

Famine in Babylonia

A microhistorical approach at agricultural crisis in 6th century Babylonia

Kristin Kleber (Amsterdam)

A hungry man breaches even a house made of baked bricks.

(Babylonian proverb)

The workers of Eanna, the temple of Ishtar at Uruk, who rebuilt the city wall of Babylon in the years 528 - 526 B.C. must have felt like in the antechamber of hell, where “dust was their food and clay their rations”. Nothing but anger smouldered in the guts of other temple dependents that had to dig canals in southern Babylonia at the same time. For months their temple had not sent any food rations. The workers perished; their overseers resorted to swearing, but the temple had nothing to distribute. The reason was a shortage of barley whose effects afflicted entire Babylonia.

The first harvest failure occurred perhaps already in the first year of Cambyses. The crisis reached its peak in his second and third regnal year: the barley yields in these summers must have been utterly devastating. In the fourth year the pressure was relieved. We cannot determine the reasons for the crop failures. The date harvest was either not or less affected, and the Babylonian south suffered more severely than the north.

The texts that illustrate the crisis belong to dossiers concerning the provisioning of dependent workers of the Eanna temple who performed corvée work at royal building projects. A short introduction into the administration of the corvée work shall precede the analysis of the famine dossier.

The administration of royal building projects

When the kings of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty boast about their building projects they sometimes mention the true heroes of these undertakings. They are called the “levy of the country” or the “workers of Bēl, Nabû and Šamaš”. One category of workers served on basis of their “tax” obligation, called *ilku* or *urāšû*. Fully free citizens (*mār banê*), temple dependents and the possessors of military fiefs had to serve alike. Another category was formed by dependents of the temples (*širkus*) who had to do additional corvée work on account of their status. The temples were responsible for their levy, the organization of their work and their food rations. The latter could be supplied by shipments of foodstuffs from the temple’s own storehouses. Alternatively the temple sent silver by which the functionaries on the building sites bought barley and dates on the local market.

In the time of the crisis, the Eanna temple of Uruk was engaged in two different contemporaneous building projects. One is the large-scale repair of the city walls of Babylon,

carried out by a troop of *širkus* (temple dependents) under the supervision of Innin-ahhē-iddin, the head of the temple dependents (*rab širkī*). This work gang existed throughout the year and had a required strength of 180 men. The team was amplified by several craftsmen, administrators, watchmen and messengers.

The other building project concerned the seasonal repair and maintenance of the irrigation system in an area where the temple had agricultural holdings. The task was carried out by men who performed their *urāšu* duty. A high functionary of the Eanna temple, the *bēl piqitti* Nabû-ahu-iddin supervised their labour.

The two officials in charge of the works sent letters to the Eanna temple which contribute much to our understanding of the barley crisis. Because letters are not dated, some remarks about their chronological placement are wanted.

The dating of the letter dossier of Nabû-ahu-iddin, royal courtier (and) supervisor of Eanna (*ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti ajakkī*)

During the years 2 and 3 Cam (528-527 BC)¹ Nabû-ahu-iddin supervised extension- and maintenance work on the irrigation system in Bīt-Amukānu². With some likelihood the canal on which he worked can be identified as the Harri-kippi or one of its branches.³ Cambyses' second year was also characterized by the preparations for the king's sojourn in the palace of Abanu in November 528. Cambyses and his entourage were on the way from Iran to Babylon, this time taking a road via Southern Babylonia.⁴ The *bēl piqitti* Nabû-ahu-iddin was one of the functionaries in charge of the food supply of the palace Abanu. His letters from Bīt-Amukānu contain frequent admonitions that the other temple officials should not neglect the deliveries to Abanu while he himself was absent. These letters were written during the summer of 2 Cam (528), several weeks before the arrival of the king. The letters that do not mention Abanu can either come from the same or from the following year (3 Cam). In the month Arahšamnu of Cambyses's fourth year Nabû-ahu-iddin was already responsible for another

¹ Babylonian dates are rendered as Day.Month (in Roman numerals).Year King (Cyr for Cyrus, Cam for Cambyses), or the Babylonian month names are spelled out in full. Modern month names like "September" refer to conversions to the Julian calendar.

² Kleber 2008: 188-191. In the Neo-Babylonian period Bīt-Amukānu was located west of the Royal Canal (Nār-šarri). Southwards it stretched as far as the Takkīru canal, see Jursa 2010: 103.

³ His letters mention Bīt-Amukānu and the names of his head-workmen who are otherwise known as agricultural functionaries in the same area. One of them, Aqria, son of Nabû-dalā, was responsible to furnish ten *urāšu*-workers at the Harri-kippi canal according to TCL 13, 150 (14.III.2 Cam). It is thus possible that the Harri-kippi was the canal that was repaired. This assumption is supported by a cross-link between our two letter dossiers. In one of the letters Innin-ahhē-iddin, the *rab širkī*, asks Nabû-ahu-iddin to load 500 *kurru* of barley on ships at the Harri-Kippi and send the barley to him. Further, an analysis of the dated legal and administrative texts (s. Kleber 2008: 20-23) shows that Nabû-ahu-iddin was frequently absent from the Eanna temple between Simānu and Ulūlu 2 Cam (= June – September 528 BC). His presence in the countryside during this time is positively attested in dated administrative documents (YOS 7, 122 and 126 dating 15.III.2 Cam).

⁴ Perhaps the king took the road via Southern Babylonia because dryer conditions made it easier to cross the Sealand. We do not hear about Eanna's duty to supply foodstuffs for Abanu from any other year. This can be an accident of discovery but it is likely that the Persian kings normally took the royal road northwards before entering the Babylonian lowlands. For the seasonal migration of the Persian king see Tuplin 1998.

building project, and that was also his last year in office.⁵ Therefore the autumn of 526 BC is the terminus ante quem in the chronological placement of this dossier.

The dossier of Innin-ahhē-iddin, the supervisor of the temple dependents (*rab širkī*)⁶

The *rab širkī* Innin-ahhē-iddin supervised Eanna's *širku* labour gang that was dispatched to royal building projects. Between 9 Cyrus and 3 Cambyses (530-527) his troop conducted work at the city walls of Babylon. Several of his letters were unequivocally sent from Babylon when Cambyses was king. Many refer to other letters of the dossier; they were surely written in a short interval. The general topic is Innin-ahhē-iddin's discontentment with the amount of rations delivered by Eanna. This gives us a terminus post quem because we know, on account of a balance sheet, how much he received for his workers in the years 9 Cyr and 1 Cam.⁷ The amounts correspond to the 90 litre standard ration per month. Thus, Innin-ahhē-iddin had no reason to complain during these years. The problems must have started shortly afterwards, most likely in autumn 528 (2 Cam). The last letter of the dossier (YOS 3, 116) mentions the first month of Cambyses' fourth year. Thereby the dating of the strongly interconnected letters can be narrowed down to the years 528-526 BC.

The first signs of crisis: The end of 528 BC

The only two texts dating on 1 Cam that mention barley prices were both written two to three months before the harvest, hence in a time when barley is expectedly expensive. However, the enormous rate, 3.0 and 3.6 shekels/*kurru*⁸ suggests that barley had been scarce for a while, resulting from a poor yield earlier that year.

