

A Group of Late-Babylonian Letter-orders and Administrative Documents — This group, which consists of at least 89 documents, was first recognized by C.B.F. Walker and E.V. Leichty in M. Sigrist, H.H. Figulla and C.B.F. Walker, *Catalogue of the Babylonian tablets in the British Museum*, 2 (London 1996; henceforth *CBT 2*), 224ff.

BM 22166, 22169, 22217, 22222, 22259, 22268, 22283, 22291, 22305, 22357, 22358, 22361, 22362, 22366-22373, 22375-22378 belong to the 96-4-9 collection.

BM 25843 and BM 26862 bear the collection numbers 98-2-16, 897 and 98-5-14, 680 respectively.

BM 29253, 29262, 29267, 29268, 29271, 29294, 29295, 29300, 29307-29311, 29313, 29314, 29316, 29322, 29337-29344, 29347-29350, 29352-29354, 29356, 29357, 29359-29363, 29365, 29367 and 29504, 29527, 29533, 29537, 29560, 29565, 29568, 29570, 29576, 29578, 29579, 29583, 29584, 29589, 29591, 29595, 29598, 29603, 29604, 29607, 29610, 29612 belong to the 98-11-12 and 98-11-14 collections respectively.

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Twenty of these documents (22.47%) are explicit letter-orders beginning with the word *tuppi* (BM 22166, 22169, 22217, 22222, 22259, 22268, 22283, 22291, 22361, 25843, 29262, 29268, 29295, 29309, 29313, 29314, 29342, 29359, 29504, 29565).

The other 69 documents (77.52%) record receipt of various items (mostly foodstuffs; BM 22305, 22357, 22358, 22362, 22366-22369, 22371-22373, 22375-22378, 26862, 29253, 29267, 29271, 29294, 29300, 29307, 29308, 29310, 29311, 29316, 29322, 29337-29343, 29347-29350, 29352-29354, 29356, 29357, 29360-29363, 29365, 29367, 29527, 29533, 29537, 29560, 29568, 29570, 29576, 29578, 29579, 29583, 29584, 29589, 29591, 29595, 29598, 29603, 29604, 29607, 29610, 29612).

Most of them (72 out of 89, i.e. 80.89%) are dated not only by day and month, but also by year. All the dated documents are from the years 24-29 of Darius I (498/7-493/2 B.C.). The ruler's name is recorded only in sixteen documents (17.97%), viz. BM 22217, 22222, 22370, 25843, 29267, 29294, 29295, 29309, 29311, 29313, 29314, 29340, 29342, 29349, 29362, 29533.

47 (65.27%) of the dated documents are from year 26, seventeen (23.61%) from year 27, three (4.16%) from year 25, two (2.77%) from year 24, one (1.38%) from year 28, one from year 29 and one from year 20+[x]. BM 26862 is dated only by month (VIa). It is presumably from year 30 of Darius I (492/1 B.C.) which had an intercalated Elul according to BM 26613 (unpublished).

Here follows a list of all the documents arranged in chronological order :

9.IV.24	(BM 29560)
10.IX.24	(BM 22371)
22.VI.25	(BM 29314)
25.VII.25	(BM 22370)
26.X.25	(BM 29504)
I.26	(BM 29360)
2.II.26	(BM 22366)
3.III.26	(BM 29598)
26.III.26	(BM 22373, 29342)
1.IV.26	(BM 29311)
10.IV.26	(BM 22305)
11.IV.26	(BM 29367)
13.IV.26 ¹ (?)	(BM 22369)
3.V.26	(BM 29349)
9.V.26	(BM 29589)
10.VI.26	(BM 22357)
11.VI.26	(BM 29337)
20.VI.26	(BM 29309)
24.VI.26	(BM 29578)
VI.26	(BM 29294)
8.VII.26	(BM 29591)

