A New Attestation of Ardaya, the General of Babylonia under the Declining Seleucid Rule

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This paper introduces an unpublished cuneiform Akkadian (Late Babylonian) document on the clay tablet BM 35183 of the British Museum. This document is a part of an astronomical diary, and includes a long historical account. A part of it concerns Ardaya, “the general of Babylonia,” i.e. the commander of the army in Babylonia, and sheds new light on the collapse of Seleucid rule of Babylonia in the late 140s B.C. The new document reports that someone “abandoned” Ardaya, probably at a point between his defeat by the Elamite king Kamniskires I and the appointments of the new “general above the four generals” (governor-general of the Upper Satrapies of the Seleucids; however, the office’s jurisdiction seems to have been restricted to Babylonia under the Arsacids) and “the general of Babylonia” at the conquest of Babylonia by the Arsacids. Another part of the document increases our knowledge of the administration of Esagil in the late second century B.C. It mentions Bēl-lūmur with his title *zazakku*. A person Bēl-lūmur as the *šatammu* of Esagil is attested in two documents of the 120s and the 110s B.C. If he is the same person as Bēl-lūmur mentioned in the new document, it shows his past office in the late 140s B.C. and indicates that a person once served as the *zazakku* could become the *šatammu*.

Keywords: Babylonian astronomical diaries, Seleucids, Arsacids, Elymais (Elam), Esagil

I. Introduction

This paper introduces an unpublished cuneiform Akkadian (Late Babylonian) document on the clay tablet BM 35183 of the British Museum. This document is a part of an astronomical diary,¹ and includes a new attestation of Ardaya, “the general of Babylonia,” i.e. the commander of the army in Babylonia in the Seleucid and the early Arsacid period,² who first came to the modern world’s attention through the astronomical diary -144.³ We first clarify the situation of Babylonia in the late 140s B.C. leading to the collapse of Seleucid rule in this area, then show the text of BM 35183, and discuss some remarkable descriptions in the tablet, relating them to the information from other documents.

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Abbreviations in this article usually follow those used in Roth 2010. Special abbreviations are shown at the end of this paper.

¹ For the astronomical diaries, see Sachs and Hunger 1988, 11–38 and Mitsuma 2015.

² For the function of the office, see Mitsuma 2002, 46.

³ The notation “-n” in this paper indicates a text number of the diaries published by Sachs and Hunger (1988, 1989, 1996) and Hunger and van der Spek (2006). For the convention used to indicate a part of a diary, see Sachs and Hunger 1988, 36–38.

II. Babylonia in the Late 140s B.C.

1. Elamite Invasion and the End of the Seleucid Rule

Diary -144 covers the period from Ab to Kislīm of SE 167 (late July to late December, 145/144 B.C. according to the Babylonian calendar)⁴ and belongs to the group of standard diaries.⁵ The diary preserves some important historical records and sheds light on the process of decline of the Seleucid Dynasty in Babylonia (*māt Akkadī*).⁶ In the month Ulūl, Kamniskires I Nikephoros, the king of Elymais (Elam), and his troops departed their country. Their action is recorded in -144 'Obv. 18' as follows: LUGAL KUR ELAM.MA^{ki} EN ERÍN^{meš} MAḤ^{meš} TA KUR-šú ú-[...], “The king of Elam with numerous troops [...] from his country [...],”⁷ A Babylonian response to this action in the month Tašrīt is described in -144 'Obv. 36'–37' as follows: ITI BI *ina qí-[bi šá^mA]r-da-a-a^{lú} GAL ERÍN^{meš} KUR URÍ^{ki} mi-nu-tú [... š]á^{lú}E^{ki.meš} lú^{meš} IR^{meš} LUGAL [x x^l]^úpu-li-ṭe-e šá^{ina} E^{ki} u^{u^{ru}}Se-lu-ki-'a-a i-man-nu-ú*, “That month, at the com[mand of A]rdaya, the general of Babylonia, they counted the number [...] of the Babylonians, the servants of the king, [...] the (Greek) citizens who were in Babylon and Seleucia (on the Tigris).” This counting of the population was probably conducted for the purpose of mustering an army against the Elamite invasion.⁸ The targets of the counting include some population groups of Babylon and Seleucia on the Tigris. The latter is the Seleucid administrative center built in Babylonia. The (Greek) citizens (*puliṭē* or *puliṭānu*) of Babylon are often attested in the diaries from SE 149 (163/162 B.C.) onward.⁹ They were introduced in the reign of Antiochus III (Boiy 2004, 207–208), or Antiochus IV (van der Spek 2009, 107–108), and separated from the traditional community of Babylon (the Babylonians).¹⁰ In Araḥsamna, Ardaya, the one who ordered the counting, appeared at the Esagil temple in Babylon. He presented offerings to Bēl (Marduk), Bēltiya (Zarpanitu), and the “great gods” as follows (-144 Rev.' 17–19):

