	4
2'	^{mul} MAŠ.TAB.BA.[GAL.GAL]		5
3'	^{mul} BIR		6
4'	^{mul} NIN.M[AH]		7
5'	^{mul} LUGAL		8
6'	šal-bat-a-nu		9
7'	^{mul} AL.LU[L]		10
8'	^{mul} SI[M.MAH]		11
10'	[^{mu}] 'KA ₅ .A'		12

I also concur with J. Oelsner's proposal that LBAT 1500 is astrological in character. I suggest that lines 3' and 5'-6', where the preposition *ana* occurs immediately after the star-name, indicate that these lines,

13) **Suicide in Akkadian** – The desperate princess Kirûm wrote to her father, “If my lord does not bring me back to Mari, I will ‘grab my nose’, jump from the roof” (*ašabbat appī ištu ūrim amaqqut*), *ARM* 10, 33 : 7-9 ; “je courrai à l’instant me jeter du toit”, J.-M. Durand, *LAPO* 18 (2000) 444 no. 1230. Another letter confirms this desperation, “Since my lord could not care less about me, either a woman is killed, or else she falls from a roof”, *AEM* 1/2 59 no. 304 : 45, after W. Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari* (2003) 292. Clearly, the woman intends to kill herself. A third letter has a similar threat, “(Otherwise) I will strangle myself or mount a roof and throw myself down” (*uštannaq ūlu ellīma ištu ūrim amaqqut*), *TCL* 18, 95 : 32-34, after K.R. Veenhof, *AbB* 14, 149. The verb *maqātu* “to fall” also means “to throw oneself down”, *CAD M/1* 242b (1.c).

The example in *AbB* 14 seems to show that we have to take the action on the roof literally. Nonetheless, the phrase could also be used figuratively, and indeed there are reasons to suppose that “to jump from the roof” is an Akkadian idiom for “to commit suicide”. In two cases it is a specific way to die :

(1) The OB liver omina in *YOS* 10, 17 include the following forecasts : “among the personnel / the acquaintances / the relatives of a man, someone will die” (49-51), “[...] will jump [fro]m the roof” ([...] *iš-ti-ū ūrim imaqqut*) (52), “[a man] will die a natural death (*mūt š[im]tišu imât*)” (53), [...], a priest, a noble will die” (54). A parallel text (J. Nougayrol, *RA* 44 [1950] 33-35) duplicates only lines 49-50, omitting the jump from the roof and what follows.

(2) In the dream oracles published by A.L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (1956) 328, Tablet C obv. I, we come across this sequence : “he will die by a collapsing wall (*ina miqitti igāri imât*)” (82), “he will die the death (due to) sun-heat (*mūt šēti imât*)” (83-84), “he will die the death (due to) jumping from the roof” (*mūt mi[qi]ti ūri imât*)” (85). Note the distinction between the *ina miqitti* for the wall and the *mūt miqitti* for the roof, suggesting that the man will not die “through” a collapsing roof. This militates against Oppenheim, 283a, “he will die through a falling roof-beam”.

The omen for the king, “from the roof he will jump, *ta-(...)*”, Oppenheim, 337 rev. 6, stands alone within the dream corpus.

There are two passages where jumping to one’s death from the roof is premeditated :

(1) *STT* 1, 65 : 24, read and translated by A. Livingstone as follows : [*e*]-*li ut-ta-ra ana ma-qa-a-ti[i] ū-ri aq-qa-rat ZI-ti i[u-ta-r]a-an-ni*, “I repeatedly ascend the roof in order to fall down, but my life is too precious, it turns me back” ; *SAA* III (1989) 32 no. 12 rev. 1, followed by B.R. Foster, *Before the Muses* (1996) 605, “I constantly go up to the roof to jump off, but my life is too precious, it turns me back”.