9.vii.26	(BM 22169)
20.vii.26	(BM 22166)
6.viii.26	(BM 29308, 29570)
12.viii.26	(BM 22268, 29310)
14.viii.26	(BM 29347)
17.viii.26	(BM 22291)
27.viii.26	(BM 29353, 29363)
viii.26	(BM 29365, 29584)
10.ix.26	(BM 29307)
11.ix.26	(BM 29300)
14.ix.26	(BM 29339)
27.ix.26	(BM 22358)
3.x.26	(BM 29576)
4.x.26	(BM 29356)
7.x.26	(BM 29595)
x.26	(BM 29607)
23.x1.26	(BM 22375)
xi.26	(BM 29348)
14.xii.26	(BM 29313)
24.xii.26	(BM 29338)
29.xii.26	(BM 22372)
xii.26	(BM 29354)
3.-.26	(BM 29295)
3-8.-.26	(BM 29253)
24.-.26(!)	([10]+16; BM 22367)
26.-.26	(BM 29610)
4.i.27	(BM 29359)
10.i.27	(BM 22368)
12.i.27	(BM 29568)
†27.i.27	(BM 29316)
14.iii.27	(BM 29340)
19.v.27	(BM 22222)
2.vi.27	(BM 29341)
vi.27	(BM 29350)

3.VII.27	(BM 22259)
6.VII.27	(BM 22378)
21.VII.27	(BM 29361)
5.VIII.27	(BM 29271)
12.VIII.27	(BM 22376)
15.VIII.27	(BM 29565)
21.IX.27	(BM 22283)
12.X.27	(BM 29362)
27	(BM 29267)
XI.28	(BM 29533)
VII.29	(BM 25843)
9.II.20 [+x]	(BM 22217).

— No year (eight including BM 26862 above; seven with day and month and one with day only):

18.1	(BM 22362)
12.III	(BM 29537)
30.V	(BM 29268)
4.VIII	(BM 22377)
VIII-x	(BM 29357)
29.X	(BM 29583)
8.–	(BM 29603)

— No date (nine: BM 22361, 29262, 29322, 29343, 29352, 29527, 29579, 29604, 29612).

There is no evidence that BM 29573 (date not fully preserved; «tag» recording receipt; ^fInšabtu is mentioned; she or her namesake delivered one kor of dates to a certain Tattannu according to BM 29143 from 2.IV, no year).

The central figures are Nabû-ēṭir and Bēl-eṭir, who are the respective sender and addressee of the letter-orders BM 22268 (Kīnayyu is also mentioned), BM 22283, 22291, 22361, 29309 (*šibtu*-bread to be given to a female, presumably Mullittu-silim, cf. BM 29356), BM 29342, 29504 (Tabluṭu and another woman are mentioned), BM 29578, 29591, 29595, 29612 and probably BM 29359 (Nabû-ušuršu is to be given a *šibtu*-bread, cf. BM 22222). Nabû-ēṭir also sent letter-orders to Bulluṭu (BM 29314) and Nabû-ittiya (BM 22222;

Nabû-uşuršu is to be given *šibtu*-bread). Nabû-ēṭir received various foodstuffs from Bēl-ēṭir according to the administrative documents BM 29300 (Rēmūt-Bēl's daughters are also mentioned), BM 29337, 29349, 29578, 29591, 29595, 29598, 29612, as well as BM 29341 (Bulluṭu is also mentioned), BM 29576 (in the presence [*ina ašābi*] of Bēl-ēṭir/Guzānu and Nabû-uşuršu/Bāni-ahi; cf. perhaps Guzānu in BM 29340). Nabû-ēṭir received foodstuffs from Nabû-uşuršu (BM 29354 and presumably BM 29311 where the text has Bēl-ēṭir, possibly due to a scribal error), Nabû-bullissu/Kit(or Sah)-pa-nu (BM 26862, Bēl-ēṭir is also mentioned), Bānitu-ittiya (BM 29308, 29310, 29322, 29568), and Mullittu-silim (BM 29356, in the presence [*ina ašābi*] of Ardi-Bēl the Younger); cf. BM 29352. Nabû-ēṭir is mentioned together with Bel-ēṭir also in BM 29316, 29610 and BM 29367 (with Nabû-ittannu), with a certain Aha-iddina (or Nāšir-šumi) in BM 22259, and with Nabû-ittannu, Kalbā and Iddina-Bēl in BM 29357 (in the presence of Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti). Iddina-Bēl is also mentioned in BM 29313. Bēl-ēṭir is recorded together with Nabû-balassu-iqbi and Nabû-uşuršu (cf. above), Nabû-rē³ûšunu (BM 29348; Nabû-rēûšunu is also recorded in BM 29579) and perhaps BM 29338 (with Nabû-kāšir). Other individuals are Bulluṭā (= Bulluṭu above?), Nabû-balassu-iqbi and Nidintu (BM 29350), as well as Balāṭu (BM 22367), Iddinā (BM 29584), Iqīšā (BM 29343), Nāširu (BM 29271), and Šamaš-iddina (BM 29583). Nabû-bullissu/Ardiya is recorded in BM 29339. Like in other epistolary and administrative documents, the patronyme of the individuals are rarely indicated. Therefore the possibility that many of the names refer to different homonymous individuals cannot be excluded.

