

## A New Text from Nippur's "Archive of the Granary" in the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East

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[This paper presents the first publication of a cuneiform tablet accompanied by a sealed envelope, originating from Kassite Nippur and now housed in the collections of the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East. The text documents the receipt of beer containers by a previously unknown brewer, Taqīšu, who was active during the reign of Kurigalzu II. Based on prosopographic analysis, the document can be linked to Nippur's so-called "archive of the granary". The seal, featuring a martial motif and inscribed with a brief anonymous prayer to Marduk, is identified as belonging to the pseudo-Kassite style.]

**Keywords:** Kassite Nippur, administration, glyptic, brewers.

### 1. Introduction

The tablet with sealed envelope edited here for the first time (SM 1899.02.052A and SM 1899.02.052B, fig. 1) belongs to the collections of the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East<sup>1</sup> and is one of a small group of tablets from Kassite Babylonia housed there. It was acquired in 1899 by the museum's curator David Gordon Lyon from Daniel Z. Noorian, interpreter for the University of Pennsylvania's Nippur archaeological mission in 1888-90,<sup>2</sup> as part of a sizable lot of artifacts from various locations in Iraq and the Levant.<sup>3</sup> The timing of the sale coincides with the period the Nippur excavations brought to light most currently known Middle Babylonian cuneiform texts from the site. As a matter of fact, prosopography suggests that also this document originates from Nippur, more precisely from the tablet assemblage known as "archive of the granary".<sup>4</sup> This archive consists of ca. 270 tablets that were discovered southwest of the temple of Gula in area WA

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2. Harper 1893, 57.

3. Aja, personal communication, June 2024.

4. On the "archive of the granary" see Sassmannshausen 2001, 187–194 and Devecchi in print a. The "archive of the granary" at least partially corresponds to Pedersén's "Nippur 2" archive (see Pedersén 1998, 112-116).

of the site and covers a timespan of ca. 60 years, from the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Kurigalzu II until the 16<sup>th</sup> year of Kadašman-Turgu.

Prosopographical connection with the “archive of the granary” is provided by the presence of Innannu as the official in charge of giving containers of beer to a previously unknown brewer named Taqīšu, who joins the already long list of brewers attested in Middle Babylonian sources.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Text edition

Tablet and envelope feature virtually the same inscription with identical layout and text distribution, with the only exception that the tablet also provides Taqīšu’s profession (l. 6).

Dimensions: tablet 31×44×17 mm; envelope 42×53×31 mm

### Transliteration

#### Tablet (SM 1899.02.052A)

Obv. 5 DUG SAG  
 2 8 DUG ÚŠ  
 3 PAP 13 DUG *ša* TA *Za-rat-IM*<sup>ki</sup>  
 4 *iš-šu-ni i-na ŠU* <sup>m</sup>*In-na-an-ni*  
 5 <sup>m</sup>*Ta-qi-šu* DUMU <sup>m</sup>*Šu-zu-bi*  
 L.e. <sup>lu</sup>LUNGA *ma-ḫi-ir*  
 Rev. <sup>iii</sup>BÁR.ZAG.GAR  
 8 U<sub>4</sub>.18.KAM  
 9 MU.18.KAM  
 10 KIŠIB <sup>m</sup>*Ta-qi-ši*  
 11 DUMU <sup>m</sup>*Šu-zu-bi*

#### Envelope (SM 1899.02.052B)

Obv. 5 DUG SAG  
 2 8 DUG ÚŠ  
 3 PAP 13 DUG *ša* TA *Za-rat-IM*<sup>ki</sup>  
 4 *iš-šu-ni i-na ŠU* <sup>m</sup>*In-na-an-ni*  
 5 <sup>m</sup>*Ta-qi-šu* DUMU <sup>m</sup>*Šu-zu-bi*  
 L.e. *ma-ḫi-ir*  
 Rev. <sup>iii</sup>BÁR.ZAG.GAR  
 8 U<sub>4</sub>.18.KA[M]  
 9 MU.18.KAM  
 10 KIŠIB <sup>m</sup>*Ta-qi-ši*  
 11 DUMU <sup>m</sup>*Šu-zu-bi*

### Translation (tablet)

Obv. 5 first quality DUG-containers  
 2 8 second quality DUG-containers  
 3 Total: 13 DUG-containers which from Zarāt-Karkara  
 4 they brought here. From Innannu  
 5 Taqīšu, son of Šūzubu,  
 L.e. the brewer, received.  
 Rev. Month I,  
 8 day 18,  
 9 year 18.  
 10 Seal of Taqīšu,  
 11 son of Šūzubu.

