

89) **Casting off the fetters : BM 41449 reconsidered¹** – In her recent book K. Abraham provides an edition of the tablet BM 41449.² The tablet is understood as an “undertaking to bring the thieves in handcuffs to the house of MNA”. This interpretation can be revised somewhat in the light of an improved reading of a problematic passage in the text. The difficulties centre around the reading of the signs at the ends of lines 3 and 5, where the author suggests ... *ša ni-i[k-...]* and *ik-si-ṽx*¹ respectively. In her commentary (p. 364) she suggests for the latter the reading *ik-si-ṽsu*¹ from the verb *kasû* with the meaning “to put in fetters, to arrest” (with pronominal suffix). This interpretation and the resulting translation are syntactically awkward and it is better to understand the passage as a relative clause containing the expression *niklu ... nakālu* referring to the ^{lú}*sa-a-ri*^{meš} (*sarrūtu*) who are the object of the main clause in lines 2-7 (Arad-Bēl ... *ibbakamma ... inamdin*). The problems raised by the author in her commentary to lines 5-7 are thereby resolved. The operative part of the document with the suggested emendations runs as follows :

- 1 ud.1.kam *ša*^{iti}sig₄ *ša* mu.ṽx¹. [kam ¹*da-ri-ʔ i-mu-uš*]
- 2 lugal tin.tir^{ki} lugal kur.kur ṽr-ṽd⁺en¹ [a-šú *ša*¹ ...]
- 3 a ¹*e-ṽè-ru* ^{lú}*sa-a-ri*^{meš} *ša ni-i[k-lu]*
- 4 *ina bi-riṽ* ^{id}*meš* *ina uru ša* ^{lú}*qṽ-pi*
- 5 *a-na é* ^{id}amar.utu-na-šir-ibila *ik-kil!*-ṽlu!¹
- 6 *ib-ba-kam-ma a-na* ^{id}amar.utu-na-šir-ibila
- 7 *i-nam-din e-lat ra-šu-tu ša* ^{id}amar.utu-na-šir-ibila
- 8 *ša ina muṽ-ḫi* ^{id}ṽr-ṽd⁺en

Notes :

- I. 4 The place where the crime was perpetrated, *birīt nārāti* (“Between-the-Canals”), occurs also in the Egibi/Nūr-Sîn tablet *Cyr.* 12,³ which refers to a house of Iddin-Marduk (maternal grandfather of Marduk-nāšir-apli) in that location.
- II. 3-5 For the infrequently attested expression *niklu ... nakālu* see AHW 717

s.v. *nakālu* 3.b. “arglistig sein, handeln” ; CAD N/I 155 s.v. *nakālu*
1. “to act cleverly, to play a trick, to deceive, to cheat”.

l. 5 In NB script the signs *-kil-lu* are not completely dissimilar to *-si-šu*.

In the light of these revisions the first eight lines of the document may be translated as follows :

On the first day of Simānu, year x [of Darius], king of Babylon, king of the lands, Arad-Bēl, [son of PN], descendant of Ēṭiru, will bring the fraudsters who practised a dece[ption] at Between-the-Canals in the city of the resident against the house of Marduk-nāšir-apli, and he will hand them over to Marduk-nāšir-apli. Not including the credit of Marduk-nāšir-apli which is the debt of Arad-Bēl.

Thus we can relieve the culprits of the indignity of being brought to the house of Marduk-nāšir-apli in handcuffs.

1. This and the following notes were written under the auspices of the START-Project on “The Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium issenschaftlichen Forschung (Vienna).

2. K. Abraham, *Business and Politics under the Persian Empire. The Financial Dealings of Marduk-nāšir-apli of the House of Egibi (521-487 B.C.E.)* (Bethesda, MDublished copies prepared by G. Bertin and housed in the British Museum.

3. Edited by C. Wunsch, *Die Urkunden des Babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk*. CM 3 (1993) no. 263.

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