Expected shortage: Cambyses' second year (528/27 BC)

The harvest of the second year (June/July 528 BC) could apparently not ease the tension on the barley market. One of Nabû-ahu-iddin's letters broaches the issue of rising commodity

⁵ Kleber 2008: 23 and 191-93.

⁶ Stolper 2003 edited the letters of Innin-ahhē-iddin (except YOS 3, 10 and 21) in full, therefore I shall only quote translations of them. BIN 1, 16 (s. Stolper 2003: 280), a letter that does not report his problems, must be earlier than the dossier treated here, because Innin-ahhē-iddin addresses the scribes Nādinu, Kīnāja, Balātu and Mūrānu of which only Nādinu was still in office in the reign of Cambyses. The letters from the time of crisis were normally addressed to the *šatammu* and to the temple accountant (*tupšar ajakki*) Nādinu, son of Bēl-ahhē-iqīša, or to the accountants (*tupšar ajakki*) Ardīa, Liblūtu and Sūqāja. The *qīpu* Anu-šarru-ušur, actually the superior of the *rab širkī*, was perhaps busy somewhere else. But his letter TCL 9, 111 may belong here. In it he orders the temple to issue the rations to the 'squad leaders of Fifty' (*rab hanšē*).

⁷ OIP 122, 81 lists expenditures for two years until the end of Addāru of a first year. Because line 5' mentions an intercalary Ulūlu the dating is unambiguously 9 Cyr – 1 Cam. The balance sheet brings to account 2400 *kurru* (4320 hectolitre) barley for two years. The exact number of workers is not mentioned but we know that the requested strength was 180 plus a few craftsmen, resulting in a number between 190 and 214. The standard ration of this time was 90 liters per month per head. The 2400 *kurru* therefore paid 200 workers for two years.

⁸ For an overview over the barley prices see the table in Jursa 2010: 443ff. Our texts are BM 94668, 13.XI.1 Cam = 14 February 528 from Borsippa (3 *š/kurru*) and CT 57, 117 from Sippar, 9.XII.1 Cam = 11 March 528 (3.6 *š/kurru*). The rates display a sharp increase in comparison with pre-harvest prices ten to twenty years earlier, s. Jursa 2010: 445f. This underscores that the high rates do reflect a crisis and cannot be ascribed to a normal seasonal pattern.

prices and the arrival of the king at Abanu⁹. The high prices also pertain to dates. The letter was most likely written shortly before the dates were ripe, in late summer of Cambyses' second year (ca. September 528 BC).

YOS 3, 79 (Nabû-ahu-iddin, from Bīt-Amukānu, to the *šatammu* („chief administrator“) of Eanna in Uruk)

⁶⁾ *a-na* ugu zú.lum.ma ⁷⁾ *šá áš-pur-rak-ka* zú.lum.ma *a-na* ⁸⁾ *šuk*^{hi.a.me} *a-na na-da-nu ul áš-pur-rak-ka* ⁹⁾ *um-ma* 1 qa *a*₄ zú.lum.ma *a-na su-mu-ut-tu*₄ *lud-da-áš-šú-nu-tu* ¹¹⁾ *ù dul-lu li-pu-šu-* ... ²²⁾ *šá* 1 pi zú.lum.ma ²³⁾ *a-na* 1 gín kù.babbar *ina unug*^{ki} ²⁴⁾ *iq-ta-bu-ú-na-a-šú* ²⁵⁾ *ki.lam ul ni-íp-pu-uš a-kan-na* ²⁶⁾ 2 pi še.bar *ù* 2 pi zú.lum.ma ²⁷⁾ *a-na* 1 gín kù.babbar *qa-lu-ú i-qab-bu-ú* ²⁸⁾ *ù ú-ba-'e-ma ul am-mar*

„Regarding to what I wrote you about the dates: I have not written that I want to distribute the dates as rations, but: „I want to give them one litre of dates each as *summutu* and they shall do the work.“ ... They told us that one *pānu* of dates (36 l) cost one shekel of silver in Uruk. We don't buy anything. Here they say that two *pānu* of barley (72 l) and two *pānu* of dates (can be bought) for one shekel of refined silver. I keep looking around but I don't see this.“

Sumuttu must designate a ration not identical with the normal monthly payment. The quantity is low, which suggests that the dates were given as a meal to satisfy the hunger to prevent the workers from escaping or striking. The exchange rate of dates in Uruk – five shekels per *kurru* (180 l) – is extremely high. The reported prices in Bīt-Amukanu are 2.5 shekels per *kurru*. Although only half as expensive, they are well beyond the average of normal years.¹⁰ The problem was that the market was almost empty:

YOS 3, 33 (Nabû-ahu-iddin from Bīt-Amukānu to Nādin, the temple scribe (*tupšar ajakki*) in Uruk)¹¹:

⁹⁾ *lí*^{erín}^{meš} ¹⁰⁾ *šá a-gan-na* *šuk*^{hi.a} *ina igi-šú-nu* ¹¹⁾ *ia-a-nu* ... ²⁸⁾ 2 pi še.bar *a-na* 1 gín kù.babbar ²⁹⁾ *a-kan-na* *ù šá* 1 ma.na kù.babbar ³⁰⁾ še.bar *ia-a-nu al-la* ³¹⁾ *šá* 5 gín kù.babbar *ù* 10 gín

“The workers here have no rations. ... two *pānu* barley (cost) one shekel of silver here, but there is not (enough) barley (on the market) for a mina of silver, only for five or ten shekels!“

This proves that Nabû-ahu-iddin eventually found the reported price of 2.5 š/*kurru*. But the small available amount is a finger in the dike for an institution that has to feed so many personnel like the Eanna temple.

At the end of September (Tašrītu) 528 BC the date harvest began. The yield allowed the temple to pay its workers again. The *rab širkī* Innin-ahhē-iddin expected a shortage of barley also for Babylon and therefore contemplated additional purchases in Northern Babylonia. It is likely that he sent the following letter in late autumn of 528 BC:

⁹ At the end of November Cambyses stayed for at least one week, perhaps a bit longer, in the palace of Abanu in the Sealand (Kleber 2008: 89 with fn. 262) from where he proceeded upstream to Babylon. The sojourn of the court was certainly an additional financial burden but cannot have caused the crisis alone.

¹⁰ Barley prices between 550 and 540 BC and date prices between 540 and 530 BC oscillate around 1 š/*kurru*. Date prices were on the lower side at the end of Cambyses' first year and only slightly higher in either his third or fourth year, s. the table in Jursa 2010: 594.

¹¹ The placement of the letter in the summer time is corroborated by the content: Nabû-ahu-iddin does work on the irrigation system and asks the temple scribe Nādinu, to levy the gardeners of the temple for the work (line 19f.). This would not be sensible during the date harvest.

