

12'. Well known from Ur. [D. Charpin : cf. *Clergé d'Ur*, p. 138; there are 19 refs. to this man in Archibab, between Warad-Sin 12 and Rim-Sin 35].

Marten STOL <marten.stol@gmail.com>
Heivlinder 27, 2317 JS Leiden (THE NETHERLANDS)

112) BM 87655 – a fragment of Old Babylonian oil omens — As noted in Khait 2018 and Cingolo 2016:94 (fn 2), BM 87655 is a fragmentary tablet inscribed with oil omens from the Old Babylonian period. The obverse preserves the beginnings of 20 partial lines of text, 11 of which begin with the undamaged sign DIŠ inscribed on the left edge, followed by Ī.GIŠ (*šammum*-oil) on the obverse's flat surface. The right side of the tablet is entirely broken, so that no omen sentences, apodoses especially, are complete. The reverse is uninscribed but carved with a drawing, perhaps representing a statue. Though little of the text remains, this fragment preserves protases not encountered elsewhere in the OB oil omen corpus, and omens that echo those in YOS 10 62 and BM 22446 (Pettinato 1966). This note presents a transliteration and translation of the text, with a brief journey into the acquisition history of the tablet in continuation to Ait Said-Ghanem 2020. I thank the Trustees of the British Museum for having allowed this study, and the British Academy who funded my research. I am also grateful to Professor Andrew George who kindly commented on the early drafts of this note.

Provenance

BM 87655 was bought by the British Museum in 1900 together with two other fragmentary tablets that record oil omens, BM 86735 (Anor 2018) and BM 87642 (Ait Said-Ghanem 2020), from a seller listed as F.C. Strick & Co. No provenance is known for these fragments, but information about their provenance can be pieced back from their recent acquisition history. Like its two companions, the orthography of BM 87655 has southern traits: the scribe uses the sign PI to express the phoneme /*pi*/ (4') for example, the sign UZ for /*uz*/ and /*us*/ (4'-7'; 8'), and ZU (8') for /*sú*/. These southern inclinations fit well with the trading history of Strick & Co, a steamship company that regularly anchored in Basra, southern Iraq, from the mid-1890s. Set up in 1887, Strick & Co began to trade coal from Swansea (southwest Wales, UK) to Italy, then added iron ore to their trade, taken from Beni Saf in West Algeria, so that by 1889, the company branched out as the 'Anglo-Algerian Steamship'. As described by the Royal Museums Greenwich's profile of the company, following a successful trip to the Persian Gulf in 1892, Strick & Co expanded again as the 'Anglo-Arabian and Persian Steamship'. After the Suez Canal was opened for navigation in 1869, trade to and from Iraq had vastly increased, with large exports from Iraq of dates and grain for example, and imports of textile from the UK to Basra (Robertson 2020:243-244). It must have been from their new and thriving anchor point that Strick & Co became involved in the trade of cuneiform tablets, and began to ship crates of them over to the UK. The BM's online records in fact state that they purchased from Strick & Co a total of 1,874 objects between 1895 and 1900.

One sale dated to 1900 is recorded in letters exchanged between the BM and Strick & Co, still kept in the BM's central archive (letters generously copied and shared with me by the archivists while Covid-19 related measures keep the archives closed as I write). A letter dated 29 October 1900 sent by Strick & Co to Wallis Budge thanks the latter for the £100 pounds that would soon be received (on 16 Oct 1900) in payment for a lot of tablets discussed the year before, on 1 September 1899. On 6 September 1900, Strick & Co name the individuals behind the sale: "Mr Asfar of Baghdad and Bassorah" and his representative I. E. Géjou, the well-known antiquity dealer born Ibrahim George Géjou in Baghdad on 12 May 1868 (Archives Nationales de France, 1913). Mr Asfar is likely either a relative of, or the very same J. Asfar described by Parrot 1946:127 as "une des personnalités de Bassora" whom E. De Sarzec had gone to consult in 1877 when he was looking for a site to excavate in the South of Iraq. De Sarzec had been told by Asfar of the inscribed statues that Iraqis living in Tello had found, and had decided to excavate there with the result we know (Parrot 1946:128). Finding Géjou tied to the acquisition of Old Babylonian omens is particularly exciting for a provenance history of the OB omen corpus because Géjou is also behind the acquisition of many divination texts by the Louvre and the Yale Babylonian Collection. In 1913, the YBC purchased 41 "presage tablets" from Géjou, from two different lots. A single tablet had been sent by Géjou to Albert T.