These documents record the following items :

Šibtu-bread (presumably a flat bread, cf. *CAD* Ş,162f. : 4 «(a type of bread)» ; *AHW*. 1099a, s.v. *šibtu* III, 2: «*ein Brotfladen*») is mentioned in most of the documents (e.g., BM 22358, 22362, 22366, 22371-22373,22375-22378). The quantities range from half a piece (BM 29310, 29595) to 400 pieces (BM 22370), but otherwise, with very few exceptions (two and five *šibtu*: BM 29309, 29340 and BM 26862, 29348, 29350 resp. ; three *š.* with other foodstuffs, BM 29322 ; 2.5 s. with meat, BM 29314), just one *šibtu* is recorded (BM 22217, 22222, 22291, 22367, 22370, 29267, 29294, 29359, 29504, 29565, 29579, 29595 and perhaps BM 29610; mentioned together with other food-

stuffs: BM 22259, 22283, 29300, 29316, 29341, 29349, 29352, 29353, 29357, 29361, 29362, 29365, 29578, 29591 and perhaps BM 29356). *Šibtu* in these documents cannot be the homonymous word for a type of garment (as listed in *CBT* 2, 229), not only because it is never preceded by the determinative *TÚG*, but also in view of the context and the fact that fractions of it (0.5 and 2.5 *šibtu*) were also distributed. Another type of baked foodstuff, *kusīpu* («flat, thin bread», pl. *kusīpētū*), is recorded in BM 29337 (ten *ku-sip-⟨pe⟩-tu₄*), BM 29583 (twenty *ku-si-ip-pe-tú*), BM 29576 (thirty *ku-si-ip-pe-tu₄*), and BM 29533, 29607. The ratio between *šibtu* and *kusīpu* (henceforth *š.* and *k.* resp.) is always in favour of the latter (ranging from 1 : 40 to 1 : 2): 0.5 *š.* : 10 *k.* (BM 29595); 0.5 *š.* : 20 *k.* (BM 29310); 1 *š.* : 21 *k.* (BM 22283); 1 *š.* : 20 *k.* (BM 29300, 29341, 29353, 29362); 1 *š.* : 10 *k.* (BM 29361); 2 *š.* : 10 *k.* (BM 29340); 2(?) *š.* : 20 *k.* (BM 29591); 5 *š.* : 10 *k.* (BM 26862). It is very probable that *kusīpu* was smaller than *šibtu*.

Barley: BM 29537 (cf. BM 29603; it is doubtful whether BM 29344 from 22.XI.-, where ten kors of ŠE.BAR *pe-ši-t[i]*, i.e. «white barley», are recorded belongs to this group); barley for a barrer of barley beer (BM 29584, an earlier document is mentioned).

Parched grain (*qa-A+A-i-tu₄*, BM 29591).

Flour: BM 29560.

Dates: BM 29300, 29357, 29504.

Wine (*karānu* = ^(gš)GESTIN) is always mentioned together with meat. The quantities are specified in BM 29347 (two seahs), BM 29307 (one seah and three ŠĪLA) and BM

29591 (two ŠĪLA). A larger quantity (three *pānu* and one seah) of wine(?) is recorded in BM 29253.

