

Destination Eanna : Cultic Assemblies Visiting Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period

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Abstract: In the Neo-Babylonian period, gods and their associated cultic personnel often travelled from their respective cities to Babylon, the political and religious capital of the empire, especially for major rituals such as the *akītu* festivals. Visits by the cultic officials of Babylon and nearby Borsippa to other, less prominent temples are less well attested and consequently poorly understood. Nonetheless, a handful of administrative and economic texts, primarily from the Eanna archives, attest to Babylonian and Borsippean (and, in one case, Larsean) priestly and divine visitors in Uruk¹. These records contain information related to the logistics not only of moving cult statues between cities but also of provisioning traveling and visiting personnel, including by the *rē'i sattukki*, who normally provided livestock only for ritual purposes. In turn, these texts illuminate some aspects of the economic and cultic relationships between different temples from the perspective of the Eanna in Uruk in the Neo-Babylonian period and may hint at lesser-known festivals or visits that served a function not primarily related to rituals.

Keywords: Babylon – Larsa – Uruk – travel – priests – economics

INTRODUCTION

While Mesopotamian gods remained most of the time in the safety of their temples, inhabiting restricted areas far from the public eye, there were several occasions on which the gods would emerge from their abodes and into their communities. Perhaps the best known example, at least for the first millennium BCE, is the *akītu* festival, during which the gods' cult statues would process out of the temple and into an *akītu* house just outside of the city². For the Babylonians, this procession focused on Marduk and his entourage in the Esagil temple and centered on Babylon as the religious center and imperial capital and Marduk's patron city³. Deities from other temples around Babylonia participated in this celebration as well, undertaking (sometimes long) journeys from their respective cult centers to Babylon. Based on the Hellenistic ritual texts that describe the *akītu* festival, the gods from the other Babylonian cult centers, such as Borsippa and Uruk, would travel by boat to Babylon, arriving on the 5th or 6th day of the *akītu* festival with a cultic and diplomatic entourage of priests and officials and leaving the same way on the 11th or 12th of Nisānu, the last day of

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² For information about the Babylonian *akītu* festivals in Nisānu and Tašrītu, see DA RIVA & GALETTI 2018, 190, especially n. 5 for further references. An overview is given in ZGOLL 2006 and a thesis dedicated to this topic is in process, see DEBOURSE (in prep.). Festivals, including the *akītu*, are also discussed in COHEN 2015.

³ The Assyrian *akītu* festivals are different and discussed in BARCINA 2017.

the festival⁴. There were numerous ideological reasons for the deities of the other Babylonian cities to travel to Babylon, not least of which was to pay homage to Marduk as the head of the pantheon and to acknowledge Babylon as the political and religious capital of the region, and the cultic images themselves would also undergo a renewal process on the third day of the festivities⁵. The *akītu* festival is only one example of divine journeys, however, and there were other occasions on which cult images would travel, as will be discussed below⁶.

Regardless of the reason, transporting a god was no simple task –the deed had to be done with the utmost care to ensure the safety and well-being of the cult statue during its journey⁷. Cult statues were considered to be the gods themselves, created and animated through ritual acts, and damaging or accidentally destroying the cult image while travelling would have been a catastrophic event (WALKER & DICK 2001; HUROWITZ 2003). Moreover, the god’s daily cult could not go neglected during the trip and it was necessary to arrange for feeding, clothing, and caring for the deity during its time away from its temple. In order to ensure these conditions, the cultic personnel from the deity’s home temple travelled with the cult image. Like with their divine counterparts, it is well attested in the sources that priests travelled to the imperial center, but cultic personnel leaving the center to pay a visit to secondary or minor temples is rarely mentioned (JURSA 2010, 70). One known example comes from a deposition text from Uruk, YOS 7 20, which mentions that cult images from Babylon and Borsippa (“the gods of the Esagil and Ezida”) were present in the Eanna temple during the events described in the text (BEAULIEU 2003, 263-64). The tablet is dated to Simānu 9 in the 2nd year of Cyrus’ reign, and Beaulieu notes that early Simānu was a period in which there were rituals for Ušur-amāssu and Urkayītu; what role the visiting gods had (if any) in these rituals is not specified (BEAULIEU 2003, 264)⁸.

Though this case is unusual, it is certainly not unique and this article presents editions of five texts from Uruk, largely from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, that contain information about cultic personnel and divine images that visited the Eanna temple in Uruk⁹. The

⁴ BIDMEAD 2002, 86, 106 for the suggestion that the journey took place on the 6th and 12th days and ZGOLL 2006, 25, 41 for the 5th and 11th days.

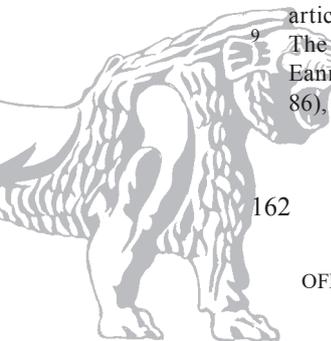
⁵ BIDMEAD 2002, 54, 93, 106 and MACGINNIS 2000 for gods traveling for the *akītu* ritual. For Nabû’s journey to Babylon for the *akītu* in particular, see WAERZEGGERS 2010, 119-130. There is also evidence of Šamaš of Sippar travelling to visit Babylon on an *eleppu ša kusīti*, see ZAWADZKI 2005.

⁶ See also JURSA 2010, 70 and WAERZEGGERS 2010, 130-134.

⁷ For instance, during the well-documented efforts made by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal to ensure that Marduk’s return from Assyria to Babylon was done correctly both logistically and ideologically; for an overview, see NISSINEN & PARPOLA 2004. Additionally, WAERZEGGERS (2010, 120-25) has described the preparations made for Nabû’s journey to Babylon for the *akītu* festival, from the ritual cleaning of his accommodations in the Esagil to preparations in Borsippa that included clothing ceremonies, beer offerings, and sheep sacrifices.

⁸ The subject matter of the deposition concerns a temple slave entering into a restricted space that contained the statues of the gods from Babylon and Borsippa. BEAULIEU 2003, 264 has identified this text as “the only direct hint in the entire archive at the possibility that either Marduk or Nabû, or other gods of the capital, travelled to Uruk to participate in the rituals of the Eanna temple” because a procession (*tebû*) of Urkayītu is mentioned, but it cannot be concluded that the visiting gods joined Urkayītu’s procession. The other texts discussed in this article may have also included ritual elements but they are not explicitly mentioned in any of them.

⁹ The five texts, all of which were found in Uruk, have the following contexts: three are certainly from the Eanna archive (UCP 9/1 42, NCBT 760, and VS 20 48), one is an undated letter of unknown origin (YOS 3 86), and one is a letter that probably came from Larsa, given its contents (BIN 1 1). These texts are all dated (or



following discussion focuses especially on journeys to Uruk from those cities with larger temples, Babylon and Borsippa, but also includes an example of a trip taken from Larsa, whose local temple to Šamaš, the Ebabbar, was smaller than the Eanna. In doing so, this article seeks to better understand the phenomenon of gods and their priests visiting Uruk from other cities, including the purpose of these journeys and their logistics, and the implications of these visits for the relationships between the different temples and associated personnel.