Clay on 21 May 1912, as a specimen from an unprovenanced lot of 53 “presage tablets” - the other 52 were sold to the Louvres for “£1500 (\$7500)” that summer, at Clay’s great annoyance. The other 40 were from a subsequent unprovenanced lot Gėjou sold Yale on 11 February 1913 (Dessagnes 2017:202-203). This is of interest because according to Yale’s conservation records (as confirmed to me by Dr Agnete Lassen by private communication and whom I warmly thank) many of the OB omen tablets published by Goetze 1947 in YOS 10 were treated as a group in 1913 – but that is another and forthcoming story.

The letter of 1 September 1899 mentioned by Strick & Co still exists in the BM’s central archive. Sent by Budge, it offers £100 for the lot made of “780 or 781” tablets, 300 of which “too small” for publication purposes. Other letters show that discussions about the sale went on for the best part of a year - sellers having hoped for a better offer - until the £100 was accepted and paid on 16 October 1900. Given the date and the fact that no other sale is recorded in 1900, it is presumably from this lot that BM 87655, BM 87635, and BM 87642 come from, and they were not the only omens in the crate. Two other Old Babylonian omen tablets were also part of this Strick & Co lot: BM 87572 and BM 87631, two extispicy texts published by Jeyes in her volume *Old Babylonian Extispicy: Omen texts in the British Museum* (OBE, 1989), respectively listed as nos. 17 and 18. But while our three fragments could be southern, the extispicy texts are said to be from Sippar. Jeyes 1989:4 names Sippar as “*the most likely provenance of the tablets in this corpus*” based on orthography (“*the orthography of nos. 17 and 18 which were bought from F.C. Strick and Co. is the only guideline to the provenance*”).

And so, the question remains: from which ancient cities could the fragments come from? Retracing part of Gėjou’s activities may help in getting closer to an answer, especially because it is clear, from the records, that Gėjou came by a striking number of omen tablets between 1899 and 1917, including the Old Babylonian omen text BM 103165 (Wagensonner 2018) bought from Gėjou by the BM in 1910. Searching for the individuals part of Ibrahim Elias Gėjou’s supply chain (one that included his brother Isaac) might just lead to substantial clues about these tablets’ provenience.

Description

This triangular fragment measures 7.5cm in length. At its widest, it extends to 4.3cm, and reduces in size until the lower pointed-part reaches 5mm. The similarity in the handwriting of this fragment with that of BM 87642 and BM 87635 (Anor 2018) is noted in Ait Said-Ghanem 2020.

