

**Recall of a Debt (OA 23, 49-52)** — The edition of the partly broken tablet by G.J.P. McEwan in 1984 contains several restorations, some of them questionable. In line 5 he had restored a total of 4 minas of silver, which is impossible because sums in lines 1-4, also partly restored by him, adds up to 4 minas and one-third of a shekel of silver. One may argue that the difference is negligible but an account should be correct. On closer examination the restored wool price in line 4 also becomes suspect because the resulting price of 2.22 minas of wool for one shekel of silver is too high a price in the mid 6th century. Also, it is a very unlikely price, since one would expect rather 2 ; 2.25 ; 2.5 etc. minas for one shekel of silver. His alternative proposal of restoring 2 minas results in a more likely price the problem of the line 4 total remains unresolved. In view of the average wool prices of the period we have to start from a price of 4 minas of wool for one shekel of silver resulting in  $1 \frac{2}{3}$  minas of silver for the 6 talents and 40 minas wool. This leads seemingly even further from a solution since there is not enough place in the total in line 5 for a sum of  $2 \frac{2}{3}$  minas  $\frac{1}{3}$  shekels of silver. However, realising that the sum written as  $\frac{1}{3}$  shekel must be understood as  $\frac{1}{3}$  (mina! in) shekels we get exactly 3 minas for the total in line 5 ( $1 \frac{1}{3}$  in line 1 +  $1 \frac{2}{3}$  in line 4 = 3). Accordingly the first lines of the tablets reads as follows :

1 MA.NA  $\frac{1}{3}$  GÍN KU<sub>3</sub>.BABBAR re-he-et Ú.IL<sub>3</sub>.TI<sub>3</sub>

šá 2 MA.NA KU<sub>3</sub>.BABBAR šá UGU md.a-num-ŠEŠ.MU

A-šú šá m.GI-d.AMAR-UTU u m.I-d.XV A m.nad-na-a

[1  $\frac{2}{3}$ ] MA.NA KU<sub>3</sub>.BABBAR ŠÁM 6 GUN 40 MA.NA SÍG.HI.A

[PAP 3] MA.NA KU<sub>3</sub>.BABBAR NÍG.GA d.GAŠAN šá UNUG.KI

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