PRIESTLY PROVISIONS

Two texts from the Eanna archive, UCP 9/1 42 and VS 20 48, attest to the presence of members of the cultic assemblies of Babylon and Borsippa in Uruk. The former is dated to just after the *akītu* festival in Babylon, suggesting that the Urukean deities had already gone north to Babylon and returned to their cult center. The latter text, dated to the first week of Addāru, may also have coincided with a divine procession, this time from Uruk. It is significant that members of the assemblies of both the Esagil and the Ezida, the most important temples in Babylonia, were visiting the Eanna in Uruk, and these texts moreover provide some glimpses into how these esteemed guests were treated during their stay. These personnel from Babylon and Borsippa would remain in Uruk for an unspecified amount of time and thus needed daily food provisions, which were administered through the Eanna. In particular, these two texts reveal that the visiting personnel were provisioned with sheep and beer by local officials.

The first text reads as follows¹⁰:

UCP 9/1 42

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. 10 udu.nīta šá a-na
 lútin.tir^{ki.meš}
 ù bar*.sipa^{*ki.meš}
 lúki-na-áš-tu₄</p> | <p>(The temple) received 10 sheep,
 which were given to the people
 of Babylon and Borsippa
 (that is, the members of) the priestly college,</p> |
|---|--|

can be dated) to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II except for BIN 1 1, which is more likely from the Achaemenid period, see discussion below. On the Eanna archive, see VAN DRIEL 1998 and for Larsa see BEAULIEU 1991. For an overview of known archives in the Neo-Babylonian period, see JURSA 2005.

¹⁰ The handcopy was originally published by LUTZ (1972), which is, to the authors' knowledge, the only full edition, with a recent (2018) paraphrase in the NaBuCCo database by LEVAVI and ABRAHAM (<https://nabucco-db.org/node/6593>). Otherwise, the text is referenced only in passing in such publications as KLEBER 2010 and BEAULIEU 2003. As Lutz's handcopy contains several errors, this edition indicates signs that the authors read differently from Lutz with *. The authors collated this tablet from the photo, which is available in the CDLI database (CDLI number P248252). LUTZ (1972) had read line 5 as a personal name but what he saw as the *Personenkeil* is a šá on the tablet. The new translation, "with the gods," suggests a type of cultic procession. The earlier reading of Bēl-iqīša is an error but he and Tukultī-Marduk were both attested as *rē'i sattukki* and were contemporaries of each other. The term *nadan* in line 7 should be understood as *nadnū*. The verb form *mahir* in line 9 is typical for the Eanna archive to indicate the one giving the goods, see JURSA 2005: 46. This episode is mentioned already in JURSA 2010, 110.



5.	šá* it-ti dingir ^{meš} ta tin.tir ^{ki} il*-li-ku*-nu na*-dan* 1tukul-ti-damar.utu	who had come with the gods from Babylon, from Tukultī-Marduk,
l.e.	dumu*-šú* šá m ^{nig} .*du* 1úšipa šá.dug ₄ igi-ir	son of Kudurru, the <i>rē'i sattukki</i> .
rev. ₁₀	iti.bár ud.22.kam mu.23.kam d+ag-nig.du-ùru lugal tin.tir ^{ki}	Month of Nisānu, 22 nd day, 23 rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

As mentioned, the deities coming with the officials from Babylon suggests that the gods of Uruk –the patron goddess Ištar of Uruk and possibly other residents of the Eanna such as Nanāya – had visited Babylon for the *akītu* festival and were now returning to their respective dwellings in Uruk¹¹. The Urukean deities would have been accompanied by their own cultic personnel for the entire journey but apparently made their return trip with the addition of the cultic assembly (*kiništu*) of Babylon and Borsippa as part of the travel party¹². The returning Urukean personnel were not mentioned in the text since, as locals, they would not need additional provisions from the temple beyond their existing rations. Borsippa was important as the cult center for Nabû, Marduk’s son and a guest of honor for the *akītu* in Babylon (WAERZEGGERS 2010, 120)¹³, thus there were personnel from the two most prominent cult centers in Babylonia staying in Uruk on the date recorded in the text. The same combination reappears in VS 20 48, though that text does not mention the accompanying gods, and YOS 3 86 mentions the cultic assembly of Esagil in Borsippa traveling with Urukean gods; both texts are discussed below.

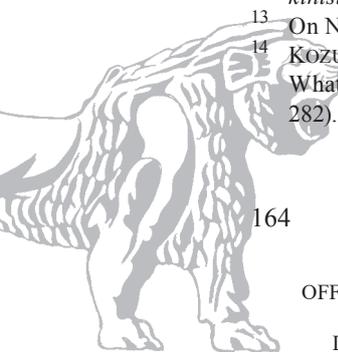
In UCP 9/1 42, the visiting cultic assembly was provisioned with livestock by the *rē'i sattukki* (the “offering shepherd”), an official who administered and prepared livestock, usually sheep and sometimes goats, that were used for ritual slaughter¹⁴. The people who acted in these roles were called either *rē'i sattukki* or *rē'i ginē* but they were not shepherds in the true sense of the word in that they were administrators who generally had several shepherds working for them. According to VAN DRIEL (1993, 226, 239), the *rē'i sattukki* was part of the internal organization of animal husbandry in the temple along with the *bīt urī* (“fattening

¹¹ For other deities, especially goddesses, visiting Babylon during the *akītu* of Nisan, see DA RIVA & GALETTI 2018, 213-217. Divine journeys to Babylon (and Kiš) during Šabātu 28-29 are discussed in DA RIVA & GALETTI 2018, 216, GEORGE 2000, 289-299, and WAERZEGGERS 2010, 130-134. On Urukean cults in the Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian periods, see BEAULIEU 2003 & KRUL 2018.

¹² The term *kiništu* (also *kinaštu* or *kinaltu*) is used here collectively as a type of collegium or assembly associated with the temple, comprising various types of priests, prebend-holders, and professionals or laborers important to the cult. The concept of *kiništu* has been discussed in BONGENAAR 1997, 150-165, who defines it as “the prebendaries of a temple organization or their representatives,” rejecting van der Spek’s observations regarding the relationship of *kiništu* to ¹⁰UKKIN as the “council of the temple” during the Seleucid period. In this text, this term qualifies both the group of Babylonians and the group of Borsippeans. For another discussion of *kiništu* and its composition, see PIRNGRUBER 2015, 210-11.

¹³ On Nabû’s role in the *akītu* in Babylon and his journey from Borsippa, see DA RIVA & GALETTI 2018, 191.