	Transliteration	Translation
§1.	1' - [...a]m mu [...] 2' - [n]a-ak ² -rum ú-še-ni ² -b[a ²]-x [...] 3' - ú-še-{blank space}-[ši ² ...]	<i>[If the oil...]-...the enemy will ent[er²...]; (he) will b[ring out²...]</i>
§2.	4' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ a-na ši-na i-zu-uz pi-it-ru-u[š ² -tum ²] 5' - ma-mi-it ^d UTU a-wi-lam [ša-ab-ta-at]	<i>If the oil divides in two - 'diver[gence²']; the curse of Šamaš [is seizing] the man</i>
§3.	6' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ a-na ša-la-aš-ti i-zu-uz ta-[-...]	<i>If the oil divides in three (and)...-...</i>
§4.	7' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ a-na er-bi-it i-zu-uz bi-i[t ² ...]	<i>If the oil divides in four -...</i>
§5.	8' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ me-e-šu ik-sú-us ni-ki-i[m-tum ² ...]	<i>If the oil 'consumes' its water - div[ergence²...]</i>
§6.	9' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ ina qá-ab-li-a-tim [...] 10' - uz-zi i-li a-wi-lim a-na [...]	<i>If the oil...in its middle...- the anger of the man's god is... on...</i>
§7.	11' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ me-e-šu il-hi-ib ma-a[t ² ...] 12' - a-na a-wi-lim	<i>11'-12' - If the oil 'blisters over' its water - the la[nd²...] for the man</i>
§8.	13' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ me-e-šu ú-ka-a[l...] 14' - ni-ig-mu-um a-na K[ASKAL ² ...]	<i>If the oil hol[ds²] its water...- clamour; for the cam[paign²...]</i>
§9.	15' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ su-ma-am ù [...]	<i>If the oil...red and...-...</i>
§10.	16' - DIŠ [i]-mi-it-ti Ì.GI[Š...] 17' - mar-šum i-na m[u-ur-ši-šu ² ...] 18' - a-na KASKAL lu-m[u ² -um ² ...]	<i>If the right of the oil...- the sick person [will...] in [his² illne]ss²; for the campaign, ba[d²...]</i>
§11.	19' - DIŠ Ì.GIŠ su-[ma-am...]	<i>If the oil...r[ed²]...-...</i>
§12.	20' - DIŠ ša-ar [...] 21' - ma-an[-za-az ² ...]	<i>If the wind of [the four quarters²]...- pres[ence of]...</i>

Notes

§1. As discussed by Anor 2017, the enemy is not often encountered in the oil omen corpus. For mentions of the enemy elsewhere see BM 22446:28, IM 2967:28, for example.

§2 and §3 and §4: omens about the oil splitting in several parts are found in broken contexts in YOS 10 62:3, 9, and possibly 13. In line 4', the reading *piṭrum*, a split, is possible. The reading *piṭruštum* is also found in BM 22446:40 (Pettinato 1966:20) where the oil splits to the right and left. For a discussion of this term often found when *amārum* is used (in the protasis in relation to a lightness in colour, or in the apodosis in relation to a meeting), see Starr 1975:242, who translates it 'disengagement', and Winitzer 2017:337, 4.95. The term is also associated to an ambiguous reading as noted in George 2013:150, note 21-22, who translates it 'divergence'. The apodosis l. 5' is found in BM 22446:29 where instead of *Šamaš* the word *eršetim* is used ('the curse of the earth', *māmīt eršetim*) and in BM 22446:68 with *ilim* (the 'curse of the god', *māmīt ilim*). See Pettinato 1966:19 & 23.

§5'. BM 22446:68 (Pettinato 1966:23) also records this protasis.

§8. The verb *ú-ka-a[l...]* is broken and I read it as D *kullum*, to hold an object, contain (CAD K:508). If this is correct I can visualise the oil containing its water only if it is water that is being poured on it, with water remaining within the oil's hold. For omens about water poured on oil see for example BM 22446:32-40 (Pettinato 1966:19-20) and BM 87655:7 (Anor 2018:30).