5. See Sassmannshausen 2001, 78-80; further brewers are mentioned in the Middle Babylonian tablets of the ex-Rosen Collection, possibly stemming from the ancient Dūr-Enlilē: see van Soldt 2015, 581-582 and Devecchi 2020, 383.



Fig. 1. SM 1899.02.052A (left) and SM 1899.02.052B (right); see CDLI P405842

### Commentary

1-3. The Sumerogram DUG could indicate, depending on the context, either an actual container or its content, usually considered to be beer.<sup>6</sup> The qualifications “first quality” (SAG) and “second quality” (ÚS) used in this text must refer to the content, *i.e.* beer.

3. Zarāt-Karkara should have been in the vicinity of Karkara, whose identification with modern Tell Jidr has been recently confirmed.<sup>7</sup>

4. Innanu’s activities are recorded by more than ninety tablets and span from the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Kurigalzu II until at least the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Nazi-Maruttaš (see also below).<sup>8</sup>

6. See del Monte 1994 and Sassmannshausen 2001, 257, 453; cf. Deheselle 1994, 36-38.

7. See Marchetti *et al.* 2017, 70.

5-6. This is the first attestation of a brewer called Taqīšu, who is further identified as a son of Šūzubu. He must have been a brother of Rigim-Adad, a contemporary brewer who is well attested in the “archive of the granary” and who is also known to be a son of Šūzubu.<sup>9</sup> Taqīšu is a frequently attested name in Middle Babylonian documents<sup>10</sup> and, even within the “archive of the granary”, there were at least two other homonymous individuals: a Taqīšu son of Ninurta-bāni (BE 14 112) and another one identified as a scribe (BE 15 110). A number of attestations of the name Taqīšu bear no indication of the patronymic and of the professional title, and could be assigned to one or the other individual by the same name only by analyzing the context in which they occur. Among them, BE 15 54 and BE 15 143 can be referred to the brewer with a certain degree of confidence. BE 15 54 is a record of “expended barley, (measured by) the big *sūtu*, as production supplies for a brewer, since the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 15<sup>th</sup> year”<sup>11</sup> and lists substantial amounts associated with different locations (Āl-mār-Bā’ili, Bāb-Nuska, Dūni-aḫi, Dūr-Nuska, Zarāt-Karkara, Zibbat-Kartaba). The total, which adds up to more than 89 kor, is associated with the name of Taqīšu, no further qualified through patronymic or profession (Rev. 19-20). However, it seems very likely that he should be identified with the brewer mentioned in the text’s opening lines as recipient of the production supplies. BE 15 143 is a record of “wheat, (measured by) the big *sūtu*, which was expended in Kār-[Ad]ab from that of the god”<sup>12</sup> dated to day 21, month 8, year 24 of an unnamed king. Here, Taqīšu appears together with Rēš-ašūšu as recipient of a small quantity of wheat, whose purpose is not specified (Obv. 5). Even though the text does not provide details useful to identify Taqīšu and Rēš-ašūšu, it seems plausible that they were respectively the brewer discussed here and a well-known miller who often appears in tablets from the “archive of the granary”.<sup>13</sup> This is suggested by the fact that brewers and millers are often mentioned together, showing that these artisans were working in teams of two-three persons.<sup>14</sup>

7-9. Only a few receipts from Innannu’s dossier feature a full date containing month, day, year, and name of the ruling king. Usually, as in this case, they mention only month, day and regnal year, spanning from year 10 until year 24 of an unnamed king, who should likely be identified with Kurigalzu II.<sup>15</sup> A further element suggesting that this document dates in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Kurigalzu II is provided by BE 14 29 and BE 14 30, two receipts of barley issued by Innannu to Rigim-Adad, Taqīšu’s brother, that are dated precisely in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Kurigalzu II. Considering the date of this text, of BE 15 54 and of BE 15 143 (discussed above), Taqīšu’s period of activity can be currently dated between years 15 and 24 of Kurigalzu II.

8. See Sassmannshausen 2001, 188–189 and Devecchi a, in print for newly identified tablets belonging to Innannu’s dossier.