¹⁴ KOZUH 2010, 216, 536-537, 548. For more information on daily offerings in the Eanna, see ROBBINS 1996. What exactly the preparation consisted of is not known at the present time (KÜMMEL 1979, 85; KOZUH 2014, 282).



house¹⁵). The livestock in this text, however, are not likely to be related to the sacrificial offerings – the amount is more than double what the *rē'i sattukki* usually provided for the daily sacrifices and are said to be given to the people rather than to the god¹⁶ – but are instead probably intended for the cultic specialists themselves, who receive food and beer rations during their stay¹⁷. This is an unusual account in that livestock provided by the *rē'i sattukki* were almost exclusively used for cultic offerings, though this provision could still be considered a cultic expense in the sense that it was allocated to cultic personnel¹⁸.

There are additional indications from other texts that the *rē'i sattukki* indeed provided livestock for reasons other than ritual sacrifice. Another Eanna text, NCBT 760¹⁹, for instance, shows the same *rē'i sattukki*, Tukultī-Marduk, allocating ten sheep to Šamaš and two sheep to the *ummânū*:

NCBT 760		
	10 udu.níta ^{meš} šá a-na	(The temple) received 10 sheep
1.	^d utu šap-ru-ú	that were sent to Šamaš
	2 udu.níta ^{me} šá a-na	and 2 sheep that were given
	^{lu} um-man-ni sum-ú	to the <i>ummânū</i> from
l.e.s	^l tukul-ti- ^d amar.utu	Tukultī-Marduk,
	[a] ^l níg.du	[son of] Kudurru,
rev.	^r ú ⁷ sipa-i igi-ir	the <i>rē'i sattukki</i> .
	(1 line uninscribed)	
	iti.še ud.17.kam	Month of Addāru, 17 th day,
10.	mu.21.kam ^{ld} +ag-níg.du-ùru	21 st year of Nebuchadnezzar II,
	lugal tin.tir ^{ki}	king of Babylon.

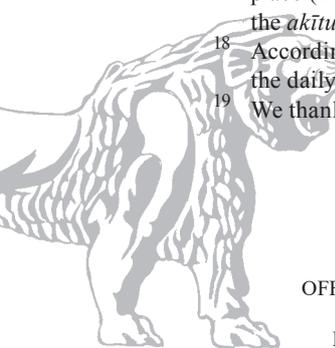
¹⁵ On this topic see also KOZUH 2014, 220-223.

¹⁶ ROBBINS 1996, 66 and compare to NCBT 760 and BIN 1 1 below in which sheep and oxen are “sent to Šamaš,” i.e. provided for the offerings in Larsa. BIN 1 1 further specifies that dates will travel with the entourage to Babylon. The phrasing in UCP 91/ 42 makes it thus unlikely that these sheep would have been intended for ritual offerings in Babylon. There is a text (BM 113264) discussed by JANKOVIĆ 2008: 448-49 that mentions eight goats for 180 men employed in a public labor project for the period of eight months, but these people were neither cultic personnel nor *ummânū* and she argues that meat consumption was actually quite restricted for the normal workers.

¹⁷ For instance, several letter orders indicate that the *ummânū* from Babylon were provided with beer and food rations by the Ebabbar temple during their visits to Sippar, see BEAULIEU 1989, 7-10 and BONGENAAR 1997, 123, though (as noted below), they were not usually given sheep. There is a connection between the *akītu* houses and sheep, first of all because the new year was a time of account-taking in the temple, including of the holdings of sheep belonging to the god (BIDMEAD 2002, 164-165) and second of all because the *akītu* house itself may have served as the location in which the royal sheep were sheared when festivals were not taking place (BIDMEAD 2002, 116-118). Nonetheless, the sheep mentioned in UCP 9/1 42 are not related to shearing or the *akītu* festival but, as stated, are simply meant to provision the visiting personnel.

¹⁸ According to KOZUH (2014, 283), “around 90% of all the animals collected by the offering shepherd went for the daily offerings, called *sattukku*, and for another set of offerings named *guqqū*.”

¹⁹ We thank Michael Jursa for his transliteration of this text.



The ten sheep were sent to the Ebabbar of Larsa (rather than of Sippar), where they would be used for the ritual offerings for Šamaš of Larsa²⁰. The two sheep given to the *ummânū* parallel the provisions that Tukultī-Marduk gave to the visiting priests, constituting another example in which the *rē'i sattukki* allocated sheep for non-ritual purposes. This text also suggests that the *ummânū* were in the Eanna complex but it is not stated whether they were the local *ummânū* of the Eanna or visiting specialists from Babylon. That there is a record of their provisioning may indicate the latter case, however, as local provisions would not need special documentation²¹. This text is also noteworthy in that visiting *ummânū* were generally rationed staples like flour, beer, dates, and barley (and occasionally silver), but not usually sheep²². Similarly, YOS 7 8 mentions in lines 21-22 livestock given to corvée workers of Larsa, another exceptional example of animals allocated by this official outside of a ritual context. Otherwise, carcasses of animals that died prematurely in the *rē'i sattukki*'s care, unsuitable for sacrificial offerings, could also be rationed out for non-cultic purposes, but these animals are normally identified explicitly as carcasses, which is not the case in these texts (KOZUH 2010, 541-49)²³.

In addition to UCP 9/1 42 and NCBT 760, Tukultī-Marduk son of Kudurru, the acting *rē'i sattukki* for the Eanna, is attested in a large number of administrative texts²⁴. He served in this capacity during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II and possibly continued into Nabonidus' reign²⁵. Tukultī-Marduk's family was closely connected to this office, as indicated by their family name *rē'i ginē*, and held the position of *rē'i sattukki* for over three generations (KÜMMEL 1979, 84). As mentioned, the *rē'i sattukki* did not usually provide sheep for non-cultic purposes and the majority of the texts related to Tukultī-Marduk and the other known *rē'i sattukki* confirm the office's known responsibilities. Nonetheless, UCP 9/1 42 and NCBT 760 show that the *rē'i sattukki*, at least in Uruk, provided sheep rations to important visitors from another temple or city in a non-cultic capacity²⁶.

²⁰ See the discussion of BIN 1 1, below, for the dependency of the Ebabbar of Larsa on the Eanna temple.

²¹ One might expect that visiting *ummânū* would be qualified as coming from elsewhere, as in BEAULIEU 1989, 7-9 (e.g. "*ummânū* who came from Babylon"), but this is not consistent and therefore not conclusive.

²² BONGENAAR 1997, 368-369 provides a table of the known rations for *ummânū* who visited Sippar, and only one text (CT 56, 565) mentions sheep. CT 55 365 is another outlier as it mentions fish and dried vegetables or herbs.

²³ KOZUH (2014, 220) suggests that the *rē'i sattukki* kept livestock in separate groups, one that was ready for sacrifice and one that was kept in the pastures; presumably, the sheep mentioned in UCP 9/1 42 came from the latter group. For the terminology used with deceased livestock, see VAN DRIEL 1995, 232-233 and KOZUH 2010.