YOS 3, 81 (Innin-ahhē-iddin from Babylon to the temple scribes in Uruk):

“You know that much of the barley that is in Babylon has already been expended. Send me, via Šamaš-udammiq (a decurio), five minas of white silver from the silver (earmarked) for the work, so that it can be given out for labour and rations. My lords should please look up in the ledgers how many rations are still in the storehouse and how much I have already received out of it; and what the remainder of the rations is that is still in the storehouse. There is barley available here in exchange for dates. One *kurru*, one *pānu*, four *sūtu* of dates (240 l) for one *kurru* (180 l) of barley. Forty *kurru* (7200 l) of barley (cost) one mina of white silver. Two gentlemen (*mār banê*) should bring dates upstream and exchange them for barley in Sippar. Alternatively they can bring ten minas of white silver and exchange it for barley here before barley becomes scarce. Look up the transport costs from the time of Neriglissar and Nabonidus, how they hauled flour and barley to Agade, and also what you gave me for the workers in Lahīru in the time of Cyrus.¹² Send me my rations in accordance with that!”

The “barley that is in Babylon” refers to grain in the storehouse that the Eanna temple maintained in Babylon. Innin-ahhē-iddin asks the scribes for a balanced statement of rations he can still receive from the storage in Uruk, so that he can plan and take measures to mitigate the expected shortage. He demands that dates should be expended to buy grain, as barley was still available in Sippar and Babylon for the price of 1.5 shekel per *kurru* (180 l). As a post-harvest price it is higher than in normal years,¹³ but in view of the upcoming crisis it was certainly quiet favourable.

The following letter may have been written shortly afterwards, most likely in the month Kislīmu of Cambyses’ second year (late November 528 BC), as it refers to the imminent arrival of the king in Babylon.

YOS 3, 21 (Innin-ahhē-iddin from Babylon to the *šatammu* and to Nabû-ahu-iddin, the *bēl piqitti*)

⁸⁾ lugal *a-na kap-du a-na* ⁹⁾ *muh-hi-i-ni uš-ša-a* ¹⁰⁾ *u₄-mu ši-pir-ta-a en* ^{meš 11)} *i-mu-ur-u* ¹²⁾ *md na-na-a-mu ù* ¹³⁾ *lú gal 10-ti* ^{meš} *ina unug* ^{ki 14)} *la i-bi-it-tu-u* ¹⁵⁾ *en* ^{meš} *lu-še-šu-ú-šú-nu-tu* ¹⁶⁾ *u₄-mu šá uš-šu-nu* ¹⁷⁾ *ina ši-pir-tu₄ en* ^{meš 18)} *liš-pur-ú-nu te-eq-tu₄* ¹⁹⁾ *ina lîb-bi-ku-nu la i-šak-kan-u* ²⁵⁾ *šá iti* ^{meš} *a₄ kù.babbar* ^{[x 26)} *2 ma.na sá a-na* ²⁷⁾ *m mu-du u* ^{ni 28)} *ni-din-tu₄ ta-ad-din-u* ^{i 29)} *i-kul-u* ^{du 30)} *ki-i la iti* ³¹⁾ *5 ma.na kù.babbar šuk* ^{hi.a 32)} *su-nu* ³³⁾ *du ki-i mim-mu gab-bi* ³⁴⁾ *la ú-qa-at-tu-ú* ³⁵⁾ *en-na* ^{1 en 36)} *lú dumu-dù-i* ³⁷⁾ *10 ma.na kù.babbar babbar-ú liš-šá-a* ³⁸⁾ *am-ma* ³⁹⁾ *še.bar a-kan-na ki.lam* ⁴⁰⁾ *li-pu-uš lid-din-nu* ⁴¹⁾ *5 me gur* ⁴²⁾ *zú.lum.ma* ⁴³⁾ *ina muh-hi a* ^{meš} *a-na* ⁴⁴⁾ *kal-ba-a en* ^{meš 45)} *lid-din-nu-u* ⁴⁶⁾ *kap-du* ⁴⁷⁾ *lik-šu-du*

“The king will soon move out to (come to) us. Nanāya-iddin and the (other) decurios should not stay longer in Uruk after the lords saw my letter. My lords should make them move out. My lords should send me a letter as soon as they have left; they (the decurios) must not delay anything! ... Monthly – they have already eaten up the two minas of silver that you gave to Šumu-ukīn and Nidintu – by Šamaš, five minas of silver are their monthly ration!

¹² The *širku* work gang of Eanna performed corvée labour in Agade in ca. 4-7 Nabonidus and in Lahīru in 1 Cyr, s. Kleber 2008: 196f. Innin-ahhē-iddin inquires about the transport costs of shipments of foodstuffs to Northern Babylonia in order to be able to compare the costs with those of his intended exchange of Urukian dates for barley in Sippar. During previous building projects in the north the temple had paid these costs. For transport costs in Babylonia, see Weszeli 2010.

¹³ Jursa 2010: 443ff.

By Šamaš, they really use up everything! Now, a gentleman should bring ten minas of white silver to buy barley here and they shall distribute it. (Furthermore), the lords may give five *kurru* of dates at a quay (lit.: water) to Kalbaya and he/it should arrive soon please”.

Innin-ahhē-iddin had sent the decurios to Uruk to fetch rations. In the letter quoted above he asks the temple officials to notify him about their departure from Uruk – perhaps a messenger with a letter can arrive faster than a heavy shipment of grain or dates. He wanted to be able to estimate when the shipment would arrive, and he also seems to have felt it necessary to check on the performance of the decurios. The monthly need of five minas would yield 1.5 shekels of silver per person calculated with the average number of 200 workers. In normal times 1.5 shekels were sufficient to purchase two to three monthly rations.

Cambyse's sojourn in Babylon cannot have lasted the whole winter. Shortly after the king had left the Babylonian capital, Innin-ahhē-iddin sent the following letter (BIN 1, 29) to the temple accountant Nādinu:

“By the protection of the gods we are well. Iddināya is well. We went with the king as far as the river ford in safety and (then) came back. But look, there is no barley in my house. Five *kurru* of barley should be sent to my family”.

The shortage of barley has also reached the private household of the *rab širkī*. In the following letter he took up his demands that he had already placed on the scribes in YOS 3, 81. It seems that he had not received any answer. Now he proceeded to write directly to the chief administrator (*šatammu*):

YOS 3, 45 (Innin-ahhē-iddin to the *šatammu* of Eanna):

“Before I come, I would like to draw my lord's attention to the issue of the rations. My lord should examine the ledgers from (the time) of Neriglissar and Nabonidus (to find out) how much was expended to Agade as (transport) costs for barley and flour, but also how much you yourself gave me in the reign of Cyrus for the workers of Lahīru. My lord should arrange for the expenses in just the same way. Please don't be negligent about the rations. Before barley becomes scarce, my lord should send 1000 *kurru* of dates so that I can exchange them for barley. I want to set aside rations for the winter. My food supplies must not become scarce! Concerning the five minas of silver (earmarked) for the work about which I had (previously) written to my lord: My lord may send five minas of white silver via Šamaš-udammiq and Nanāja-iddin (the decurios) so that I can buy barley. ... Šumu-ukīn and Nidintu (overseers) should not stay longer with my lord. Send them quickly on their way. They must not delay anything! The messenger of the king monitors the work”.

