

15) The Colophon of the Sippar Text of the “Weidner Chronicle”¹ — In his edition princeps of the copy of the “Weidner Chronicle” from the library of Ebabar at Sippar,² F.N.H. Al-Rawi read the colophon (rev. 41) of the tablet as follows:

- *tup-pi* ^{1d}AMAR.UTU-ēṭir(SUR) A-šú šá ¹KAR-d^x [x x x] x-*ha-a-a pa-lih* ^dAG *hal-qā* GUR.
- “Tablet of Marduk-ēṭir, son of Eṭir-[...] of ...; a worshipper of Nabu. Return if lost.”

That edition has been adopted by J.-J. Glassner in his editions of Mesopotamian chronicles, with minor changes in the translation.³ I think, the reading and interpretation of the colophon can be improved, as follows:

- *dub-pi* ^{1d}amar.utu-sur a-šú šá ¹kar-d^xen! du[mu 's]u-*ha-a-a pa-lih* ^dnā *hal-qā* gur
- *tuppi Marduk-ēṭir mār(i)šu ša Mušēzib-^dBēl!* *m[ā r S]uḥāya - pālih* ^dNabū *halqa litīr*
- “Tablet of Marduk-ēṭir, the son of Mušēzib-Bēl!, s[on of S]uḥāya. – May he who reveres Nabū restore the loss!”

I propose to identify the scribe’s father mentioned in the colophon with the scribe (*tupšarru*) Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Lâbâši, descendant of Suḥāya, who was active in Sippar during the years 17-25 of Dareios, i.e. 505-497 BCE. Furthermore, he is mentioned in texts dated from Dareios 10 to 32, i.e. 512-490 BCE.⁴ If Marduk-ēṭir, the scribe of the tablet extant, is

1 I am very grateful to Caroline Waerzeggers (Amsterdam) for kindly commenting on an earlier version of this note.

2 F.N.H. Al-Rawi, “Tablets from the Sippar Library, I. The ‘Weidner Chronicle’: A Supposititious Royal Letter concerning a Vision”, in: *Iraq* 52, 1990, pp. 1-13.

3 J.-J. Glassner, *Chroniques mésopotamiennes* (Paris 1993), p. 218. J.-J. Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*. Society of Biblical Literature. Writings from the Ancient World 19 (Leiden 2005), pp. 268-269.

4 A.C.V.M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and its Prosopography*. PIHANS 80 (Leiden 1997), p. 490: active in Sippar in Dareios 17-25, mentioned in texts from Dareios 10 and 32. M. Jursa, *Das Archiv des Bēl-rēmanni*. PIHANS 86 (Leiden 1999), p. 282 (index); mentioned in texts from Dareios 20[+x²] and 24: p. 173: BM 42397, 11f: Dar. 24; p. 197: BM 42548, 11: Dar. 20[+x²]; p. 212: BM 42591+, 11f: date broken. – From the colophon of another tablet from the Sippar library we also know a certain Mušēzib-Bēl, [son of] Šamaš-mukīn-apli (Heessel and Al-Rawi, in: *Iraq* 65, 2003, p. 232, ll. 45f). There is also a Mušēzib-Marduk, son of Ṣillāya, descendant of Suḥāya attested in Sippar in the early years of Dareios, who is however to be kept apart from Mušēzib-Bēl, son of Lâbâši, descendant of Suḥāya, see C. Waerzeggers, in: *Akkadica* 122, 2001, pp. 65, 68.

indeed his son, he would probably have been active in Sippar during the first decades of the fifth century, i.e. up to the period of the “end of the archives” after the suppressed revolt in the second regnal year of Xerxes (484 BCE).⁵ Since the copy of the “Weidner-Chronicle” he prepared seems not to be the work of an experienced scribe, and since there are apparently no tablets extant which can be attributed to him as a professional scribe, he may have still been an apprentice when he copied that text. According to Pedersén,⁶ the latest dated tablet from the Sippar library is reported to be from the reign of Cambyses II (529-522 BCE). If the dating of Marduk-ētir is correct, it could lower the dating of the library by some 3 decades:

Suhāya (ancestor)	
Lâbâši	
Mušēzib-Bēl	ca. 512-490 BCE (Dareios 10-32)
Marduk-ētir	(ca. 490 - 484 BCE ?)

The interpretation of the pious wish at the end of the colophon should be adjusted, too. I understand the phrase */hal qa gur/* as a request (*halqa litīr* “may he restore the loss”) to restore the many breaks and losses, that are marked by the comment *hepi* “broken / lost” or visibly by hatchings throughout the text. The request is directed towards some future scribal colleague, who would of course also worship Nabû (*pālih dNabû*), the god of the scribal art. Al-Rawi’s and Glassner’s interpretation of the phrase as “return if lost” is probably dependent upon the request *litīršu* “may (the scholar who has borrowed the tablet from the library) bring it back again” found in some colophons of the first millennium.⁷ There is however a much closer resemblance to the virtually identical request (*šuma*) *hepā lišallim* “may he restore the broken (line)”, equally found in colophons.⁸ And in view of the

⁵ C. Waerzeggers, “The Babylonian Revolts Against Xerxes and the ‘End of Archives’”, in: *AfO* 50, 2003/2004, pp. 150-173. Heather D. Baker, “Babylon in 484 BC: the Excavated Archival Tablets as a Source of Urban History”, in: *ZA* 98, 2008, pp. 100-116.

⁶ O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500-300 B.C.* (Bethesda 1998), p. 197.

⁷ H. Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone*. AOAT 2 (Kevelaer / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1968), p. 13, and in nos. 91, 96, 97.

⁸ Hunger, *Kolophone*, p. 13, 135, no. 498, l. 3: *hepā lišallim*; and see nos. 383-384 for the request: mu BE-a li-[š]al-lim (var.: gi; STT no. 174 rev. 11', no. 177 rev. 11), which is probably to be understood as: *šuma *hepā lišallim* “may he restore the broken line”, see also CAD Š/1, p. 223, s.v. *šalāmu* 8e and CAD Š/3, p. 296, s.v. *šumu* 5e, with slightly differing readings.

many breaks and losses marked on the tablet by the ancient copist, this interpretation is certainly the choice to make.

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