²⁴ BIN 1, 147; GCCI 1, 50; 88; 144; 216; GEHLKEN, *Eanna-Archiv* I, 109; NBDMich 19; UCP 9/1, 33; 36; 40; 41; 42; 48; UCP 9/2, 18.3; YOS 17, 66; 69; 70; 72; 72; 76; 84; 93; 94; 95; 96; 345; 360.

²⁵ KOZUH 2014, 218-219, referring to YOS 19 157 and Moore Michigan Collection 20, has suggested that he held this position from the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign to the 7th year of Nabonidus' reign, though this is a surprisingly long tenure of 55 years.

²⁶ See KLEBER 2005 and the note above about the *ummânū* visiting Sippar. Rations paid by the Eanna were usually in the form of barley and dates; on this and the rations for the *ummânū*, see PAYNE 2007, 17-26. Further examples include the *ummânū* coming to Babylon for work and receiving fish and herbs or vegetables in CT 55 356, while they are given beer rations in CT 55 142. Although the consumption of meat amongst laborers was unusual (see JANKOVIĆ 2008: 448-449), priests and other prebend-holders received meat from lambs, sheep, and goats (see KOZUH 2010, in particular 541 "the explicit sale or secular utilization of male lambs or sheep was virtually unknown."). Compare also with BIN 1 1 (below), in which the Larseans ask the Eanna for 30 *kurru* of dates for their journey with Šamaš from Uruk to Babylon.



The Babylonian and Borsippian cultic assembly members also received beer rations from an Urukian brewer. VS 20 48, another text from Uruk, is dated to the day after a procession mentioned in YOS 3 9, in which the Urukian gods depart from their city on the 6th of Addāru, discussed below²⁷. The text reads:

VS 20 48

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | 3 <i>dan-nu</i> [...]
<i>ša</i> <i>kaš.ḫi</i> . <i>[a šá[?]</i>
<i>a-na</i> ^{lú} <i>tin.tir</i> ^{ki}
<i>u</i> ^{lú} <i>bár.sipa</i> ^{me} | (The temple) received 3 vats [...]
of beer for the people
of Babylon
and the people of Borsippa, |
| 5. | ^{lú} <i>ki-na-al-t</i> ^[i^{me}]
¹ <i>gi-mil-lu</i>
<i>ma-ḫi-ir</i> <i>iti.še</i>
<i>ud.7.kam mu.42.kam</i>
^{d+} <i>ag-níg.du-ùru</i>
<i>lugal tin.tir</i> ^{ki} | (that is,) the cultic assembly,
from Gimillu.
Month Addāru,
7 th day, 42 nd year
of Nebuchadnezzar,
king of Babylon. |

Like in UCP 9/1 42, members of the cultic assemblies from the cities of Babylon and Borsippa received provisions, this time of beer instead of sheep, during a stay in Uruk. The purpose for the visit may have been related to a ritual or festival as well, as there were rituals in the Eanna during the first five days of Addāru (COHEN 2015, 447). Robbins, in her study about tabular lists of animal disbursements from the Eanna for the *sattukku* offerings, shows that “the sacrifice of more than ninety sheep on each of three consecutive days in *Addaru*, an enormous increase over the nine sheep in a typical daily rite, could not have been experienced as other than a major cultic event” but that the exact festival is not known (ROBBINS 1996, 69). She points to evidence of a festival for Bēlet-ša-Uruk on the 2nd, 3rd and 5th days of this month and that an administrative document shows that animals for the sacrifice were delivered to the Eanna around the same time; she notes, however, that other details are lacking despite the presumed scale of a festival that would have merited this amount of sheep²⁸. Nonetheless, it might be this mysterious festival that prompted these officials to come to Uruk, perhaps arriving in time for the festivities of the first five days of Addāru and remain-

²⁷ A photo of this tablet is available in the CDLI database as CDLI P373225.

²⁸ ROBBINS 1996, 72, writing that “it is remarkable that we find so few references to a festival occurring on these dates elsewhere in the literature. LKU 51, dated roughly within the same period as the tabular records, gives a summary of some ritual activities for the last nine months of the year and mentions activities for a festival for Bēlet-ša-Uruk in *Addaru*; what remains of the text specifies rituals on the second, third and fifth days of the month. YOS 3 25 details the delivery of sacrificial animals at the beginning of *Addaru*. This seems rather scant corroboration for a cultic event of such magnitude.” There is also another possibility: YOS 3 3 (= LEVAVI 2018, nr 64) is a letter from the king to several Eanna officials requesting *kalû* priests for a *ḫarû*-offering that he has planned for the 8th day of Addāru but, because it is not clear where the ritual took place, it is not conclusive that this offering is related to VS 20 48.



ing in Uruk to watch the gods depart on their journey on the 6th, though whether the officials then left on the 7th or stayed until the procession ended is unclear.

The beer provided in this text came from a local official named Gimillu, son of Ardia, who is known from other texts as a brewer whose duties included receiving and distributing beer during Nebuchadnezzar II's reign²⁹. Other visitors from Babylon, including an envoy of the *šatammu* of the Esagil, also received beer rations from Gimillu in Uruk³⁰. Gimillu is not associated with producing beer for cultic purposes, and 3 *dannu* is a fairly large quantity of beer: while the quantity held in a *dannu* is still not known for certain, the amount of 3 *dannu* is substantial though not exceptional³¹. The amount in this text suggests that this beer is meant for either a large number of people or a longer period of time, perhaps even including the personnel's return trip. Overall, it appears that the hosting temple, in this case the Eanna, was responsible for provisioning its priestly visitors with food and drink during their stay and called upon local personnel to do so.

UNDERTAKING THE JOURNEY BETWEEN BABYLON AND URUK

A divine journey to Babylon similar to that of UCP 9/1 42 took place in the Neo-Assyrian period under Ashurbanipal, who wrote that, during the return of the Marduk cult image from Assur, the Babylonian gods all traveled from their respective patron cities to Babylon for Marduk's triumphal re-entry into his patron city (RINAP 5 Asbpl 73/Assyrian Tablet 2). Several minor deities, including those associated with Uruk (Ušur-amāssu and Nanāya, for instance), waited along the river, while the more prominent gods Nergal, Nabû, and Šamaš traveled from their main temples (in Cutha, Borsippa, and Sippar, respectively) directly to Babylon itself, the mention of the river suggesting transportation by water consistent with the *akītu* journeys³². Marduk's re-entry into the Esagil was consecrated by food

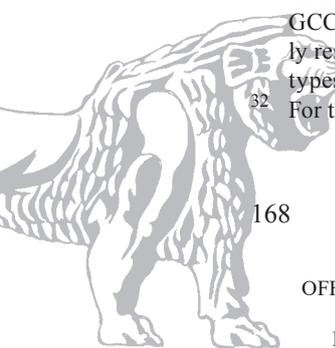
²⁹ See KLEBER 2005 (especially 311-313) and STOL 1994, 182.