The responsible administrators at the temple seem to have ignored his pleas, or the return of the overseers with the rations was delayed. Innin-ahhē-iddin was under considerable strain. The food supplies became scarce and the workers were underprovided. The tone of the following letter to the temple accountant (*ṭupšar ajakki*) Nādin is much harsher:

YOS 3, 106 (Innin-ahhē-iddin to Nādin, the *ṭupšar ajakki*)

“Although I wrote you two or three times, I did not hear your instructions. Šamaš may know: When Gūbāru (the satrap) arrives, I will speak about no-one else in the world except about you, who has the ledgers in your possession and so you know about my rations. With the ledgers at

hand do a reckoning of my rations. Send 500 *kurru* if you have them at your disposal. Otherwise I want to take over Baniya's balance; he has piled up 500 in the house of his messenger, I want to release (these) 500.¹⁴ Why should I and my men perish because of an incorrectness (*pirku*)? Check the ledgers of Nebuchadnezzar, Neriglissar and Nabonidus and look up how much flour and (what) expenses for water skins and sandals you paid out for the the workers on the Tagritennu-canal and at Agade! According to this pay out the expenses and rations! Now I and my 180 workers are locked up here. Once I went out of Babylon. But now, how should I come even till behind Šahrīn if in the reign of Cambyses you have changed something in the rations of the *širkus* on the ledgers of Nebuchadnezzar, Neriglissar and Nabonidus!"

500 *kurru* of barley yields rations for approximately five months. It is not fully clear to me what Innin-ahhē-iddin means when he says he cannot go behind Šahrīn. The text BM 113264 (edited below) shows that he once bought a small amount of barley there. Perhaps his statement pertains to the possibility of purchasing additional foodstuffs. The following letter that takes up the issue of the old ledgers implies that he had now received an answer from the temple.

MM 504 (Stolper 2003: 274ff.) (Innin-ahhē-iddin in Babylon to Nādin, the accountant at Uruk)

"Nobody but you has exact information about my rations. (You), the lord, may consult the old and current ledgers and my lord should send me my rations. I have seen the letter that you sent me. That pleased me!¹⁵ Until Gūbāru has made (new regulations concerning the rations) of the *širkus* of Bēl, Nabû and Nergal, their rations should be given to them¹⁶ according to the ledgers (from the time) of Nebuchadnezzar. The circular concerning this matter has been disseminated in the entire world! [...] add to my rations and send them here! My lord may look up how much was paid in Uruk and what (was paid out) here. Gūbāru may say: "Why should your work assignments be too high?" The squad leaders of Fifty and the decurios have told us: "Forty of our men have been conscripted (for another task) and fifty of our workers have died for lack of rations." Until a written order about it is given to Parnaka ..."

The letter is most illuminating. At the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign the ration standard was 72 litres per month and therefore much lower than the later standard of 90 litres.¹⁷ The caloric needs of a worker can be met by the lower standard. In face of the famine the local royal administration or the Esangila temple had eventually publicized an emergency rule which was binding until the satrap arrived who would then give legal orders. I believe that Gūbāru was expected to arrive at the turn of the year 528/527. Most likely he came to participate in the Babylonian New Year's festival. We know from other

¹⁴ The translation is based on the following reading: ¹²⁾ 5 me ¹³⁾ ki-i ina pa-ni-ka i-ba-áš-[š]u-ú ¹⁴⁾ šu-bi-lu ia-a-nu-ú re-[eh-ti] ¹⁵⁾ ba-ni-ia ¹⁵⁾ lu-uš-šu 5 me <ina> é a.kin-šú id-di 5 me ¹⁶⁾ lu-up-šu-ur. The verbal form *aktenzi* in Z. 29 was interpreted by Stolper 2003: 285 as deriving from *kanāzu* (Aram. loanword?) „put in storage“. Here it perhaps designated "locked up". Šahrīn is a town south of Babylon.

¹⁵ I understand this as irony. He quotes the circular which has most likely been issued either by the local royal administration or Esangila, and then demands that something should be added to his rations. He may have felt fleeced that Nādin offered him less than the publicized emergency rule prescribed. An alternative interpretation is that Innin-ahhē-iddin was seriously relieved that Eanna found a temporal solution and therefore quotes the ruling as a confirmation.

¹⁶ The verbal form is: *na-da-na-ta-áš-šú'-nu'-tu* (Hackl 2007: 92, fn. 328).

¹⁷ For the ration standards s. Jursa 2008.

years that he gave audiences, was present at litigations and attended to administrative issues in the weeks after the festival, from the middle to the end of the month Nisān.¹⁸

Some letters of our dossiers must stem from the second or third year of Cambyses' reign but cannot be dated more precisely. The following fragment, whose sender and recipient are not preserved, may represent a letter by Innin-ahhē-iddin. It is not clear whether the letter was written in 2 Cam or whether he tried to purchase additional barley again in 3 Cam. In any case, the sender mentions horrendous prices for Northern Babylonia:

W 3381 z¹⁹

¹⁾ [x] ¹ki.lam^{meš} ²⁾ šá ^{lu}la-mu-tu ³⁾ iš-pu-ru-na-a-šú ⁴⁾ 1 (pi) 2 bán še.bar ina tin.tir^{ki} ⁵⁾ ù bár.sipa a-na 1 gín ⁶⁾ ù 1 (pi) 4 bán še.bar ⁷⁾ ina ud.kib.nun^{ki} ⁸⁾ [u] ^{uru}ú-pi-ia (traces, rest verloren)

(beginning lost) ... “the prices about which the servant wrote us, are 48 litres of barley in Babylon and Borsippa for one shekel (of silver), and 60 litres of barley in Sippar and Opis...”

According to this letter the barley price in Babylon and Borsippa increased to 3.75 shekel/*kurru* and in Sippar and Opis to 3 shekel/*kurru*. These may be the prices of the winter of the second or of the third year of Cambyses' reign.

The peak of the crisis: Cambyses' third year

Innin-ahhē-iddin had, perhaps in the summer of 3 Cam, sent a messenger directly to Nabû-ahu-iddin to the agricultural area in Bīt-Amukānu. The short accompanying letter is preserved in YOS 21, 35:

⁸⁾ a-mur^m numun-ia ⁹⁾ a^{md} na-na-a-kam ¹⁰⁾ a-na pa-ni en-ia ¹¹⁾ a-šap-par-ra ¹²⁾ 5 me še.bar ¹³⁾ kap-du ¹⁴⁾ ina ^{id} har-ri-kib-^[bu] ¹⁵⁾ en lid-da-áš-šú ¹⁶⁾ še.bar ra-šu-tu ¹⁷⁾ ina muh-hi-i-ni ma-da-at ¹⁸⁾ šuk^{hi.a} ^{lu}ina pa-ni ^{erín}^{meš} ¹⁹⁾ ia-a-nu

“Look, I have sent Zēria, the son of Nanāya-ēreš, to my lord. My lord may give him instantly 500 *kurru* of barley on the Harri-Kippi. We have great outstanding debts in barley and the workers have no rations.”