9. For the attestations of the brewer Rigim-Adad, see Hölscher 1996, 177 and Sassmannshausen 2001, 80. Rigim-Adad’s profession is mentioned in BE 14 29 (Kurigalzu 18), BE 14 30 (Kurigalzu 18) and CT 51 39 (year 18), while his filiation is known from BE 15 101 (year 19): even though the latter text does not explicitly identify Rigim-Adad as a brewer, the correspondence is secured by the context (expenditure of barley as production supplies, typically assigned to brewers and millers) and by the co-occurrence with other individuals who appear also in CT 51 39.

10. For Nippur, see Hölscher 1996, 217 and Sassmannshausen 2001, 495; for attestations in texts of the ex-Rosen Collection, see van Soldt 2015, 567 and Devecchi 2020, 378.

11. BE 15 54 Obv. 1-2: ṛŠE SUM<sup>1</sup>-nu ṛḂAN GAL ÉŠ.GÀR LU<sup>1</sup>LUNGA TA i<sup>1</sup>G[U<sup>4</sup>.SI.S]Á<sup>2</sup> MU.15.KAM.

12. BE 15 143 Obv. 1-2: GIG ḂAN GAL ša i-na Kar-[UD.N]UN<sup>ki</sup> i-na ŠÀ ša DINGIR SUM-nu.

13. For the attestations of the miller Rēš-ašūšu, see Hölscher 1996, 179 and Sassmannshausen 2001, 78.

14. Sassmannshausen 2001, 76; Deheselle 2004, 276-277.

15. Another – less likely – possibility would be Nazi-Maruttaš: see Devecchi a, in print.

10-11. The presence of a caption identifying Taqīšu as the sealer on both tablet and envelope is unusual; more often, if a tablet had an envelope, both the caption and the sealing are found only on the envelope.<sup>16</sup> For other documents from the same archive sealed by brewers, see below.

### 3. *Taqīšu's seal*

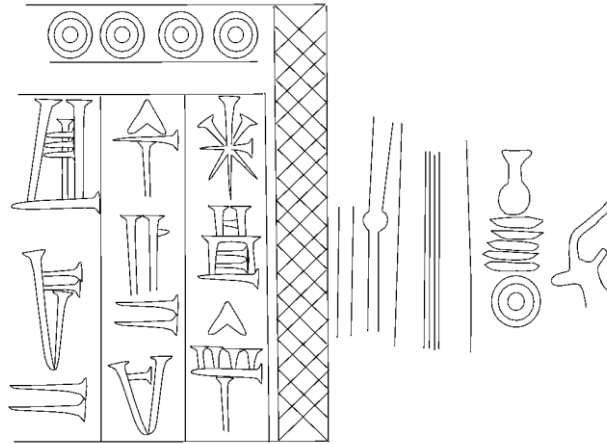


Fig. 2. Composite drawing of the seal impressions on the envelope SM 1899.02.052B

**Dimensions:** 33mm high, full length of seal design not preserved.

**Sealing practice:** The seal was rolled on all sides of the envelope: twice on the obverse, reverse, upper edge and lower edge, but just once on the left and right edges. On the obverse and reverse, the seal was rolled upside down compared to the inscription on the envelope. Despite the multiple rollings, the design is only partially preserved. The focus of the rollings was the seal legend.

The cuneiform inscription does not appear to have been warped and flattened by the impression of the seal, suggesting that the envelope was sealed before it was inscribed. The only possible exception is the DUG sign in line 2 of the obverse, which looks a little flattened.

#### **Inscription:**

<sup>d</sup>MES UMUN GAL  
IGI.DU<sub>8</sub>.A.NI  
ARḪUŠ TUKU.A

“O Marduk, great lord, who looks (upon him) with favor, have mercy!”<sup>17</sup>

16. Clay 1906a, 9-12; Matthews 1992, 56; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, 45; Zimmermann 2020. BE 15 116 – also from Innanu’s dossier – is another case of captions on both tablet and envelope, with seal impressions only on the envelope.

17. Following the translation adopted by CSIK no. 729. For different interpretations, cf. Limet 1971 no. 4.3 (“Marduk, prince sublime, (toi qui es) son secours, aie pitié (de lui!)”), Matthews 1992, 93 for KGN no. 81 (“Marduk, great lord, look with favor on him, show mercy!”), and Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, 242 (“Gott X, großer Herr, (der) seine Fürsorge (ist), hab Mitleid!”).