³⁰ See GCCI 1 220 and 235.

³¹ KLEBER 2005, 300; she also notes that "Bier, Mehl, Brot oder sonstige verarbeitete Produkte waren keine normalen Rationen, außerhalb der hier besprochenen Texte tauchen sie äußerst selten als Ausgaben des Tempels auf." STOL (1994, 167, 169) addresses the issues with understanding how much one *dannu* is, as all that is certain is that it was the largest vessel. He adds that, by his calculations, 1 *dannu* is 26 *qa*, so close to 26 liters, with an alternative calculation of 31 *qa*, but that "of the largest vessel, *dannu*, sometimes the contents are given; much larger than 26 or 31 *qa*! The largest known is 1 kor, 1 PI (= 216 *qa*), smaller is 1 kor (= 180 *qa*). Another text gives various possibilities, 180 *qa*, 144 *qa*, 130 *qa*. Freydank showed that in brewing barley beer one needed 1 ½ kor of barley in order to produce one *dannu* of beer and reasons that one *dannu* had a capacity of ½ kor (90 *qa*). This seems to be confirmed by a contract assuring a man a yearly income of, among other things, four *dannu* of sweet beer per year: this means one vat for 90 days; assuming that the man consumed 1 *qa* per day, one arrives at a capacity of 90 *qa* for one *dannu*. One *qa* of barley beer per day is a minimum but quite possible . . . as to date beer, one kor of processed dates yielded one *dannu* of beer. Certainly the sizes of these vats had been standardized in order to get such nice ratios" (STOL 1994, 169-170).

The daily ration seems to have varied between 1-3 *qa* (STOL 1994, 180). Numerous texts mention Gimillu (see KLEBER 2005) and the amount he provides generally ranges from 1 to 5 *dannu*, for example AUWE 5 117, 118, GCCI 1 100, and NCBT 1038. The type of beer is not specified but Stol writes that barley beer was traditionally reserved for the cult and date beer was provided otherwise, with exceptions made of only *nāšu* and *zarbabu*, types of date beer allowed in the cult (STOL 1994, 161).

³² For the deities involved, see DA RIVA & GALETTI 2018.



offerings. This description, along with the mention of a renewal of statues, including a *mīs pī* ritual, closely imitates the features of the Babylonian *akītu* festival, though, according to the Esarhaddon Chronicle, Marduk's return took place on Ayyāru 25 during Ashurbanipal's first regnal year (April/May in 668 BCE), more than a month too late to be the traditional *akītu* festival. While this example is from the Neo-Assyrian period, it was an act meant to appease and win over a Babylonian audience and would have drawn upon Babylonian traditions to do so, thus providing a further insight into the logistics and ideology of divine journeys discussed in the Neo-Babylonian texts³³.

Indeed, the deities mentioned in UCP 9/1 42 must have also traveled by boat upstream on the Euphrates River to Babylon and returned the same way³⁴. The connection between Babylon and Uruk via river was well established and frequently used for trade between the Esagil in Babylon and neighboring temples in other Babylonian cities, especially between the temples in Uruk and in Babylon – JURSA (2010, 71) notes that both common provisions and prestige goods routinely travelled on the *eleppu ša kusīti* “boat of the *kusītu*-garment” between the Esagil and the Eanna. He further specifies that “the contributions of the *kusītu*-boat coincide with festivities, like the *lubuštu*-ceremony and the Addāru-festival” (JURSA 2010, 547), which may have implications for the texts YOS 3 9 and VS 20 48, in which the gods travelled during Addāru. As will be seen below, the trip back from Babylon to Uruk seems to have included a stop in Borsippa, which may have also been the case on the trip from Uruk to Babylon³⁵.

Officials travelled with the cultic image not only to ensure its safety and comfort during the journey but also to provide the deity with its daily cult, including feeding, clothing, sleeping, and other regular needs³⁶. Though they are not explicitly mentioned, it is safe to presume that local officials – that is, the members of the assembly of the Eanna – traveled with their deities to Babylon. Beaulieu writes that, when Ištar of Uruk's cult was moved temporarily to Babylon for safekeeping, the personnel not only provisioned the travelling god(s) but also sent brewers and bakers to Babylon with the divine image; there is evidence for at least the Eanna's chief brewer being present in Babylon during that time³⁷. UCP 9/1 42 and VS 20 48 suggest that, for the return trip, some members of the cultic personnel from the temples in Babylon and Borsippa were dispatched along with the selection of personnel from the Eanna that had come up to Babylon from Uruk with their cult images. The Neo-Babylonian letter YOS 3 86, below, also mentions the cultic personnel from the Esagil travelling with the Urukian gods to Uruk, with a stopover in Borsippa, though the Borsippian personnel are not mentioned.

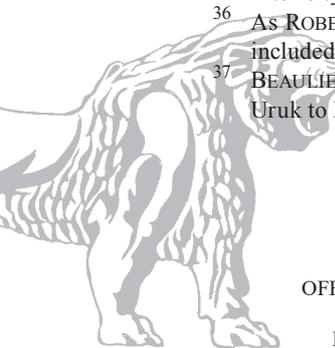
³³ In addition, there are similarities with Esarhaddon's attempt to return Marduk first, including that the god's statue was transported on the river (see NISSINEN & PARPOLA 2004). On the Assyrian use of Babylonian ideology, particularly during the return of Marduk, see PORTER 1993.

³⁴ Nabū also traveled to Babylon by water, but on the *nār Barsip* canal (WAERZEGGERS 2010, 125).

³⁵ Inter-city travel, both overland and via watercourses, is also discussed in LEVAVI 2018, 89-90.

³⁶ As ROBBINS (1996, 66) writes, based on the tabular records from the Eanna, “the basic regular daily sacrifice included nine sheep, typically five from the *urū*-stable and four from the shepherd of the ŠÁ.DUG₄ sacrifices.”

³⁷ BEAULIEU 1993, 247-248. YOS 9 94 indicates that barley for Ištar of Uruk's *ginū* offerings was taken from Uruk to Babylon, see BEAULIEU 1989, 221-222.



Some further details about how the deities were transported can be inferred from a later letter, YOS 3 145, which concerns the evacuation of the Ištar of Uruk statue from the Eanna to Babylon for safekeeping in the face of Cyrus' invasion³⁸. The letter, edited and discussed by BEAULIEU (1993), is addressed to two cultic officials of the Eanna temple and sent by Rīmūt, who Beaulieu identifies as being in Babylon³⁹. Rīmūt asks the Urukeans to send "one leather mat and five (inflatable) goatskins for the boat concerning the La[d]y of the Eanna via the soldiers who will bring the boat parts to me, (so that) the Lady of the Eanna may go upstream to Babylon on the Euphrates" (BEAULIEU 1993, 244). BEAULIEU (1993, 245) points out that "traveling by boat on the Euphrates was the easiest means of communication between Uruk and the capital" and shows an increase in boat rentals that he interprets as related to the movement of provisions for Ištar of Uruk to Babylon. FRIED (2004, 27) identifies this text as dating to the 17th year of Nabonidus' reign and suggests that Rīmūt is a *zazakku* official. She offers a different interpretation of the text, writing that:

"Rīmūt wants the boat and parts sent to *him*, so that the goddess may travel to Babylon on the Euphrates. This suggests that the goddess is with Rīmūt, not in her temple, and that Rīmūt needs the boats to bring her to Babylon. Rīmūt is not in Babylon; rather, he and the goddess must be somewhere in the south, on the Euphrates between Uruk and Babylon, and they lack the necessary equipment to continue their journey." (FRIED 2004, 27)

One further suggestion is that Rīmūt is in Borsippa, which seems to have acted as a stopping point between Uruk and Babylon, and he is waiting for his supplies to be replenished before the last leg of the journey.