Perhaps Innin-ahhē-iddin tried to circumvent the accountants at Uruk. But requesting barley from countryside storage facilities would also have speeded up the delivery – in case his requests were met. But Nabû-ahu-iddin also lacked rations for the workers under his supervision. YOS 3, 65 is one of the rare answers which the temple sent. The accountant Nādin wrote to Nabû-ahu-iddin in Bīt-Amukānu:

⁷⁾ ù en-na šá en ⁸⁾ iq-bu-ú um-ma ⁹⁾ ^{lu}erín^{meš} šá ^mzuk-ka-a-a ¹⁰⁾ ina IGI-ka a-mur ¹¹⁾ 3 ^{lu}erín^{meš} ¹²⁾ ina lib-bi a-ta-mar ¹³⁾ a-na ma-al-la ¹⁴⁾ ^{lu}erín^{meš} ¹⁵⁾ šá am-ma-ru ¹⁶⁾ šuk^{hi.a} ¹⁷⁾ ul a'-kan-na ¹⁸⁾ lu-da-áš-šú-nu-tu

“And now, that the lord said: ‘The workers of Zukkāya are with you.’ Look, I have seen only three workers. There are no rations for or the workers that I (still) have to muster. I would give (rations) to them (if I only had anything)!”

¹⁸ Kleber 2008: 61-66.

¹⁹ The text is quoted in Jursa 2010: 82, fn. 410 with permission of the DAI.

The temple accountant Nādin was faced with reproaches and threats of the administrators on the building sites but he had nothing to counter their anger and the fury of the workers.²⁰ Feelings ran high; also Nabû-ahu-iddin's letter YOS 3, 17 belongs to here. Among other issues he defends himself against accusations: "You say thus: 'Nabû-ahu-iddin makes errors' – perhaps you make errors, but I certainly do not make errors!" In the same letter he reports that the above mentioned farmhand Zukkāya had nothing to eat and was furious. After Zukkāya had resumed his work (he must have received something), his men also returned.

Nabû-ahu-iddin sent the following letter most likely in the intercalary Ulûl (September) of 3 Cam, when the crisis had reached its peak. It was short before the date harvest, the storage facilities being completely empty. He orders that the *šatammu* should buy food for fifteen days on the market and distribute it according to the (older and lower) ration standard of 72 litres per month:

YOS 3, 69 (Nabû-ahu-iddin to the *šatammu*)²¹

4) lú⁴ hun.gá^{meš} ia-a-nu gab-bi⁵ a-na iti.du⁶ it-tal-ku-⁶ u⁶ lú⁷ rig^{me} šá a-na igi-ia⁷ ta-šap-par-ra ši-di-tu⁸ it-ti-šú-nu ia-a-nu 5 u⁴-mu⁹ dul-lu ip-pu-uš u i-hal-liq¹⁰ u lú¹¹ hun.gá^{me} šá iti lú 6 gín kù.babbar¹¹ a-na iti-šú a-na i-di-šú¹² i-na-áš-ši a-na-ku¹³ i-di šá še.bar u zú.lum.ma¹⁴ ina é.an.na ia-a-^{nu}¹⁵ kù.babbar a-na še.b[ar]¹⁶ u zú.lum.ma¹⁷ ina murub⁴ uru i-din-m[a]¹⁸ i-šá-am-ma 5 bán še.bar¹⁹ šá 15 u⁴-mu^{me} a-na lú i-din²⁰ u⁴ lú²¹ erín^{me} šu-pur-ma dul-lu²¹ li-pu-šu-²² at-ta²² ik-ki-ka ku-ri-ka u a-na-ku²³ ik-ka-a ku-ru šá ta-qab-bu-ú²⁴ [um-ma] a-na-ku al-<la>-kam-ma²⁵ dul-lu ép-pu-uš ki-i²⁶ at-ta ta-at-tal-ku²⁷ ina tē-me-ka a⁴ ki-i²⁸ dul-lu te-ép-pu-uš²⁹ ki-i pa-ni-ka mah-hir³⁰ šu-pur-ma^{lu} lul^x (LIL)-lik³¹ u at-ta al-kam-ma³² dul-lu e-pu-uš

"There aren't any hirelings left. They all went away for the month Tašrītu. And the *širkus* you keep sending me don't have any provisions. They work five days and then run away. And the hirelings take each six shekels of silver per man per month. I know there is neither barley nor dates left in Eanna. Buy barley and dates in the city centre, bring it and give five *sūtu* (30 liters) of barley for 15 days to each man. And send me workers so that they can do the work! You are running out of patience and I am also at the end of my tether. That you say: 'I shall come and do the work.' – When you have come it is in your appraisal how you do the work. If that suits you write me and I shall go (home) and you come here and do the work!"

Commentary

Z. 24: In spite of the spelling *al-kam-ma* the form is a present tense emphasized by the independent pronoun of the 1st person singular.

"To leave for the month Tašrītu" means that hirelings chose not to work on building sites because the date harvest began in that month. The letter must have been written in the time short before that, when dates were still scarce. Food should be distributed only for half a month, in the lower ration standard from the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign which

²⁰ The discontentment of the workers is broached in Nabû-ahu-iddin's letter YOS 3, 19 which mentions Abanu and must therefore be placed in the 2nd year of Cambyses: ²⁰ lú-u ti-i-di dib-bi lu ma-a-du²¹ a-gan-na ina muh-i-ni bi-šu-²² ba-²² dingir^{meš} lu-uš-pur-rak-ka²³ i-na ugu ka-i mar-šu nu-bat-tu⁴ ²⁴ la ta-ba-a-ta „You know that the disposition towards us is very hostile. By the gods, I want to write it to you, so that you do not lose time in face of the malicious talk!“ A German translation of the complete letter can be found in M. Jursa, TUAT NF 3: 168f.

²¹ S. also Jursa 2005: 174 for this letter.

had possibly been confirmed by the satrap as an emergency measure. The high wages that the hirelings ask can also be interpreted in the context of increased commodity prices.

The difficulties in the time of crisis had led to conflicts between the high officials of the Eanna temple. After having been faced with criticism from the *šatammu*'s side, Nabû-ah-iddin prompts the *šatammu* to supervise the work on the irrigation system, while he himself would return to Uruk. The change of responsibilities has most likely been implemented. From the beginning of Arahšamnu of Cambyses' third year we see a change of paradigm in the presence and absence pattern of the two officials from the temple.²² Nabû-ah-iddin participated in judicial meetings in Uruk while the *šatammu* was absent. The latter is even attested in Bīt-Amukānu in the month Šabātu (January/February) of 3 Cam. On that day he took several men in service as guards of fields that were located between the Takkīru canal and the Harri-Kippi. They ought to prevent damage of the new barley by animals. The six guards received rations, most likely in dates, and a "gift" of 50 *kurru* of barley, to be paid out in Ayyāru after the new barley harvest.

The third year of Cambyses (527/26) must have been the hardest time of crisis. For a while people will have been able to compensate partly by eating fish and legumes and whatever else was available, and the temple tried to mitigate the effects of the lacking staples by sending animals for slaughter to the workers (YOS 7, 143). But according to the letter of the *rab širkī* some workers had died from hunger and exhaustion during the winter. In February 526 BC the foremen of the workers at the city wall of Babylon travelled to Uruk to file an official complaint at the temple.²³ Šumu-ukīn, the „squad leader of Fifty“ (*rab hanšê*) and the decurios of his unit, as well as the decurios of the unit of the *rab hanšê* Nidintu, spoke as follows to the *šatammu* of the Eanna temple at Uruk:

AnOr 8, 71:

¹⁵⁾ *um-ma* šuk^{hi.a} -*ni* šá iti.bará <ud>.2.kam šá mu.3.kam ¹⁶⁾ *kam-bu-zi-ia* lugal tin.tir^{ki} lugal kur.kur *ina* šu^{II 17)} md^{in-nin-šeš^{meš}-mu} lú gal šir-ki ¹⁷⁾ *ni-it-ta-ši* šuk^{hi.a} -*ni* šá *ina* níg.ga ¹⁹⁾ *a-na* md^{in-nin-šeš^{meš}-mu} lú gal šir-ki ²⁰⁾ en *lid-di-in*

“We have received our rations of the 2nd of Nisān of the 3rd year of Cambyses from Innin-ahhē-iddin, the *rab širkī*. The lord may give our rations that are still in the temple's possession to Innin-ahhē-iddin, the *rab širkī*.”

