

Another Old Babylonian barley loan from Gula's temple*

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1. Introduction

[Kress 83](#) is an Old Babylonian loan of barley from the Gula temple, written in the twenty-first year of Rīm-Sîn I. It allows a better understanding and improved readings of the loan contract recently published as RSO NS 89, 38 no. 1 (Spada 2016; henceforth: no. 1).¹ Based on their similarity in date, contents and acquisition history, it is reasonable to assume that both tablets refer to the same temple of Gula.

Although no archaeological context of the tablets is known, the use of year-names of Rīm-Sîn I relates that the tablets come from the Kingdom of Larsa; the reference to sealing by the witnesses in [Kress 83](#) (l. 15) points to the city of Larsa or to its vicinity.

[Kress 83](#) is housed at the private collection of P. Kress (Bochum).¹ As the owner relates (pers. comm. 03.07.2017), he bought it from Michael J. Farr (Akron, OH), a former business associate of Bruce P. Ferrini,² in 2007. There seems to be no obvious connection to his other Old Babylonian documents coming from the same source.

2. Text edition

2.1. Text Apparatus

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Photo | CDLI No. P370944 |
| Measurements | 3.8×3.3×1.8 cm |
| Museum No. | Kress 83 |
| Date | RS 21/10 |

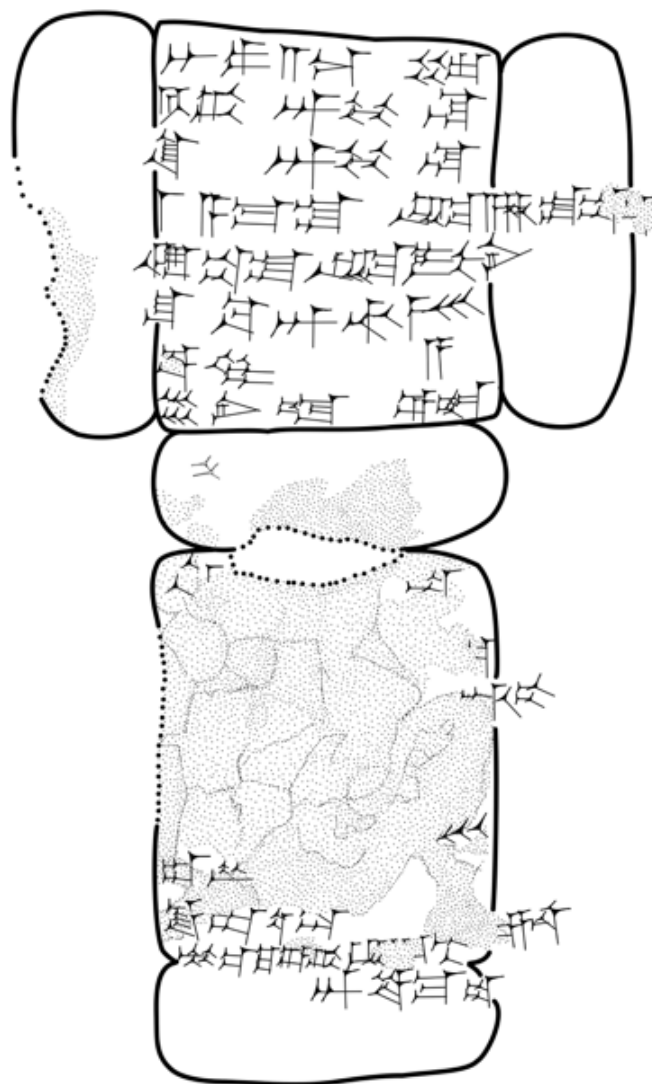


Fig. 1

2.2. Transliteration

Obverse

- 1 2.0.2; 2 SILA₃ ŠE.GUR
- 2 NIĜ₂.GA dGU.LA
- 3 KI dGU.LA
- 4 ¹a-ma-at-dEN.ZU a-ḫa-at r Ša²-la²?-[...]
- 5 u₃ ša-at-dEN.ZU DUMU.MUNUS.NI
- 6 ŠU.BA.AN.TI.MEŠ
- 7 iti^{ti}SIG₄.A
- 8 ŠE I₃.AĜ₂.E.NE

Bottom

edge

{x}

(-)

Reverse

- 9 ^ˆKI^ˆ [LU₂.SILIM.MA].^ˆTA^ˆ(?)
10 [u₃ LU₂.GI.NA.TA(?)]
11 [ŠU BA.AB.TE.Ĝ]A₂(?)
12 [IGI^ˆ ...-li^ˆ-t]u₃^ˆ-ul
13 [...]
14 [...]
15 KIŠIB^ˆ LU₂^ˆ [INIM.MA.BI.M]EŠ
16 ^ˆiti^ˆAB.E₃^ˆ
17 mu^ˆ ^ˆiš^ˆtukul kala-ga^{dˆ} en-lil₂^ˆ m[u-u]n-na-

Top edge

18 -an-šum₂-ma-ta

(-)

Seal legends

- 1 a-[pil^ˆ-^{dˆ}E]N.^ˆLIL₂^ˆ (on le. e.)
 DUM[U] ^{dˆ}EN.ZU-^ˆre^ˆ-[x x (x)]
2 [...]-^ˆša^ˆ-gi-[...] (on obv.)
 [...]