A similar expedition is chronicled in the Neo-Babylonian letter YOS 3 86, previously edited by PONGRATZ-LEISTEN (1994, 251), though a connection between YOS 3 86 and UCP 9/1 42 was already observed by UNGER (1931, 160). While YOS 3 86, sent from Nabû-šuma-ukīn to Iddinâ, is undated, Nabû-šuma-ukīn was associated with boat deliveries that came in from Babylon and was active between the years 10-20 of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (LEVAVI 2018, 321, 325, 396), making the letter roughly contemporary to UCP 9/1 42 and NCBT 760:

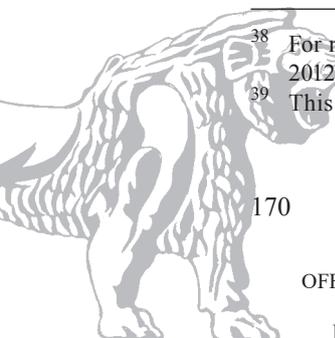
YOS 3 86

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. im^{ld}+ag-mu-gi.na
[a-n]a^lsum-na šeš-ia
[d]a^g u^damar.utu a-na šeš-ia
[lik]-ru-bu^{gis}má</p> <p>5. šá^{ld}+ag-mu-ib-ni
ul-tu bár.sipa^{ki}
id-da-ak-ka-am-ma
^{lu}ki-na-al-tu₄
šá é.sag.il</p> | <p>Letter of Nabû-šuma-ukīn
to Iddinâ, my brother.
May Nabû and Marduk bless my brother!</p> <p>The boat that Nabû-šuma-ibni
gave to you (for departure) from Borsippa

and in which the cultic assembly
of Esagil</p> |
|---|--|

³⁸ For more instances of divine statues that were sent to Babylon for this reason, see BEAULIEU 2014, ZAWADZKI 2012, and SANDOWICZ 2015.

³⁹ This letter is also discussed in WESZELI 2002, 30, 74.



10. *ina šà-bi it-ti ^dna-na-a* travelled downstream
ù ^dgašan šá unug^{ki} to Uruk with Nanāya
a-na unug^{ki} and Bēlet-ša-Uruk (Ištar of Uruk) –
ú-ri-du-u'
- rev. *giš^{ma} ^{lu}ki-na-al-tu₄* the cultic assembly
15. *šá é.sag.il* of Esagil
ina bár.sipa^{ki} gave (this) boat to me in Borsippa⁴⁰.
it-tan-nu-ú-ni

The issue at the heart of this letter is a disagreement about who has rights to a boat, as it appears that the same boat, previously in the possession of Esagil's cultic assembly, was given to both Iddinā and Nabû-šuma-ukīn to use. The boat seems to have been employed at some point to transport the cultic assembly members from Babylon to Uruk and was later docked in Borsippa, where the (mis)appropriation or miscommunication occurred. As Nabû-šuma-ibni cannot be identified with certainty, it is unclear what rights he had to the boat or if he was himself part of the Esagil's cultic assembly. Whether the boat belonged to the assembly or whether they leased it from someone else is also not certain⁴¹. Nonetheless, this text indicates that the members of cultic assembly of Babylon accompanied the Urukean deities' journey along the Euphrates from Babylon to Borsippa to Uruk and this is explicitly stated (as in UCP 9/1 42 and VS 20 48), while the Urukean cultic personnel who would surely have accompanied the deities to Babylon are left implicit.

That UCP 9/1 42 was written on the 22nd of Nisānu suggests that it was written around 10 days after the deities began their return trip, if the gods indeed set out from Babylon on the 11th or 12th of Nisānu (BIDMEAD 2002, 86, 106). Robbins' study on the disbursements of animals for regular offerings in the Eanna shows that there were increased offerings between Nisānu 7-11 (especially on the 8th) and then again on the 15th-16th (ROBBINS 1996, 72, 76-77). The first period of days is too early to be commemorating the return of the city gods to the temple, so perhaps the gods reentered the city on the 15th-16th, suggesting 3-4 days of travel from Babylon downstream to Uruk⁴². It seems to have taken Nabû relatively little time to travel from Borsippa, which was much closer to Babylon than Uruk but would have constituted one leg of the Urukean deities' journey, as a Neriglissar inscription indicates that Nabû left on the 5th and then left again on the 11th⁴³, suggesting only one full day of travel between Borsippa and Babylon (upstream)⁴⁴. Nonetheless, this implies that the cultic assembly had been in Uruk for about a week before they received the sheep mentioned in UCP 9/1 42.

⁴⁰ Translation contra PONGRATZ-LEISTEN 1994, 251.

⁴¹ For Eanna administrators renting boats, including for divine journeys, see BEAULIEU 1993, 245.

⁴² LEVAVI 2018, 89-90, who mentions that it took approximately one week to travel upstream to Babylon from Uruk; downstream travel would assuredly take fewer days to complete the same journey.

⁴³ See DA RIVA & GALETTI 2018, 191, DA RIVA 2013, 133, 135 and an earlier discussion in PONGRATZ-LEISTEN 1994, 197.

⁴⁴ See also WAERZEGGERS (2010, 123-129) for Nabû's departure from and reentry into Borsippa.



The divine statues could be on the road for several days; YOS 3 9, a letter from Nabû-ahhê-šullim to Ibni-Ištar that Levavi dates to around the 30th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (LEVAVI 2018, 458), mentions that the letter writer will travel for five days *itti ilāni* “with the gods,” who are departing from the city on the 6th of Addāru for a procession (KIENAST 1988, 8, 24-25, COHEN 1993, 342 and COHEN 2015, 446). Nabû-ahhê-šullim's greeting formula mentions Ištar and Nanāya, suggesting that he is Urukian, and other letters indicate that he was a mid- or high-ranking official in the Eanna temple⁴⁵, so it is indeed likely that these are the Urukian gods undertaking another journey. As mentioned above, there seems to have been festivities in the Eanna during the first five days of Addāru, so perhaps the gods were travelling after the conclusion of these rituals. Where and why the gods in Nabû-ahhê-šullim's letter are traveling thus remains unclear at the present time, but they may be traveling in conjunction with (or on) the *eleppu ša kusīti* mentioned above⁴⁶.