Meat: a shoulder cut (1(-*en*) ^{uzv}ZAG.LU = *imittu*, BM 22357, 29253, 29568, 29591); *har-mi-ir* (e.g., BM 29253; = ^{uzv}*har-mil*, BM 29338, 29339). Statistically, there are more spellings with *-r* (hitherto unattested in published documents) than with *-l*. Since the etymology of this word is uncertain (for a tentative Aramaic derivation of *harmil* see von Soden, *AHW.*, 326a), there is no telling which form is the original one (the final liquid can be interpreted as due to assimilation to the *r* of the first syllable or by dissimilation to it which would have resulted in *-l*). The number of cuts is one (BM 29300, 29341, 29362,

29578), two (BM 26862, 29314, 29341 ; 29322: *uzuha-<ar>-mi-ir*), five (BM 29342), ten (BM 29313, 29360), twelve (BM 29357: *uzuha-<ar>-mi-ir*), eighteen (BM 29533) and as many as 21 (BM 29338). Compare BM 29316. The reading of another specific cut of meat (1-*en uzuši-ri-x-x*, BM 29352) is to be clarified. Unspecified meat cuts (the quantity ranging from one to sixteen is indicated in brackets) are recorded in BM 29356, 29361, 29365 (1 UZU ; BM 29349: 1-*en* UZU), BM 26862, 29367 (3 UZU), BM 29271 (16 UZU). Meat is also recorded in BM 22305, 29308, 29347, 29527, 29576 and together with silver in BM 29253. BM 29589 has *har-ha-ru* which looks like the Akkadian word for «chains».

Some of these documents are very tiny and look like docketts (or tags), e.g., BM 26862, 29533, 29537, 29560, 29576, 29578, 29583, 29589, 29591, 29595, 29598, 29604, 29607, 29612.

Many letter-orders and administrative documents (of various sizes) end with a sign resembling DAR e.g. BM 22222, 22370, 22372, 26862, 29253, 29309, 29313, 29314, 29316, 29340, 29342, 29348, 29361, 29362, 29533). It should be pointed out that the sign in question is not identical with DAR or with any other sign of the LB syllabary. Typologically, one may compare Aramaic ostraca from late-Achaemenid and early Hellenistic Idumea (likewise recording receipt of certain items) ending with a sign that is not identical with a lester (year 45 or 46; I. Eph'al and J. Naveh, *Aramaic ostraca of the fourth century BC from Idumaea*, Jerusalem 1996, 10 ad ₁₁1, 2, 3, 5, 52, 54; year 16: ₁104; no year: ₁65; no year or year lost: ₁145; different signs at the end of ₁72 from year 3 [+x], ₁45, no year and ₁100, no year). It seems that these signs had the same function as a seal impression. More typological parallels may be mentioned here:

A sign resembling GÁT is written four times after the text of CBS 7969 (a list of personal names, found in Nippur, presumably from the late-Assyrian or «Chaldean» period; PN₁ A PN₂ is used in administrative documents also long after 600 B.C.; quoted with kind permission of Professors A. Sjöberg and E.V. Leichty of the University Museum, Philadelphia). The undated note BM77549 (= Bertin ₁2976, Sippar collection; no place) ends in, a sign resembling BI and GAB. According to a deed from Uruk (549/8 B.C.), the GAD sign was tattooed on the hand of a female slave: GAD *šaṭ-ra-ti*

(fem.) « the cuneiform sign GAD » (fem. as in Arabic, see W. von Soden apud M. San Nicolò and H. Petschow, BR 6, 107 ad 99, 6). Regarding *š/za-du-ú* (M.W. Stolper, *AMI* 23, 1990, 174 ad 9: « a hapax legomenon, perhaps describes a bran »), which in all probability derives from *Š/Z-D-Y*, it may be related to *šdy*, name of a lester in the Canaanite and Aramaic alphabet (if anciens Aram. *šdh* ‘owl’ derives from *Š-D-Y*, cf. W.R. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine 1000-586 B.C.E.*, Philadelphia 1984, 46, 68, n. 100, then it may be homonymous – if not related – with the letter’s name). Was this letter marked on the animal?

As is usual in epistolary and administrative documents, the place of issue is not indicated in these letter-orders. It cannot be proven that BM 29328, a memo concerning work in the temple of Mār-bīti between 5.VII and 5.VIII.26, belongs to this group (this deity was worshipped mainly, but not exclusively, at Borsippa ; none of the four individuals mentioned in BM 29328 reappears in the group under discussion). Neither is there internal evidence that these 89 documents originated in Borsippa. That the museum purchased them together with many N/LB tablets from Borsippa, provides only the weakest of arguments.

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