2.3. Translation

“Amat-Sîn, the sister of Šala(?)-[...] and her daughter Šāt-Sîn have received 2 gur (and) 22 sila (= 622 l.) of barley, (which are) property of Gula, from Gula. They will measure out the (same amount of) barley in Month III. [He (the creditor) will ta]ke it from [the financially sound and legally responsible one]. [Before ...-liṭṭ]ul(?), [...]. The seal(s) of the witnesses (have been impressed on this document). Month X; the year: ‘He (destroyed Uruk) with the help of the mighty weapon entrusted to him by Enlil’.”

Seals:

- 1) A[pil-E]nlil(?), son of Sîn-rē[...]
2) [...]

3. Commentary

1: Both tablets record loans of large quantities of barley, here 622 litres, however in no. 1 the damage of the surface does not allow a safe restoration. The available room makes one expect several *gur* of barley, however.

2-3: These lines allow some improvements to no. 1 which is now to be interpreted as a barley loan from the Gula temple. Lines 2-3 of that text should be read accordingly:

[NIĜ₂].^ˆGA^ˆ ^{dˆ}GU.LA / ^ˆKI^ˆ ^{dˆ}GU.LA.

The presence of the goddess Gula as creditor is a clear indication that this loan contract (and consequently also no. 1) belongs to the category of the “temple loans”.³ In this case, therefore, it seems that the lender deity is not the chief god of the city, but a divinity with a more modest local role (see Charpin 2015: 157). Based on L.76.70, a text that was found by the French excavators at the Ebabbar and that deals with donations to Gula as well as with her *pašišum*-priests,⁴ Richter (2004: 360-361) assumes that her cult in Larsa was more significant than the available sources would imply. Like the two

loan contracts, that text is dated (RS 24[?]/09/15?) [here the note from #1 as footnote no. 5 (see above)] well before the occupation of Isin by Larsa.

The presence of a term (here NIĜ₂.GA, “property (of the deity)”) specifying that the lent goods belong to the divinity (i.e., to his/her temple), is not unusual in temple loans. The most common is the use of KU₃(.BABBAR) or ŠE, followed by the name of the lending god(dess), but sometimes also NIĜ₂.GA appears (see for example OECT 13, 177 from Kiš/Ingharra). In one case the term NIĜ₂.U₂.RUM, with the same meaning (cf. OECT 15, 270 from Larsa; see Charpin 2007: 152) occurs.

4-5: While in no. 1 the borrower of the barley is a single man, here two women appear in this role. The latter one, Šāt-Sîn, is identified as “her daughter”, presumably referring to Amat-Sîn rather than her sibling.

7-8: In both contracts the time of repayment is Month III, which was the predominant due date for barley loans in Larsa (see Skaist 1994: 168).

9-10: The “joint liability clause”, here tentatively restored, usually appears in loans made to more than one debtor, and expresses the idea of joint responsibility of all the debtors for the entire debt. For a description of this clause, its usage and its historical and geographical spread see Skaist 1994: 231-237.

11-18: The rest of the reverse, which is almost completely destroyed, had to record the list of witnesses, as indicated by the formula in line 15. This last clause, which is typical of Larsa documents, usually follows the list of witnesses in title deeds, such as sale documents, marriage and adoption contracts, etc. However, it can also appear in other contracts in which a party is entering into an obligation, such as loans, rental contracts, leases,⁵ wherever witnesses are present and seal with their personal seals.

Seal 1: As for the father’s name, one expects Sîn-rēmēni, Sîn-rē’e or similar. In view of the available room, Sîn-ri[m-Urim] is rather unlikely. Whether there was a third line or not remains unclear.

Seal 2: [Aḫī]-šagi[š] might be a reasonable restoration, but the number of signs before and after GI cannot be ascertained.

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* The authors gratefully acknowledge the permission of P. Kress to publish Kress. 83. The drawing is the work of Zs. F., who also provided a preliminary transliteration. The commentary was written by G. S. and supplemented at some points by Zs. F. The authors take joint responsibility for any remaining mistakes. Relative dates follow the pattern RN YY/MM/DD.

¹ In view of the presence of “dug₄-ga zi-da” (l. 11) and “id₂ ħe₂(!)ĝal₂-la” (l. 13), the year is not RS 16, but probably RS 24 (courtesy D. Charpin, pers. comm.) or RS 26.

² For the previously published tablets of this collection see Földi 2017: 19 with n. 71.

³ On Ferrini’s business activities in relation to the famous Gospel of Judas, see Brodie 2006: 20-23.

⁴ The most recent overview was given by Charpin 2015, with further bibliography. Note the unpublished loan contracts found in the Ebabbar, associated with Šamaš (Arnaud 1976: 50 // Arnaud 1978a: 165-166 nos. 24ff.) and Ištar (Arnaud 1976: 57-58 // Arnaud 1978a: 165 nos. 63f.).

⁵ Up. L.76.70, see Arnaud 1978b: 227 // Arnaud 1980: 129-130 12.2.2.

⁶ These contracts sometimes do not contain witnesses and are usually sealed with the personal seal of the party taking up an obligation. For an overview of the sealing practices in the Old Babylonian period see Leemans 1982; see also Goddeeris 2012: 227-231, who offers an updated summary of Leemans’s outline.