TRAVEL BETWEEN LARSA AND URUK

Finally, BIN 1 1, a letter from Larsa to Uruk, reveals that the cult image of Šamaš from the Ebabbar of Larsa, a minor temple during the Neo-Babylonian period, also travelled to Babylon⁴⁷. The trajectory of this god included an additional stop as he traveled northward: in Uruk, where the god's entourage picked up 30 *kurru* of dates for their journey.

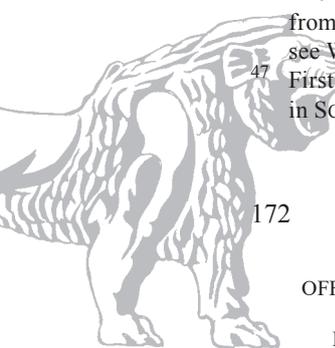
BIN 1 1

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | im ^{ld<<d>>} <i>il-ta-meš-id-ri-i'</i>
ù sum- ^d utu- ^{šu}
a-na ^{lú} šà-tam ad-i-ni
^d utu u ^{abu} ne-ne
5. <i>šu-lum u tin šá ad-i-ni</i>
<i>liq-bu-ú gu₄^{meš}</i>
<i>šá a-na ud.8.kam il-la-ka</i>
<i>ia-a-nu gu₄^{meš}</i>
a-na ud.8.kam a ^o -na
10. ^d utu <i>šup-pur</i>
30 gur zú.lum.ma | Tablet of Iltameš-idri'
and Iddin-Šamšu
to the <i>šatammu</i> , our father:
May Šamaš and Bunene
decree the health and life of our father.
There are no oxen
that are fitting for (the festival of) the 8 th day.
Send oxen
for the 8 th day
to Šamaš. Let the lord
prepare 30 <i>kurru</i> of dates |
|----|--|--|

⁴⁵ See LEVAVI 2018, 397, 457-458, including a letter that states that “the temple is entrusted to” Nabû-ahhê-šullim and Ibni-Ištar.

⁴⁶ There is also a “*makkû*-boat of the gods,” e.g. YOS 21 102 (= LEVAVI 2018 nr 139), in which said boat is sent from Babylon to Uruk to assist with a barley delivery. On boats in general in the second and first millennium, see WESZELI 2002.

⁴⁷ First edited by EBELING (1930-1934, 161), new editions of the Larsa letters including BIN 1 1 will be published in SCHMIDL (in prep.).



rev. <i>ina unug^{ki}</i> <i>en li-<u>h</u>ir-ma</i> <i>it-ti^dutu a-na</i> <i>tin.tir^{ki}</i> <i>li-il-lu-ú</i>	in Uruk that they might go up to Babylon with Šamaš.
---	---

While the Eanna was not as prominent as the Esagil, it was still the largest temple in the direct surroundings, and the Ebabbar in Larsa was one of a few minor temples that were essentially dependent on the Eanna to survive⁴⁸. Indeed, the first request in the letter indicates that there were no oxen that could be used for the offering to Šamaš that was supposed to take place on the 8th day of the month⁴⁹. Thus, Iltameš-idri', the *qīpu* of the Ebabbar⁵⁰, and his colleague Iddin-Šamšu⁵¹ asked the *šatammu* of the Eanna to send them livestock appropriate for the sacrifices. This was not a unique request: the Ebabbar of Larsa is known to have asked the Eanna for many such favors, especially for the *ginū* offerings for Šamaš, and letters record appeals for wine, sheep, and dates⁵². Concerning sheep distributed by the Eanna to the Ebabbar of Larsa, ROBBINS (1996, 81) writes that “these shipments appear to be occasional, although some are specified for particular rituals.” As mentioned above, there were large sheep offerings, at least in Uruk, on the 8th of Nisānu as well as on the 8th day of Tašrītu because of the *akītu* festivals, and there was an additional but poorly-known festival during the first 8 days of Addāru (ROBBINS 1996, 72). Unfortunately, the cultic calendar in Neo-Babylonian Larsa is essentially unknown so it is difficult to determine the nature of these 8th day sacrifices.

⁴⁸ ROBBINS 1996, 81: “the most common non-calendrical entry concerns the transfer of sheep to sanctuaries outside Uruk proper, either to the Nergal and Bēlet-Eanna temples in Udannu or to the Šamaš temple Ebabbar in Larsa.” On Ebabbar of Larsa’s dependence on Eanna, see LEVAVI 2018, 147-49 and BEAULIEU 1991 and 1993b.

⁴⁹ CAD s.v. *alāku* s. 3l. VAN DRIEL (1995, 220-224) discusses the characteristics of suitable offering animals.

⁵⁰ At Larsa and Sippar, the *qīpu* was the head of the temple according to BEAULIEU 1991, 74-75 (contra BONGENAAR 1997, 22-24, who considers the *šangū* as the temple manager in Sippar) and 78-81; he also discusses other texts in which Iltameš-idri' is mentioned with his title and the hypothesis that Iltameš-idri' was in office starting late in Cyrus' reign through the beginning of the reign of Darius I. BEAULIEU (1991, 79) moreover argues that the name should be transcribed as Šameš-‘idrī.

⁵¹ Iddin-Šamšu is otherwise unknown; the name Iddin-Šamšu is unusual and the ŠU sign is followed by what looks like a horizontal line , almost like a GAL sign (though there are no parallels of SUM-GAL as a personal name). As far as it is currently known, this name is otherwise unattested in the Neo-Babylonian letter corpus and there are no satisfying parallels that could suggest a better reading. This name and the peculiar horizontal line are discussed further in SCHMIDL (in prep.) and we thank Martina Schmidl for sharing her research in progress with us. She also noted that the Larsa corpus contains many West Semitic names, and variant spellings of the theophoric element Šamaš in Larsa and in West Semitic names is discussed in BEAULIEU 1991, 78-80.

⁵² According to BEAULIEU (1991, 58), the corpus of letters from Ebabbar’s personnel to the Eanna consist of “requests for shipments of foodstuffs, wine, sacrificial animals, cultic paraphernalia, and wool for the clothing of the statues of Šamaš and Bēlet Larsa (Aya?). Two of the letters, YOS 3 51 and 92, are requests to send workmen for the Ebabbar temple. One may therefore conclude that Larsa was, to some extent, in a subordinate position to Uruk which may have functioned as a kind of supply center for the surrounding communities.” This topic is addressed in BEAULIEU 1993b and LEVAVI 2018, 147-148 as well. See also NCBT 760, above.