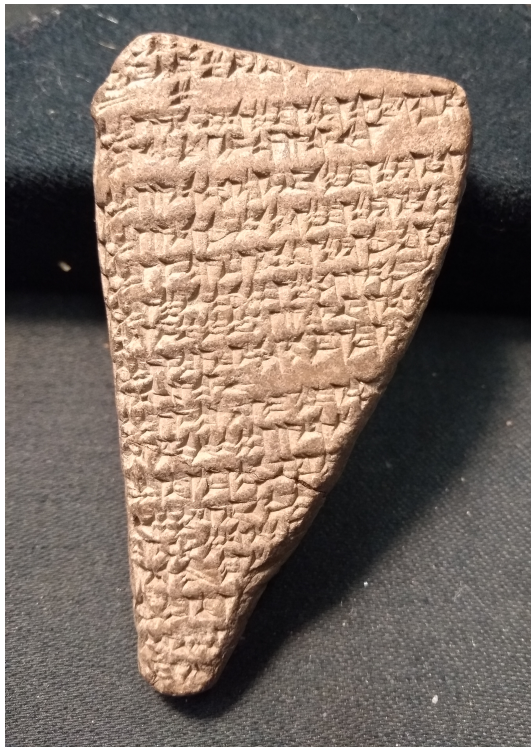
§7. *La'ābum* (CAD L:6 "to infect (a)", AHW L:521 "strapazieren") is linked to the *li'bu*-disease, and to being 'afflicted' by sorcery. These meanings do not work here for a meeting of water and oil. As pointed out to me by Andrew George, *la'ābum* occurs in the Epic of Gilgamesh tablet V:14' (Al-Rawi and George 2014:76) as a stative (*la-i-ib'*) to describe scabs on bark, translated by George 2020:36 as "Cedars scabbed with resin grew sixty cubits high". The use of *la'ābum* to describe the result of a meeting of surfaces (one bark) that results in scabs, seems fitting here, and I opted for the English word 'blister' to express both the idea of a burning and of a strain produced by the meeting of oil and water.

§8. BM 22446:50: *ana marši rigmum ana KASKAL um-ma-ni zi-it-tam i-ka-al.*

§9. BM 22447:6: *Ì.GIŠ a-na me-e i-na na-de-ia su-ma-am ù ú-úr-qá-am* (Pettinato 1966:61).

§10. BM 87635:15' (Anor 2018:31): *mar-šum i-na mu-ur-ší-šu i-lum u-sà-an-na-qa-šu-ma.*

§12. IM 2967:81 (Pettinato 1966:46): *U₄ ša-ar [4-šu] ir-ši.*



Bibliography

- AIT SAID-GHANEM, N. 2020. BM 87642: an Old Babylonian oil omen fragment about marriage, NABU 2020/62.
 AL-RAWI, F. and GEORGE, A. 2014. Back to the Cedar Forest: The beginning and end of Tablet V of the Standard Babylonian Epic of Gilgameš, pp. 69-90, JCS 66.
 ANOR, N. 2017. Mesopotamian Divinatory Inquiry: A Private or a State Matter?, pp. 71-78, in: Private and State in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 58th RAI at Leiden 16–20 July 2012, ed. by R. De Boer and

- J.G. Dercksen, Winona Lake.
- ANOR, N. 2018. An Old Babylonian Oil Omen Tablet from the British Museum, pp. 25-33, in: *Studies in Honor of Markham J. Geller, Mesopotamian Medicine and Magic (AMD 14)*, Leiden.
- CINGOLO, M. S. 2017. Some Remarks about the Old Babylonian Libanomancy Texts, pp. 93-105, in: *Divination as Science. A Workshop Conducted during the 60th RAI, Warsaw 2014*, ed. J. C. Fincke, Winona Lake.
- DESSAGNES, M. 2017. La circulation des tablettes cunéiformes mathématiques et la constitution des collections de la fin du XIX^e siècle à la première moitié du XX^e siècle. PhD thesis, La Sorbonne, Paris.
- GEORGE, A. 2020. *The Epic of Gilgamesh (new edition)*, London.
- GOETZE, A. 1947. *Old Babylonian Omen Texts*, Yale Oriental Series 10 (YOS 10), New Haven.
- JEYES, U. 1989. *Old Babylonian Extispicy, Omen texts in the British Museum*, PIHANS 64. Istanbul.
- KHAIT, I. 2018. *Typology of Old Babylonian Divination Apodoses*, Uni. Leipzig. Dissertation (unpublished).
- MAUL, S. 2018. *The Art of Divination in the Ancient Near East, Reading the Signs of Heaven and Earth*, translated from the German by Brian McNeil and Alexander Johannes, Waco.
- PARROT, A. 1946. *Archéologie mésopotamienne*, Paris.
- PETTINATO, G. 1966. *Die Ölwahrsagung bei den Babyloniern. Band II: Texte und Kommentar*, *Studi Semitici*, 22, Roma: Istituto di studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma.
- ROBERTSON, J. 2020. *Iraq: a history*, London (reprint).
- STARR, I. 1975. Notes on some technical terms in extispicy, pp. 241–47, *JCS* 27.
- WAGENSONNER, K. 2018. If his chin is constantly slack...: a new text on the verge between physiognomic and diagnostic omens, pp. 801-832, in: *Studies in Honor of M. J. Geller, AMD 14*, Leiden.
- WINITZER, A. 2017. Early Mesopotamian Divination Literature: Its Organizational Framework and Generative and Paradigmatic Characteristics. *Ancient Magic and Divination (AMD 12)*, Leiden.