(2) In the Love Lyrics : “Fall from the roof on to a dagger (*ultu muḫḫi ūri ana muḫḫi patri muqit*), get an iron spike in your side, [ge]t sharp arrows” ; W.G. Lambert in H. Goedicke and J.J.M. Roberts, *Unity and Diversity. Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (1975) 118, Section V, col. B 28-30.

Above, we suggested that *miqitti ūri* means “suicide”. The other references (in liver omina) are isolated and do not help : Boissier Choix 63 : 6, 10, cited in *CAD M/2* 102a, now U. Koch-Westenholz, *Babylonian Liver Omens* (2000) 106 no. 6 : 7, 10 ; also 204 no. 27 : 68.

Of course, one can literally fall from a roof, by accident, and die, as mentioned in *Utukkū lemnūtu* : M.J. Geller, *FAOS* 12 (1985) 38 f., line 323 (Sumerian), *SpbTU* III 38 no. 64 V 13 (the line is lost in *CT* 16, 10 IV, end). In the next line, a man falls from a palm tree. And note this obscure passage on an exercise tablet : “Who fell from the roof, [...] the roof fence (*gisallu*)”, W.G. Lambert, *BWL* (1960) 280, BM 56488 rev. IV 4-7, now P. Gesche, *Schulunterricht in Babylonien im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (2000) 429 III’ 4-7.

This omen forecast (astrology) remains a riddle : *ū-ru ana (ŠĒ) māti (KUR) i-ma-qut miqittu (RI.RI.GA) iššakkan (GAR-a[n])*, M. Leibovici, *RA* 50 (1956) 18, *KUB* IV, 63 III 32. Visible on manuscript B, *KUB* XXX, 9 III 14. In astrological omina, the forecasts refer to public life, not situations of private persons, like suicide. The original of this text is Old Babylonian ; U. Koch-Westenholz, *BiOr* 55 (1998) 186.

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14) **Cyrus defeat of Nabonidus** – The final defeat of Nabonidus by Cyrus occurred when Sippar fell to Cyrus without a battle and Nabonidus fled : A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5) p. 109 14-15. The preceding passage has caused translators no problems, but there are serious difficulties when the context is studied. Grayson reads and renders :

12 ... *ina itiTašrīti mku-raš šal-tum ina Upēki ina muhhi [...]*
 13 *īdi-di-q-lat ana libbi ummānīni kurAkkadīki ki ipušūšū (erasure) nišumeš kurAkkadīki*
 14 BALA.KI *hubta (SAR) ihbut (SAR) nišemeš idūk ...*

“In the month Tishri when Cyrus (II) did battle at Opis on the [bank of] the Tigris against the army of Akkad, the people of Akkad retreated. He carried off the plunder (and) slaughtered the people.”

J.-J. Glassner, *Chroniques mésopotamiennes* (Paris, 1993) p. 204 agrees :

"Au mois de Tešrit, Cyrus ayant livré bataille à l'armée d'Akkad à Upû, sur la [rive] du Tigre, le peuple d'Akkad reflua. Il se livra au pillage et massacra la population."

The problems of this passage were brought to my attention by Shabrokh Razmjou, who was advising Cyrus Kar, an American filmmaker preparing a documentary film about Cyrus II. The main problem is that according to the accepted translation Cyrus defeated the Babylonian army at Opis, whereupon the people of the town withdrew, Cyrus plundered (presumably the town Opis) and slaughtered the population.

The difficulty is that after defeating the Babylonian army it appears that nothing more was done about that army, but instead the local town was looted and the population slaughtered. "Akkad" means "Babylonia," but while "the army of Akkad" is an appropriate designation for Nabonidus' troops, "the people of Akkad" should then mean "the people of Babylonia," which is absurd. There was no non-Babylonian population around Opis or Sippar. A solution which makes perfect sense is to take *nišû* in the common meaning "men" to refer to the Babylonian army. Cyrus did battle with the Babylonian army at Opis, that army retreated, Cyrus looted their camp, then he caught up with them and defeated them.