Historically, Šamaš was the celebrant of a monthly festival on the 18th or 20th and of the *humtum* festival, which may have taken place in Sippar (at least) at the end of the year as the weather was becoming warmer, and an incantation text from the first millennium places the holiday on the 18th day of the month as well⁵³; there is no evidence, however, for the festival taking place in Larsa or in any city during the Neo-Babylonian period⁵⁴. More promising for understanding BIN 1 1 is that, in Sippar in the first millennium, there were offerings known to have taken place on the 8th day; specifically, there were twice-daily ceremonies on the 8th day of every month and the *šalam bīti* (“greeting of the temple”) on the 8th of Tašrītu (ZAWADZKI 2006, 186-192)⁵⁵. The tablet describing the monthly ceremony mentions the cult songs performed before Šamaš and MAUL (1999, 302), comparing the ritual to parallels known from Assur, suggests that there were songs in Emesal sung before Šamaš’s image during the morning and at night and that these were accompanied by sacrificial offerings. If the cultic calendar of the Ebabbar in Larsa mirrored that of the Ebabbar of Sippar, then one would expect the same ceremonies to take place on the 8th day of the month. In that case, the oxen in the letter may refer to the animal sacrifices that Maul suggests would take place during the morning and evening songs and ceremonies. That this rite was conducted so regularly might also explain why the letter asks for the oxen without specifying a particular ritual or festival. Otherwise, one letter from Larsa asks Eanna specifically for birds for the *eššēšu* festival⁵⁶, but, for the most part, the letters from Larsa to Uruk seem to request provisions for the regular offerings, especially *ginū* offerings (BEAULIEU 1991, 58 n. 3). The requests demonstrate the close connections between the two cities and imply that officials from Uruk would have travelled to Larsa to deliver these provisions.

Significantly, the letter also asks for provisions for Šamaš of Larsa’s trip to Babylon. While the letter is not dated, that Šamaš is traveling to Babylon makes the *akītu* festival a tempting candidate as the reason for this journey, though that is not necessarily the only occasion on which Šamaš have might travelled. Nonetheless, the requested amount of dates is a significant one: 30 *kurru* is around 5400 liters, or over 4 tons, which corresponds to the standard salary in kind of 10 people for three months⁵⁷. Presumably, these dates are intended for the cultic personnel who accompany Šamaš from Uruk to Babylon, both on the journey itself and possibly for their stay and return as well, considering the volume. Whether the cultic staff would be provisioned by the Esagil upon their arrival, in a parallel to the hospitality of the Eanna for the priests of Borsippa and Babylonia, is unknown. What is clear, however, is that the cultic personnel from Larsa brought their cult image first to Uruk, where they would

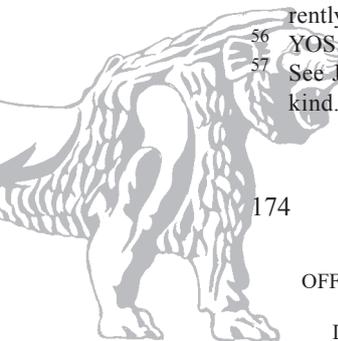
⁵³ For the incantation, which is a *lipšur*-litany, see WISEMAN 1969, 178.

⁵⁴ On this topic, see COHEN 1993, 275, 396-397, COHEN 2015, 302-303, MAUL 1999, 303-304 (for the celebration on the 20th). See also ZAWADZKI 2005, 8-9 for the journey of Šamaš from Sippar to Babylon and back in time for the 20th of the month.

⁵⁵ The ritual for the 8th day of each month is edited in MAUL 1999. For the *šalam bīti*, see BONGENAAR 1997, 120-122, including the note that this festival required a large quantity of flour (but not any oxen, as far as is currently known).

⁵⁶ YOS 3 51, mentioned in BEAULIEU 1991.

⁵⁷ See JURSA 2010, 50 with n. 209 for the conversion of dates from liters to kilograms; *ibid.* 297 for salaries in kind.

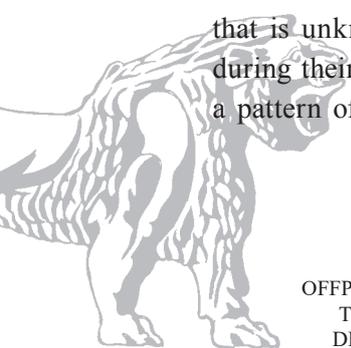


pick up the dates, and continue to Babylon, perhaps joined for the rest of the journey by the Urukean gods and cult personnel in a parallel to the Babylonians and Borsippians travelling southward together.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, these texts, while constituting a modest corpus, provide some insights into the logistical concerns of divine journeys between cities in Babylonia and the relationships between cultic personnel of different temples. In particular, these administrative documents speak to the poorly chronicled movement of higher status cultic assemblies – namely, those of Babylon and Borsippa – to the relatively less important Eanna, as opposed to the journeys undertaken by more peripheral deities to the imperial center. It is clear from these texts that the northward journey to Babylon for the *akītu* festivals was only one event in a greater phenomenon of cultic images and personnel traveling between temples around Babylonia. Though largely invisible, journeys to other temples besides the Esagil were likely no less important. In general, the reasons for the cultic visits are not made explicit in these short texts, and the presence of the cult images suggests a religious purpose. The rites or festivals possibly associated with visits are not always clear, however, as known festivals do not align well with the texts' dates and other ritual days are poorly known. For instance, there was an *akītu* house in Uruk as well, but the visitors mentioned in UCP 9/1 42 and VS 20 48 are not in the city to return the favor of participating in local *akītu* rituals, as the Urukean *akītu* was associated with rituals that took place in Tašrītu rather than in Nisānu (BIDMEAD 2002, 156; COHEN 2015, 402-408). But one might also suggest that these visits were made out of courtesy or priestly etiquette in order to maintain ties and communication between the various active temples of Babylonia, whether these visits correlated with rituals and festivals or not. After all, it is clear from the letters that temple officials had an established rapport with one another and sometimes depended on each other's institutions for basic provisions, as in the case of Uruk and Larsa.

These texts moreover provide some glimpses into how these visits happened from a logistical standpoint. Some details were already known and further reinforced, such as the use of rented boats and river travel as the preferred method to move divine images, but others have been previously understated or unknown, such as the role of the local institution in provisioning the visiting cultic assembly with food and drink. In particular, it seems that specific officials such as the *rē'i sattukki*, who traditionally only provided sheep for cultic offerings, and the brewer, who typically did not provide beer for cultic purposes, were called upon to allocate sheep and beer to these special visitors. While the visiting priests would have travelled to Uruk with provisions from their own temples, including dates and other staples, the fact that the Eanna would have not only allocated food and drink rations for the duration of their visitors' stay (and perhaps their journey back) but that the rations included sheep from the *rē'i sattukki* indicates the high status of these personnel. In sum, while there is still much that is unknown about the itineraries of cultic assemblies and what they would accomplish during their visits, the case of Uruk shows that there was much more to divine journeys than a pattern of less prominent deities travelling to Babylon for major rituals such as the *akītu*,



that it was important for the personnel of the Esagil and Ezida to visit the Eanna, and that cultic assemblies from different temples likely had regular personal contact in addition to their written correspondence.

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