Tašnintu II, ‘Repetition, Teaching’?

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11. 14, marg. Il 2, dove egli è il responsabile di uno dei rari bilanci, ní-kap-aka, di bitume a SS 2 (ITV 5, 6957 v. 3'). Il funzionario in questione è ricevente-kîšîb anche di gurûš (MVN 6, 180 r. 6 e 195 v. 1: § 35) e orzo (CT 5, tav.33, BM 17750 r. II 7 et passim: § 46; MVN 12, 255 r. 3: § 47) e ricevente-šu-ba-ti di travi per imbarcazioni (MVN 11, 126 v. 2: § 48), gurûš (MVN 7, 81 v. 2: § 35), quantità di rame e sù-gan (HLC, tav.44, 232 r. 5: AS 4). In tutte le succitate tavolette nelle quali è impresso un sigillo, questo è intestato non a Ešam, ma ad Abbamu, dumu di Ur-Eanna.

I dub-sar mar-sar nei testi di Giršu sono numerosi, a differenza di quel che ci consta per l’altra provincia di Umma, e il totale del personale in K. Maekawa, ASJ 20 (1998), p.110, N. 8 v. II 3 ( ) ne comprende 5, mentre in TU, 130 (§ 39) ne sono citati tre, due dei quali caratterizzati in rapporto rispettivamente con l'arsenale di Guabba (Ur-Nansè: v. 7) e di Nimin (Nabasa: v. 9) con il luogo di attività di Lû-Ninsûbur (v. 2) non specificato. Altri funzionari di Giršu dal medesimo titolo sono: a-tu (MVN 8, 179 r. IV 13: § 48); gû-dû (ITT 3, 5094 v. 1: § 8), anch’egli messo in rapporto con Nimin (HLC, tav.152, 398 v. I 5: ( )); ka₂-a-mu (Beren, 70 r. 4: senza data); ur-ša-ba-ti (BOPO 1, 6 v. 1 e sig.: AS 3; UDT, 27 r. 4: AS 3).

1. La tavoletta è pubblicata per gentile concessione del Dr. C.B.F. Walker e dei Trustees del British Museum. Il testo è stato tralasciato durante una missione a Londra compiuta nell’ambito della ricerca PRIN 2004-2006 dal titolo di “Catalogazione, edizione e studio delle tavolette amministrative neo-sumeriche da Giršu e Umma, appartenenti alle collezioni del British Museum”.

2. Cf. anche, senza specificazione, MVN 6, 202 sig. (§ 31); T. Gomi, BAO 2 (1980), p.25, 21 v. 1 (§ 44); OBTR, 238 v. 11(? ) (AS 2).

3. Cf. anche SNAT, 260 r. II 2 (§ 32); HLC, tav.152, 398 v. II 7(? ): [ ]; MVN 7, 339 v. 2 (senza data).

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31) Tašnintu II, « Repetition, Teaching »? – Tašnintu, according to AHw, means “Kampf.” The word occurs primarily in omen literature, ranging chronologically from OB to LB texts, with only a few instances in Assyrian royal inscriptions. In all but one of the listed attestations in AHw, “Kampf” or the like seems an appropriate semantic equivalent for tašnintu. The exception is the attestation listed as BiOr 14, 190. Von Soden included this attestation under his category 1) “in Omina.” But K.11097, the fullest context treated in BiOr 14 (1957), 190f. that attests tašnintu, does not contain omens strictly speaking; rather, the text concerns calculations related to divination. Moreover, the immediate context in which tašnintu occurs is concerned with intergenerational transmission of something, probably divinatory lore (see below). For these reasons, the use of tašnintu is not at all clear, as Borger has indicated: “Was mit ‘Streit der Gelehrten’ gemeint sein könnte, ist mir nicht recht klar.” His own attempt at achieving an understanding was: “etwa ‘Wetteifer erfolgte besondere Leistung’?” (191). Without excluding this possibility, I would like to offer an alternative interpretation: I suggest that there may exist a tašnintu in Akkadian that has the meaning “repetition,” (from an unattested Akkadian root *šunnunu). The evidence for this homonym is by no means compelling. This note is simply intended to offer a possibility for understanding an otherwise hopeless context.