The document is dated on the 14th of Šabātu 3 Cam. If the workers received rations on the 2nd of Nisān for three months, the temple would owe rations for eight months. The delivery after the one in Nisān should have come in Du'uzu and consisted mainly of the newly harvested barley. But another disastrous harvest must have led to a complete stop of deliveries. Only the new date harvest in Tašrītu-Arahšamnu (October-November) provided the country with foodstuffs.

²² Kleber 2008: 24f.

²³ A similar document comes from Sippar: MacGinnis, *Iraq* 60, Nr. 5 (19.XI.7 Cyr). According to this text the *rab širkī* of the workers of Ebabbar, four dekurios and eight guards (*tašlīšu*) demanded from the *šangû* and the accountants to give their rations of the following month to the *qīpu*. The background may have been different in this case, perhaps it concerned the number of workers at the site. According to *Iraq* 60, Nr. 3 the *rab širkī* and the *tašlīšu* take an oath that they will muster their troop, most likely in order to determine the exact number of active workers.

The distribution of the rations was normally organized by the „squad leaders of Fifty“ (*rab hanšê*). They received the rations at the temple storehouse, shipped them to the building site and distributed them there. Therefore it is conspicuous that the same decurios who had filed the complaint together with one of the *rab hanšês*, asked the temple officials on the very same day not to hand over their rations to the *rab hanšês* (BM 114563). What is the reason for this request? Did they simply not want to have the additional rations shipped to the building site but rather receive them directly at home in Uruk? Or did they mistrust their squad leaders, had there been embezzlements?

A few months after the complaint a tablet was issued that lists all individual deliveries of barley, wheat, dates, silver, cress, oil and billy-goats to Iddin-ahhê-iddin's troop in Babylon (BM 113264, edited below). This document proves that the temple eventually paid the rations in the normal 90 litre standard to the squad leaders of Fifty. In spite of the headline mentioning „barley and dates“, hardly any barley had been expended in that year. An expenditure of 700 *kurru* of dates corresponds to only 26 *kurru* of barley. Six *kurru* out of these 26 were purchased in Šahrîn, and the remaining 20 were paid out only after the barley harvest of the fourth year. In addition, 20 *kurru* of wheat was given in exchange for 40 *kurru* of barley, and a bit less than 50 shekels of silver were given for the purchase of barley. The rest of the deliveries are dates and the usual other ration components consisting of cress, oil and occasionally goat-meat. The list pertains to the deliveries from Kislîmu of 3 Cam onwards, hence the winter and the spring when barley is seasonally scarce. But that barley is entirely lacking in the distributions of the temple is certainly remarkable. The storehouses that should have contained the harvest of 3 Cam were completely empty.

There is additional scattered information about the barley crisis of these years. According to YOS 7, 143 animals were given out in replacement of barley/date rations, and even in replacement for the raw material (*maššartu*) for the production of bread, cake and beer for the offerings. The prebendary bakers and brewers had to take it upon themselves to find barley to perform their duties. The lack of barley also led to the consumption of seed grain. In Tebêtu 3 Cam (January 526 BC) temple farmers received emmer instead (but of course not exclusively). It is not certain whether YOS 7, 151 (4.V.3 Cam) also belongs in the context of crisis. In it fishers receive the order not to buy fish from the traders in Uruk but to catch the fish in their *tamirtus*. *Tamirtu* designates areas between active and dried irrigation canals that were often waterlogged (Cole 1994: 93). Fishing was especially easy there. But perhaps the *tamirtus* close to Uruk were dried up and now the fishers had to go further to catch enough fish?

Two other texts from the time of the crisis tell us that *širkus* tried to sell their daughter illegally into slavery. Is this an expression of the unbearable hardship of the poor? It is likely as the food that was still available on the market became prohibitively expensive for them.

The fourth year brought a relaxation of the crisis. BM 113264 shows that Eanna has harvested more barley. A text from Sippar (Nbn. 156 dated to 2.V.4 Cam) mentions a barley price of 1.1 shekel/*kurru*, an average price.²⁴

So, slowly things came back to normal. But for one person the barley crisis ended in a personal crisis, and that person is our *rab širkī* Innin-ahhē-iddin. His performance in face of the difficulties has apparently been negatively appraised by his superiors. In his last letter to the temple accountant Nādin which he wrote at the end of Cambyses' third or the beginning of the 4th year, he struck a sour note.

YOS 3, 116:

“For twenty years I have performed the service for you all. But in your eyes I am not worth as much as Bēl-gimlanni. On the orders of Bēl-gimlanni my house is being ruined and the people of my household are in prison. Give three billy-goats of the month Nisān of the 4th year to Nanāya-iddin and Šumu-ibni. The *šatammu* is angry with me...”

Bēl-gimlanni is the *ša muhhi quppi* of Eanna who was responsible for the financial issues of the temple. We do not know the temple's decisions in the background of this letter. Innin-ahhē-iddin seems to be held personally liable for losses. But at least he stayed in office: he is still attested as *rab širkī* in 7 Cam.

Summary

The dossier is certainly remarkable as it describes the impact of harvest failures, the dynamics of price development and the availability of foodstuffs on the market. The dual crop nature of the country helped considerably to mitigate the effects of the crisis. With every date harvest in late autumn the temple could pay rations and people were saved from starvation. Dates were not or at least considerably less affected by the crisis. Unfortunately we do not have many external date prices from these years, but the rates mentioned in the letters point to a normal price after the harvest and an increase during the summer. In case of the barley, two successive harvest failures led to a three to five-fold increase in price.

As mentioned at the outset, we cannot determine what caused the barley crisis. It lasted three or four years and the North was less affected than the south. Barley was still available on Northern markets during the summer. Perhaps a shortage of water at a time when it was essential for the crop is a reasonable guess. Date palms and orchards were located closer to the canals, so perhaps the irrigation water was sufficient for the palms but did then not suffice to irrigate the fields behind. The north may have taken the water and filled its reservoirs so that only little water reached the south.

Beyond the rhetoric of the administrators they all made efforts to mitigate the effects of the crisis. Messengers were sent to other parts of Babylonia to gather information about prices. Babylonia was an integrated economic space. Although the administrators were eager to calculate the costs of shipments, the transport costs were not the limiting factor here but the supply.

²⁴ Jursa 2010: 446.