The verb *dâku* for "defeat" is well known, and while it also has a sense "kill," "slaughtered" and "massacra" are exaggerations. CAD N/II p. 286 accepts the meaning "workmen, soldiers" for *nišû*, but the more concise CDA p. 255 stays with "people" and does not specify.

Thus the translation of the passage should read:

"In Tishri when Cyrus did battle with the army of Akkad at Opis, on the [bank] of the Tigris, the soldiers of Akkad withdrew. He (Cyrus) took plunder and defeated the soldiers (of Akkad)."

The brevity of the last sentence is characteristic of the style of these late Babylonian chronicles.

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15) **Tiš-atal's Visit to Nippur** – In a recent Festschrift,¹ R. L. Zettler has published an Ur III tablet from Inana's temple in Nippur, which concerns Tiš-atal of Nineveh. This document, which dates to the ninth month of the year Šu-Suen 3, records a visit of Tiš-atal to Nippur, in the company of eighty other Ninevites. Interestingly, the same state visit is commemorated in a tablet from Ešnuna, which is dated to the same year and month.² There, Tiš-atal, together with an escort of over 100 men, receives travel provisions from Babati, the governor of Ešnuna. Since the Nippur document was written on the twenty-ninth day of the ninth month, it follows that the Ešnuna stopover took place prior to Tiš-atal's sojourn to Nippur.

The publication of the Nippur tablet by Zettler is most welcome, as it adds important new information to our knowledge of the political history of Ur III times. Unfortunately, however, Zettler's edition misses one key point, and this is the purpose of Tiš-atal's visit to Nippur. Crucial for this point are lines 4-5, which Zettler reads [...]ka / [nam]-a-érim fb-kuš, "[Tiš-atal, city ruler, (and) 80 men, Ninevites,] ... (they) swore an oath." For the break in line 4 he proposes a restoration [é^dInanna]-ka, offering the following argumentation: "As in various legal texts, the line may have recorded the place where Tišatal and his retinue swore the oath. Given the tablet's findspot and the association of Inanna/Ištar with Nineveh, it is tempting to suggest a restoration [é^dInnana]-ka." It is certain, however, that the break is to be restored [é^dNin-urta]-ka, based on the data from Puzriš-Dagan sources. As noted many years ago by this author,³ those sources contain mentions of the animals (one sheep and one goat in each case) that were expanded, evidently for a sacrifice, on the occasion of collegial oath-taking by various foreigners in the temple of Ninurta. Since the surviving examples date either to the last or the first two years of a given reign, the individuals in question most probably took an oath of allegiance on the accession of the new king. This is confirmed by the fact that nam-érem ... kud is not just any "oath": while in the general legal context it means an assertory oath (or "oath-cum-curse"), in the context of international relations it signifies specifically the sanctification of a treaty.

Thus, Tiš-atal and his eighty Ninevite companions came to Nippur to swear their allegiance to Šu-Suen, and perhaps even to conclude a treaty with him. As is shown by the collective form fb-kud, the oath was taken by all of them. This indicates that all these Ninevites enjoyed high social status; most probably, they were Tiš-atal kinsmen. While these facts are beyond doubt, the historical background of this event is less obvious. Given its date (the ninth month of Šu-Suen's third regnal year), it is unlikely that its occasion was Šu-Suen's accession.

As already considered by Whiting,⁴ this visit must have been connected with the campaign against Šimanum, which took place in the year Šu-Suen 2.⁵ According to one of Šu-Suen's historical inscriptions,⁶ the avowed cause of the campaign was the banishment from Šimanum of a Sumerian princess that had been sent there some years earlier as a prospective bride (é-gi₄-a) for one of the members of its royal house. As demonstrated by P. Michalowski on the basis of the administrative documents from Puzriš-Dagan,⁷ the princess in question was Kunši-matum, who, in the beginning of Amar-Suen's reign (or perhaps even during the last years of Šulgi), became an é-gi₄-a of the Šimanum ruler named Pušam, with an objective of marrying his