Nadia AIT SAID-GHANEM <ng31@soas.ac.uk>
University of London, SOAS (UK)

113) Drei Multiplikationstabellen und eine Liste von Tornamen¹⁾ — Multiplikationstabellen gehören zum Standardrepertoire der babylonischen Mathematik. Ob sie ausschließlich als Teil des Schulcurriculums zu sehen sind oder auch praktisch eine Rolle gespielt haben, ist nicht sicher zu bestimmen. Es fällt jedenfalls auf, dass man auf den bisher bekannten Tabellen ausschließlich hexadezimale Notationen findet und nicht die im Alltag sicher gängigeren Dezimalnotationen.

Die hier vorgestellten Tabellen sind Teil einer mitteleuropäischen Privatsammlung. Zum Fundort der Multiplikationstabellen liegen keine Angaben vor und es ist wenig wahrscheinlich, dass sie ursprünglich aus dem selben Archivzusammenhang stammen, da sie zu unterschiedlichen Zeitpunkten von verschiedenen europäischen und amerikanischen Händlern erworben wurden. Im folgenden werden die Inventarnummern der Sammlung übernommen.

Alle drei hier edierten Tabellen enthalten jeweils eine Einzelmultiplikationstabelle, wobei die Tabellen 3 und 16 in dem von NEUGEBAUER (1935 [1973]: 32) als Typus A bezeichneten Schema angeordnet sind. Die in den Tabellen verwendeten Kopffzahlen 1,30 (90); 2,24 (144) und 8,20 (500) sind Teil des Kopffzahlbestandes sowohl in Einzel- als auch in Sammelmultiplikationstabellen (NEUGEBAUER 1935 [1973]: 34-5; NEUGEBAUER & SACHS 1945: 25-33).

Die Tabellen 3 und 16 enthalten die Multiplikationen von eins bis zwanzig und dazu noch das Dreißig-, Vierzig- und Fünfzigfache der Grundzahl. Beide Tabellen schließen mit einem Doppelstrich. Die Multiplikationstabelle von Tafel 9 ist nur bis zum vierten Eintrag erhalten, so dass nicht gesagt werden kann, ob sie im weiteren Verlauf auch diesem Schema gefolgt ist. Der untere Teil dieser Tafel enthält dagegen eine Liste von Tornamen. Bei näherer Betrachtung der Tafel zeigt sich jedoch, dass sie aus zwei ursprünglich nicht zusammengehörenden Stücken zusammengesetzt worden ist. Ob die Tafel schon kurz nach ihrer Auffindung oder erst viel später im Kunsthandel „repariert“ worden ist, lässt sich nicht klären. Der Ton der beiden Stücke sieht zwar ähnlich aus, allerdings sind sie mit Sicherheit von zwei verschiedenen Schreibern geschrieben worden.