Text editions

BM 114563

- Vs 1 ^{md}*a-nu-numun-dù a-šú šá* ^{mé}*.an.na-lip-urù*
^m*kal-ba-a a-šú šá* ^{md}*innin-šeš-mu* ^m*šu a-šú šá* ^m*nu-na-nu*
^{md}*utu-ba-šá a-šú šá* ^{md}*na-na-a-mu* ^m*ni-din-ti* <*a-šú šá*> ^{md}*innin-[numun]-[]*
^{lu}*gal 10* ^{mes}*šá šu* ^{II}*mu-gi.na a-šú šá* ^{md}*nà-sig₅-i[q]*
4a *u* ^m*ni-din-ti a-šú šá* ^m*du-muq*
a-na ^{md}*nà-gin-ibila* ^{lu}*šà.tam* ^l*é.an* ^l*.na dumu-šú*
^m*šá na-din a* ^m*da-bi-bi iq-bu-ú um-ma*
^{šuk}^{hi.a.mes}*-i-ni šá-la-nu-un-nu a-na* ^m*mu-gin*
u ^m*ni-din-tu* ^{lu}*gal 50* ^{mes}*la ta-nam-din*
Rs 10 ^{lu}*mu-kin-nu* ^m*ir-ia a-šú šá* ^m*gar-mu*
^m*šu-d* ^{na-na-a} ^m*ir-u.gur a-šú šá*
^m*gin-a a* ^m*e-gi-bi* [^{md}*na*]-*na-a*-^l*mu* [*a-šú šá*]
^{md}*nà-tin-su*-^l*e* ^m*é.*[*kur-za-kir?*]
^{md}*utu-numun-mu a-šú šá* ^m*a*-[]
15 ^{unug}^{ki} *iti.zíz ud.14.* ^l*kam mu* ^l*.3.kam*
^m*kam-bu-zi-ia* ^{lugal} *tin.tir* ^{ki} ^{lugal} *kur.kur*

Anu-zēru-ibni/Eanna-līpu-ušur, Kalbāja/Ištar-ahu-iddin, Gimillu/Nūnānu, Šamaš-iqīša/Nanāja-iddin, Nidintu/Ištar-zēru-[], the decurios under the responsibility of Šumu-ukīn/Nabû-udammiq and Nidintu/Dummuqu spoke to Nabû-mukīn-apli, the *šatammu* of Eanna, son of Nādin, descendant of Dābibī as follows: ‘You should not give our rations to Šumu-ukīn and Nidintu, the *rab hanšē*, without our consent’.

Witnesses: Ardia/šākin-šumi/Gimil-Nanāja, Arad-Nergal/Mukīn-apli/Egibi, Nanāja-iddin/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi/E[kur-zākir?], Šamaš-zēru-iddin/A[].

Uruk, 14th of Šabāt year 3 of Cambyes, king of Babylon, king of the lands.

Commentary

The witnesses of BM 114563 are not identical with the *mār banē*, in whose presence the complaint *AnOr* 8, 71 was filed.

BM 113264

- Vs 1 813 gur še.bar ù zú.lum.ma šuk^{hi.a} ^m*šá* 180 ^{lu}*erín* ^{me} ^m*šá šu* ^{II} ^{md}*a-nu*-^l*lugal* ^l*-[urù]*
^{lu}*qí-i-pi šá* ^m*é.an.na šá* 8 ^{iti} ^{me} ^m*šá a-ki-i pi-i šá* ^{md}*in-nin-šeš* ^{mes}-*mu*
^{lu}*gal rig₇* ^{me} ^m*šá ul-tu* ^{iti} ^{gan} ^{mu} ^{3.kam} ^m*a-di* ^{iti} ^{šu} ^{mu} ^{4.kam}
^m*ka-am-bu-zi-ia* ^{lugal} *tin.tir* ^{ki} ^{lugal} *kur.kur ul-tu* ^m*é.an.na a-na*
5 ^m*mu-gi.na a* ^{md}*nà-kal ù* ^m*ni-din-ti a* <^m*du-um-mu-qu* ^{sum} ^{na}
7;0.2 zú.lum.ma ^m*šá al-la pi-ir-ru šá* ^{iti} ^{šu} ^{mu} ^{3.kam} ^m*a-na ugu*
^m*mu-gi.na a* ^{md}*ag-sig₁₅* ^m*ni-din-ti a* ^m*du-um-mu-qa e-et-qa*
20 gur še.bar *i-na* ^{gis}*bán šá* ^m*i-innin ina* ^{šu} ^{II} ^m*ir-d* ^{innin-na} ^{iti} ^{sig₄} ^{ud.20.kam}
26;0.3.4 ^m*šá al-la pi-ir-ru šá* ^{iti} ^{apin} ^m*a-na ugu* ^{md}*na-na-a-mu*
10 ^m*ag-ba-šá ù* ^{md}*lugal-bàn-da-mu-dù a* ^m*ina-sùh-kar-ir e-et-qa*
17 gur zú.lum.ma *i-na* zú.lum.ma ^m*šá li-mit unug* ^{ki} ^m*i-na zag a.šà* ^m*mu-gin*
6;4 ki.min *i-na zag a.šà* ^m*šá du-um-mu-qu a* ^m*ap-la-a*
48 gur *i-na* zú.lum.ma ^m*šá* <^m*ha-an-ar-bi ù* <^m*é.kur-da-an-nu*
^{gis}*šá bán šá* ^m*ir-ia a* ^{md}*ag-dù-urù mu.3.kam ina* ^{šu} ^{II} ^{md}*ag-siskur-še.ga*
15 6 gur še.bar *i-na* še.bar ^m*šá ul-tu* ^{uru}*sah-ri-nu a-na kù.babbar mah-ra-tu*
^{ina} ^{šu} ^{II} ^{md}*amar.utu-mu-mu a* ^m*na-di-nu u* ^m*numun-ia a* ^{md}*na-na-a*-^l*mu*^l
uR 300 gur zú.lum.ma ^m*šá* 5 ^{ma} ^{na} ^l*kù.babbar*^l
Rs 100 gur zú.lum.ma *i-na* zú.lum.ma ^m*šá ina* ^{šu} ^{II} ^m*tin* ^{lu}*a.kin šá* ^{md}*en-na-din-ibila*

- ^{lu}en.nam é-sag-íl *a-na* kù.babbar *mah-ru-nu ina* šu^{II md} *na-na-a-kam u* ^{md}utu-su
 20 100 gur zú.lum.ma *ina* ^{giš}bán *ša* ^mir-ia a ^{md}ag-dù-uru mu.3.kam *ina* šu^{II m} *ir-ia*
 2;1.1.3 *a-hi i-na* šuk^{hi.a} *ša* ^{lu}man-di-di *ša* 813 gur
 4 máš.gal ^{iti}ab ud.28.kam mu.3.kam
 20;1.0.3. še.gig.ba *a-na* 40;2.1 še.bar 6 gur *sah-li-e*
 6 gín kù.babbar *a-na* 2 gur *sah-li-e* pap 8 gur *sah-li-e* ^{iti}še ud.24.kam
 25 2 1/3 ma.na 6 gín kù.babbar *a-na* 14;2 še.giš.ì *a-di* 1 bán ì.giš *ša* ^{giš}banšur
^{iti}ša gan ud.28.kam 1/2 ma.na kù.babbar ^{iti}še ud.12.kam
 2 1/2 ma.na kù.babbar ^{iti}še ud.24.kam pab 3 ma.na kù.babbar buru₁₄-šú-nu *ša* mu.4.kam
 8 gur mun^{hi.a} ^{iti}še ud.24.kam
 1 1/2 ma.na kù.babbar *a-na* 90 gur zú.lum.ma ^{iti}še ud.26.kam
 30 10 gur zú.lum.ma *ina* ^{giš}bán *ša* ^mir-ia a ^{md}ag-dù-urù *ša* mu.3.kam
ul-tu ^{uru}tu-ra-nu *ina* šu^{II md} *na-na-a-šeš-mu*
 2/3 ma.na 9 *šal-šú* 1 gín kù.babbar *i-na* kù.babbar *ša a-na* ki.lam *ša* še.bar *it-ti*
^{md}ag-gin-ibila ^{luš}ša.tam *u* ^mir-damar.utu dub.sar *a-na* edin giš-ú
 uRd ^{iti}bára ud.11.kam mu.4.kam
 35 *u* máš.gal ^{iti}bára ud.12.kam mu.4.kam

