

Two Formal Old Babylonian Letters from the Iraq Museum

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nashat Ali Al-Khafaji
College of Archaeology/ University of Kufa
nashata.omran@uokufa.edu.iq

ABSTRACT

This paper present two unprovenanced Old Babylonian letters from the Iraq Museum. Both letters are official and had sent to high rank people. the first letter is representing very typical Old Babylonian writing form that is very difficult to guess its origin. The second letter was possible to link it within the area of Nippur because of the introductory formula that consist on Enlil and Ninurta. I present here the edition of letters with a few comments.

Keywords: Old Babylonian period, Formal letters, Nippur area, cuneiform studies.

رسالتين رسميتين من العصر البابلي القديم في المتحف العراقي

أ. م. د. نشأت علي عمران الخفاجي
كلية الآثار / جامعة الكوفة
nashata.omran@uokufa.edu.iq

الخلاصة:

يتضمن هذا البحث رسالتان رسميتين من العصر البابلي القديم؛ وهن من الرقم الطينية المصادرة لصالح المتحف العراقي (نصوص القرارات). كلتا الرسالتين من صنف الرسائل الرسمية فقد تم ارسالهما الى أشخاص رفيعي المستوى؛ كتبت الرسالة الأولى بالخط النموذجي للعصر البابلي القديم فأصبح من الصعب جدا تخمين أصله لأي مدينة بابلية قديمة يعود؛ اما الرسالة الثانية فيبدو انها تعود لمدينة نيبور (نفر) بدلالة التحية والتضرع الذي تضمنته الرسالة باستدعاء الاله أنليل والأله نبورتا؛ تضمن البحث كذلك صور الرسالتين بالإضافة الى الترجمة وبعض التعليقات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العصر البابلي القديم، الرسائل الرسمية، منطقة نيبور، الدراسات المسماوية.

1. Introduction

The Old Babylonian period has specific feature for having recording and registration, such as, documenting letters which are very interested of researchers and scholars who are specialist of such study. The importance of these letters came from their important information since by studying them we can release the daily life of the population of that period. In addition, we can consider that such letter as an important resource to understand political, economic and social life of the Old Babylonian period. document Researcher Proposal.

Basing on their contexts letters usually divided into many kinds, such as, personal letters, trading letters, school letters and official letters. The latter was absent of any greeting or blessing and pray which usually find in other kind of letters to protect the receiver of the letter and to make his life longer, like what we have here in this letter.

Letters of the King Hammurabi represented the best example of greeting absent when he used second-person pronounce directly or passive voice with the person who has same social level.

2. Edition of the tablets

2.1. IM.214171

o.

a-na be-lí-ia

2. *qi-bí-ma*

[um-ma] ib-bi-tum

4. *arād-ka (İR-ka)-ma*

aš-šum be-lí ki-am iš-pu-ra-am

6. *um-ma be-lí-ia-ma*

me-ri-iš-ka ma-ṭí-a-am-ma al-kam

8. *ki-ma be-lí iš-pu-ra-am*

a-na e-ri-ši-im

10. *[ni-di] a-ḫi-im ú-ul [x x x]*

[x x x] ša me-ri-[iš-ka]

r.

12. *[x x x x x]*

Translation:

⁽²⁾ Speak ⁽¹⁾ to my lord ⁽³⁾ Thus says Ibbitum ⁽⁴⁾ your servant. ⁽⁵⁾ concerning that my lord sent ⁷⁻⁶ thus my lord has to come to me; your small cultivated land ⁸⁻⁹ According to my lord sent me, to the ploughing ¹⁰ don't careless and [...], ¹¹ that which your cultivated land [...]. The rest broken.

2.1.1. commentary:

Writing of this letter is very similar to the standard Old Babylonian signs, as well as very difficult to define the approximate date or the province because of the topic of letter is very common in the Old Babylonian correspondence even with officials and high rank people. No concrete evidence for the province or linking this letter with any dossier of well-known archives.

3' most probably there is no sign is missing within the break after *um-ma*, the space looks a bit bigger than supposed to be only *um-ma*. A comparable to a personal name has attested in (Abdi & Beckman 2007 n°20:12).

10' (*ni-di a-ḫi-im ú-ul.....*) is reconstructed after a similar expression in a letter from northern Babylonia (A. George 2017 p.99).



Fig.1: IM.214171

2.2. IM.212815

o.

a-na a-wi-lim ša ^dEN.LÍL ù ^dNIN.URTA *ú-ba-li-t[u-šu]*2. *qí-bí-ma**um-ma* KA.DINGIR.RA-*ma*4. ^dEN.LÍL ù ^dNIN.URTA *da-ri-iš u-mi-im**li-ba-al-li-tu-ka*6. *lu-ba-al-it-a ša lu-ša-al-ma-a-ka**pa-iṭ-ri-a-ša*8. DINGIR *našir* (ÛRU)-*ki-x re-eš da-mi-iq-ti-ka**i-li-i-qí-ka lu ka-ia-a-[an]*10. *a-na šu-ul-mi-ka aš-pu-ra-am-<ma>**šu-lum-ka ma-har* ^dšamaš *lu da-ri*12. *ú-šu-i iš-pu-ra-am-ma*10 ŠE.GUR *a-na bu-[x-x-x]*14. *ú-ša-pi-[la-kum]**[x-x]-x-[x-x-x]*

Some lines are missing

r.

the beginning of the revers is missing

16. *i-na-an-n[a x x x x]**lu-m[u-ur]***Translation:**

⁽²⁾ Speak ⁽¹⁾ to the gentleman whom Enlil and Ninurta keeping him in good health: ⁽³⁾ Thus says Kadingirra ^(4,5) May Enlil and Ninurta keep you in good health forever. ⁽⁶⁾ May you be well; may you be healthy ⁽⁷⁾ (and) released them ⁽⁸⁾ May your protective deity be favorably disposed ⁽⁹⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾ I am writing to (inquire about) your well-being. ⁽¹¹⁾ Safety forever with the help of Shams. (12) send to me. ⁽¹³⁻¹⁴⁾ 10 Kor barley to the you answer. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Now, ⁽¹⁷⁾ to examine.

2.2.1. Commentary:

Obviously, the province of this letter from Nippur area, depending on the gods that accompanied the addressee as well as the praying formula from the sender. I have checked for a parallel title from Nippur and elsewhere, hadn't find any similar especially the sender name. The god Ninurta has appeared also with Šamaš in some letter from Larsa (CUSAS 36, 194). According to Archibab, the personal name KA.DINGIR.RA not attested. Some phrases or words are in between not a copy from the well-known formula, almost some changing the wording. Anyway, the introductory part¹ is representing about 75% from the existed lines of the tablet.

10' *ma* not in the text.

11' I preferred to translate *maḥar* ^dšamaš as with help of Šamaš instead of in front of Šamaš to be more appropriate to the context.

For further details about the introductory part that attested here, see: (Sallaberger 1999).¹

17' Most probably that *lu* is written in the beginning as *li* or *tu*, the traces of scribe modified it, part of the modified sign still existed. the reading is reconstructed as *lūmur*.



Fig.1: IM.212815



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