**Imagery:** The extant imagery shows a standing male figure in a long robe with a double-bordered hem or fringe down the middle. In a hand behind him, he holds an implement. His pose corresponds to what Matthews has termed the ‘martial’ pose, which would suggest that the implement is a curved sword.<sup>18</sup> An element to the left of the figure is too poorly preserved to identify. On the right there is a vessel, a stack of oblong objects (possibly bread loaves), a concentric circle, and a horned caprid.<sup>19</sup> An encased three-line inscription is flanked by a hatched band and topped by a band of concentric circles.

**Style:** The design, the use of borders and hatching in particular, suggests that the seal is of pseudo-Kassite style. The pseudo-Kassite style relates closely to the First Kassite style, but tends to have shorter or truncated prayer legends.<sup>20</sup> The inscription on this seal, calling upon a deity and petitioning for favor, is of this type. Personal names are generally not included in the pseudo-Kassite legends.

**Comparanda:** For other attestations of this legend, see e.g. Limet 1971 no. 4.3 (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996 no. 202; KGN no. 70), Limet 1971 no. 4.6 (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996 no. 328), Limet 1971 no. 4.29 (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996 no. 98c), KGN no. 81 (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996 no. 102) and KGN no. 116 (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996 no. 258a). For similar designs, see KGN nos. 95, 116, and 119, all pseudo-Kassite seals from Nippur.

**Context:** Other seals used by brewers active in the “archive of the granary” are KGN no. 33 (used by (E)ulmaš-bītu on the envelope of BE 15 114),<sup>21</sup> KGN no. 59 (used by Aḫu-illikam on the envelope of BE 15 138), and KGN no. 160 (used by (E)ulmaš-bītu on the envelope of BE 15 129).

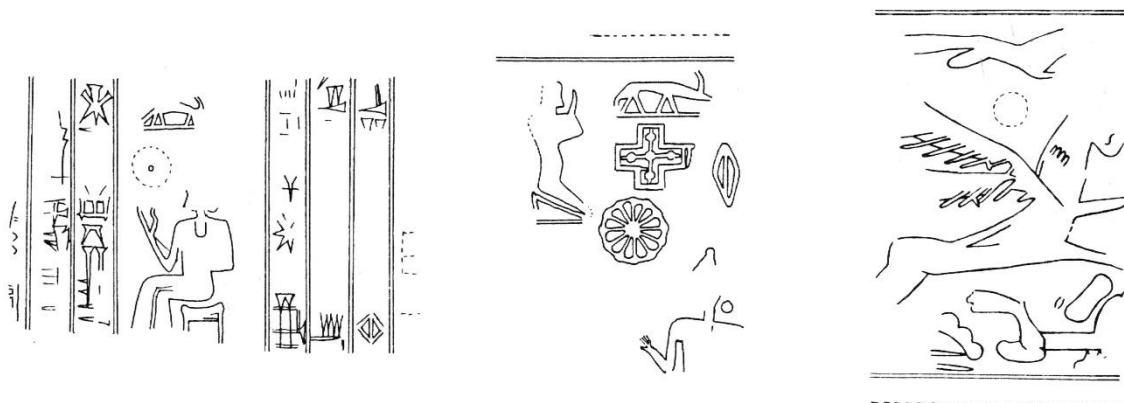


Fig. 3. Drawings of KGN nos. 33, 59 and 160 (from left to right; after Matthews 1992), all seals used by brewers in the “archive of the granary”

18. Matthews 1990, 21.

19. Matthews 1990, pl. I: horns, type 16.

20. Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, 242, Inscription type J.

21. The same seal was used also by the miller Rēš-ašūšu on the envelope of BE 15 118, dated to the very same day as BE 15 114 and likewise recording expenditures authorized by Innannu in the village of Kandurū (see Devecchi b, in print).

KGN no. 33 is First Kassite style with a poorly understood inscription dedicated to Ninisina. KGN no. 59 seems also to be First Kassite style, although the fragmentary preservation of the design means that the stylistic determination is not entirely certain. The seal would likely have had an inscription. KGN no. 160 is Second Kassite Style. Except for the fox and the seated worshiper on KGN no. 33 and KGN no. 59, there is no apparent stylistic and iconographic coherence in this glyptic material. The style, inscription and imagery of Taqīšu's seal is more closely related to seals from other contexts at Nippur.

#### 4. Abbreviations

BE 14: texts published by Clay 1906a

BE 15: texts published by Clay 1906b

CSIK: Corpus of Seal Inscriptions of the Kassite Period (<https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/csik/>)

CT 51: texts published by Walker 1972

KGN: catalog numbers of Nippur seals according to Matthews 1992

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