813 Kor Gerste und Datteln, die Rationen von 180 Arbeitern unter der Aufsicht von Anu-šarru-ušur, des *qīpu* von Eanna, für acht Monate, die auf Geheiß²⁵ des Innin-ahhē-iddin, des *rab širkī*, vom Kislīmu des dritten Jahres bis Du'ūzu des vierten Jahres des Kambyses, des Königs von Babylon, des Königs der Länder, an ⁵⁾ Šumu-ukīn/Nabû-udammīq und Nidintu/Dummuqu gegeben wurde.

⁶⁾ 7;0.2 Datteln, die, nicht eingerechnet (die für die) *perru*-Truppe des Monats Dûzu des 3. Jahres, an šumu-ukīn/Nabû-udammīq und Nidintu/Dummuqu übergeben wurden.

20 Kor Gerste von der Pachtzahlung des Na'id-Ištar durch Arad-Innin, 20. Simānu.

26;0.3.4 - nicht eingerechnet die (für die) *perru*-Truppe des Monats Arahšamnu, an Nanāja-iddin/Nabû-iqīša und Lugalbanda-šumu-ibni/Ina-tēšī-ēter übergeben,

¹¹⁾ 17 Kor Datteln von den Datteln aus der Umgebung Uruks vom Ertrag des Feldes von šumu-ukīn,

6;4 ditto, vom Ertrag des Feldes von Dummuqu/Aplāja,

48 Kor von den Datteln von Hanarbi und Ekur-dajjān, von der Pachtzahlung von Ardia/Nabû-tabni-ušur (vom) 3. Jahr, durch Nabû-karābi-išme,

¹⁵⁾ 6 Kor Gerste von der Gerste, die man aus Šahr²ⁿ gegen Silber erhalten hat, durch Marduk-šumu-ibni/Nādin und Zēria/Nanāja-iddin,

300 Kor Datteln für 5 Minen Silber,

100 Kor Datteln von den Datteln, die man von Balātu, den Boten des Bēl-nādin-apli, den Gouverneur von Esangila für Silber erhalten hat, durch Nanāja-ēreš und Šamaš-erība,

²⁰⁾ 100 Kor Datteln von der Pachtzahlung des Ardia/Nabû-tabni-ušur, 3. Jahr, durch Ardia,

2;1.1.3 die Hälfte von den Rationen der Meßbeamten, die 813 Kor (ausgemessen haben),

4 Ziegenböcke 28. Tebētu, 3. Jahr,

20;1.0.3 Weizen für 40;2.1 Gerste (und) 6 Kor Kresse,

6 Sekel Silber für 2 Kor Kresse, insgesamt 8 Kor Kresse, 14. Addār,

²⁵⁾ 2 1/3 Minen, 6 Sekel Silber für 14;2 Sesam, inklusive dem Öl für das Festmahl (lit. „Tisch“) vom 28.XI., eine halbe Mine Silber 12. Addār,

2 1/2 Minen Silber 24. Addār, insgesamt 3 Minen Silber, ihre „Erntezahlung“ für das 4. Jahr,

²⁵ Die Phrase *akī pī* kann entweder „auf Befehl/Geheiß“ oder „nach Aussage“ (präpositional mit *kī/akī* „according to“ s. CAD P: 468a) bedeuten.

8 Kor Salz, 24. Addār,

1 1/2 Minen Silber für 90 Kor Datteln, 26. Addār,

³⁰⁾ 10 Kor Datteln von der Pachtzahlung des Ardia/Nabû-tabni-ušur vom 3. Jahr, aus Ṭurānu durch Nanāja-ahu-iddin,

2/3 Minen 9 1/3 Sekel Silber vom Silber, das als Kaufpreis für Gerste mit Nabû-mukīn-apli, den šatammu und Arad-Marduk, den Schreiber, in die Steppe mitgenommen wurde, 11. Nisānu, 4.

Jahr,

³⁵⁾ 10 Ziegenböcke 12. Nisānu, 4. Jahr.

Kommentar:

Z. 1: Der *qīpu* war als Vorgesetzter des *rab širkī* der Beamte, der für die Arbeiten des Tempels an königlichen Bauprojekten zuständig war. Anu-šarru-ušur hat sich jedoch offenbar selten direkt um die Arbeiten an der Mauer von Babylon gekümmert, vielleicht war er gleichzeitig anderswo eingesetzt.

Z. 5 und 7: Die beiden Männer sind in den Briefen genannten *rab hanšēs* „Aufseher über fünfzig (Mann)“, die also letztlich doch die Rationen entgegennahmen.

Z. 6 und 9: Es ist nicht klar, was *pirru* bedeutet. Möglicherweise bezeichnet der Begriff das wechselnde Wachpersonal und die Handwerker, die zu den 180 Mann hinzustießen. In der Überschrift werden nur die 180 Arbeiter genannt.

Z. 9f.: Nanāja-iddin/Nabû-iqīša und (Lugalbanda)-šumu-ibni/Ina-tēšī-ēter könnten weitere *rab hanšēs* oder Dekurios sein, denn in BM 114558 (1 Nbk IV) werden beide auch im Zusammenhang mit Rationen für den Bautrupp genannt.

Z. 17 und Z. 29: Die Preise der Datteln liegen mit 1 s/Kor auf normaler Höhe.

Z. 24f. und 28: Für die Zahlungen von Öl, Salz und Kresse s. Janković 2008.

Z. 25f.: Am 28.IX. fand auf den Baustellen ein Festmahl statt, vgl. Kleber 2008: 126.

Z. 27: *ebūru* ist eine kleine Ersatzzahlung für die Ernte des übernächsten Jahres, vgl. Kleber 2008: 128f.

Z. 31: Der Ort Ṭurānu liegt laut RGTC 8: 316 in Bīt-Amukānu. Nabû-ahu-iddin ist natürlich der *bēl piqitti*.

Z. 35: Innin-ahhē-iddin erbat drei Ziegenböcke von den Lieferungen vom Nisān des 4. Jahres. Der Winkelhaken am Anfang der Zeile könnte entweder als „10“ gelesen werden oder als „u“ (und), falls der Eintrag einen Nachsatz bezeichnet.

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