First I offer some philological justification. There are germaine roots in the cognate languages, šnn in Biblical Hebrew and gn in Ugaritic, that mean “to repeat” (a by-form of štnyy). See, e.g., Ugaritic gnath, “she did it a second time”, in CAT 1.16 v 8' and the Biblical Hebrew verb šnnntum(wf*šinnantäm), “you will repeat them”, in Deut 6:7. As the Biblical Hebrew clearly indicates, this root occurs in the D stem, the same stem from which the Akkadian taprist- nominal formation derives (see GAG §56 l). Admittedly, the evidence is slim, but it may be just enough to conjecture an unattested Akkadian root *šnnunu, “to repeat”, which, like the situation in Hebrew and Ugaritic, would be a by-form of the attested Akkadian root šanā (Ug i = BH š 4 Akk š). From this germaine root, I suggest, may have derived the Akkadian noun tašnintu meaning “repetition.” Analogical support for the development of this nominal form may be found in two other Akkadian words tašnu and tašnitu, taprist- and taprist- nominal formations of šanā III.

A tašnintu, meaning “repetition” provides a reasonable meaning for the context of K.11097: 1-3. The text reads: 1. [šmunu DUB ḪĀLA nisiri bārdštati purštir šanā u arṣētim ] 2. taš-nin-tum ummmāni ša bār [a ... 3. abu ana mārštir ša irrumu inaṣṣarur ...] ... “Šumuna DUB ḪĀLA, secret of divination, secret of heaven and earth, the repetition of the scholar, which the divine ... the father to his son whom he loves (and) protects ...” The context probably pertains to the transmission of scholarly lore from father to son. “Repetition” would thus be best understood as “teaching”. Again, note in this regard the similar Deut 6:7, ḪašŠarem (wf*šinnantäm šer₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₃₄. Given these two contexts and general pedagogical experience, it is not at all a stretch, in my opinion, to understand tašnintu, “repetition”, as also indicating “teaching”. 

A.A.B.U. 2006 n°1 (mars)
Although "rivalry" > "attainment" cannot be entirely excluded especially given the difficult context of K.11097: 1-3 and the sociology of scholarship displayed in the SAA 10 correspondence, I think a taššinatu II, "repetition, teaching", as a philological possibility and provides a contextually appropriate understanding of the word. But the evidence is indeed slight. And therefore a question mark must remain on this suggestion for the time being.

1. See the attestations listed in AW, 1339.

4. Professor Borger pointed out to me in a personal communication (May 5, 2004) that A. Leo Oppenheim suggested "examinations, quite possibly competitive" (see *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, revised by Erica Reiner [Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977], 82).

5. I read here with John Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [Edinburgh, 1977], 99 and 160. Unfortunately, the word is in a broken context. The identification and meaning of the root, however, is secured via the context. Note especially the verb in the next line: *tīpīh* : "she did it at a third time."

6. As is well-known, this verb has presented great difficulty. I follow the most recent lexicon, Koehler-Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1606-07 for its derivation and meaning: this is accepted by, e.g., the English *NRSV* translation and the recent commentator J. Tigay – among many others – in his *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 78 and n. 25 at 358-359 (with references). The older, less tenable view derived the verb from the root *izzī (štī)*, "to be sharp" (see *BDB*, 1042).

7. I owe the recognition of the root by-form parallel to Dr. Blanc Conklin.


9. See several other collected examples of this procedure in BiOr 14 (1957), 191 and Lambert, *Borger Festschrift*, 143.

10. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 78.

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[Des erreurs s’étant glissées dans l’impression de la note publiée dans N.A.B.U. N° 4, 2005, une nouvelle édition en est présentée ici.]

32) Vie de l’Assyriologie 1 – M. Francis Joannès, professeur à l’Université de Paris VIII, a été élu à la chaire d’Assyriologie de l’Université de Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne, à la succession de M. Dominique Charpin, Directeur d'Étude non cumulant à l’EPHE IVe Section, en mai 2006.


34) Colloques parisiens – les 31 mai et 1 juin 2006 doit se tenir au Collège de France le 3ème Colloque réunissant le Collège de France, la Société Asiatique et le CNRS (FRE 2454) organisé par Dominique Charpin, Jean-Marie Durand et Jean-Pierre Mahé.

— le 23 juin 2006 doit se tenir au Collège de France un Colloque international sur la médecine babylonienne codirigé par Mme Annie Attia et M. Gilles Buisson.