

A lost tablet located and now accessible — Nearly forty years ago, René Labat wrote a short note on a neo-Babylonian tablet¹. It comprised a copy, with transliteration and translation, of a privately owned but otherwise unidentified tablet, although Labat, in fact, worked from a cast and presumably never saw the actual tablet². It is now certain that the tablet in question has been located and identified. At present it is in the Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne (U.K.). It was donated by L. Potts on 2nd September, 1952, possibly the same individual who so kindly sent the cast to Labat. Unfortunately, no other information concerning either the donor or the tablet is available³. Once the tablet had been « re-discovered »⁴ it was then photographed⁵. In the meantime, P. Beaulieu has written an article which includes discussion of this tablet⁶.

The text itself details plots of land belonging to the Ištar temple in Uruk, and is of particular importance in referring to « Kašša, the king's daughter » as a landowner. An interpretation of the significance of the tablet for our understanding of the activities of this woman has recently been published by Beaulieu⁷.

An examination of the tablet itself has not led to any significant new readings, beyond the likely figure to restore at the end of line 9. However, it is possible to suggest restorations, by reference to other texts. Thus, in line 1, the following alternatives are proposed :

- (a) [*qaq-qar 1000^m*]^{es} šá d^{INNIN} UNUG^{ki}
- (b) [1000^m]^{es} šá d^{INNIN} UNUG^{ki}
- (c) [*qaq-qar^m*]^{es} šá d^{INNIN} UNUG^{ki}

There is room for restoration (a) and it is directly paralleled by *qaq-qar 1000^{mes} šá d^{bēltu} šá uruk^{ki}* (TCL 12 64 : 3). The use of *qaqqar* also gives a link with AnOr 9 19, which details plots of agricultural land in the Uruk area, including plots in Šakillatu, the area specified in line 8 of the tablet :

Line 56 *qaq-qar šá ina ši-i-ḫu šá* ^{LAGAB×KÛ} *šá-kil-la-tu₄*

Although the use of *1000* in these texts appears to denote plots of land with a linear measurement of 1000 *ammatu*, (*1000 šarri*, AnOr 9 1 : 4 ; *1000 ... re-mut šarri*, BIN 1 159 : 44 ; *1000 sa x x x*, AnOr 9 19 : 7 ; *1000 qaq-qar*, YOS 3 19 : 3 and a list of '1000' plots, at least 18 of them, TCL 13 230), when used with ^{mes} in TCL 12 64 it denotes a collection of such plots :

qaq-qar 1000^{mes} šá^dbēltu šá uruk^{ki} 1000 šá^{LAGAB×KÛ} šēr-ilūtu(AN)^{(u)4} / 1000 šá^{id}har-ri šá^mla-ba-a-ši u 1000 šá šubat^mšu-la-a

These references raise the interesting question as to whether we can understand 1000 in this context as *līmu*, « (plots with a measurement of) 1,000 (*ammatu*) » rather than the interpretation « region, neighborhood », given in CAD L (198b, *sub līmu* D). Their only references are [...] *u ištēn^{en} li-i-mu pāni^dmār bīti*, VAS 4 197 : 8, and AnOr 9 19 again, which commences

li-i-mu šá^{LAGAB×KÛ} har-ra-tu₄ pa-na-at dūr ú-gu-um

and starts another section in line 47 with *li-i-mu šá bāb mahīri*.

From the references given, it will be appreciated that restoration (b) above is equally as likely as (a), and that (c) is paralleled by *e-lat 100^{am} u qaq-qar^{mes}*. Beaulieu's restoration of [A.ŠĀ.ME]Š cannot be disproved, but lacks the parallels afforded by key Uruk texts.

A restoration can also be suggested for line 2, namely [13]00 SAG.KI., since there is considerable evidence for the Uruk temple utilising a *kurru* of 50,000 *ammatu*² rather than the *kurru* of 54,000 *ammatu*² in use for private transactions⁸.

Whilst the plot defined in lines 4-5 is not given a total area, preventing us from restoring the *pūtu* measurement, that in lines 6-8 clearly uses the 'Uruk' system. Its total area of 840 *kurru* is far beyond any other single plot known from published texts. This in itself might suggest that the figure at the end of line 9, for the third plot, is unlikely to be the 2,000 *kurru* suggested by Beaulieu in his transliteration⁹ although the figure of 200 *kurru* in the translation¹⁰ would seem possible. However, collation suggests that in fact we should read 13 *kurru*, giving a figure of 130 *ammatu* for the *pūtu* measurement.

1. R. Labat, « Domaines de la déesse Ištar d'Uruk » *RA* 54 (1960) 85-88.
2. « Il appartient à un particulier qui, voici déjà quelques années, nous en avait envoyé un excellent moulage, en nous autorisant à le publier » – Labat, *RA* 54 (1960) 85.
3. Other material from Mesopotamia housed at the Hancock Museum includes 2 large inscribed but well-worn road bricks and some fragments, a lion with a worn cuneiform inscription, an Assyrian relief, showing 2 heads and clay nails or cones.

4. Several years ago, when it was still on display. Later, it was put into storage and subsequently was located by Leslie Jessop, a member of the museum staff, and catalogued. The catalogue number is now NEWHM : 1998.H8002.

5. By the Audio-Visual Centre, The University, Newcastle upon Tyne. The photographs are now stored with the tablet.

6. P.A. Beaulieu, « Ba'u-asitu and Kaššaya, Daughters of Nebuchadnezzar II », *Or* 67 (1998) 173-201, esp 194-195.

7. See n. 6.

8. Marvin Powell's 'Uruk' system as opposed to his 'Common' system ; see his article « Late Babylonian Field Mensuration. A contribution to the History of Babylonian Agriculture and Arithmetic », *AfO* 31 (1984) 32-66 (38-40). Whether these *ammatu* were of the same area is not of importance to the present calculations.

9. Beaulieu, *Or* 67 (1998) 194.

10. Beaulieu, *Or* 67 (1988) 195.

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