ITI BI U₄.12.KÁM^mAr-da-a-a^{lú} GAL ER[ÍN^{meš} KUR URÍ^{ki}] [x x^l] [... *ina bi-rit mu-ter-tu₄*] šá KÁ.DUMU.NUN.NA šá É-sag-gíl¹¹ GU₄ u 5 SISKUR.SIS[KUR]^{meš} ma-ru-tú ana^dEN^dGAŠAN-ia^d DINGIR^{meš} GAL^{meš} ù <ana> bul-ṭu-šú DÛ-uš [... šá^{lú} GAL ERÍN^{meš} KUR URÍ^{ki}] MU-a-ti TA É ram-ni-šú ana tar-ša KÁ [du-de-^le šá É-sag-gíl 4 GU₄^{meš} ù 4 UDU GUB^{meš} ana^dEN^dGAŠAN-ia^d DINGIL^l[^{meš} GAL^{meš}].

⁴ For the starting point of the Seleucid era according to the Babylonian calendar, 1 Nisān, 311 B.C., see Parker and Dubberstein 1956, 20.

⁵ The term “standard diaries” is used for the diaries, each tablet of which covers half a year, i.e. six months or seven months including an intercalary one, or a third of a year, i.e. four months or five months including an intercalary one, in this paper, following Mitsuma 2015, 53–54; cf. Hunger and Pingree 1999, 143. We find some tablets of diaries (such as -277A and -144), each of which covers five or seven months without an intercalary one (See Hunger and Pingree 1999, 143 for further references). We will also include those tablets into “standard diaries.”

⁶ For the area denoted by the toponym *māt Akkadī*, see Zadok 1985, 223–226.

⁷ For the identification of this Elamite king with Kamniskires I and the interpretation of this passage, see Potts 2002, 350–351.

⁸ For the character of the counting, see Pirngruber 2012, 290.

⁹ -162 Rev. 11–12; -134B Obv.' 16–17; -90 'Obv. 30'–31'; *et passim*.

¹⁰ For the character of these population groups, see Del Monte 1997, 38–39, 76–77, 86–87, 96–97; Boiy 2004, 194–209; van der Spek 2009.

¹¹ Offering presentations made *ina bi-rit mu-ter-tu₄* šá KÁ.DUMU.NUN.NA šá É-sag-gíl, “between the doors of ‘the Gate of the Son of the Prince’ of Esagil” are attested at -137D Rev.' 22–24 and 26–27.

That month, the 12th, Ardaya, the gene[ral of Babylonia between the doors] of ‘the Gate of the Son of the Prince’ of Esagil he offered a bull and five fattened sheep to Bēl, Bēltiya, the great gods and <for> his life. [... of(?)] this [general of Babylonia] arranged four bulls and four sheep from his own property opposite the *dudê* gate of Esagil. [(He offered the animals)] to Bēl, Bēltiya, the [great] god[s].

In -144 Rev.' 20, we are informed of the departure of Ardaya from Babylon as follows: ¹⁶GAL ERÍN^{meš} KUR URI^{ki} MU-*a-ti* (about ten signs are erased) TA E^{ki} *áš-šú-ut*¹² *šal-tú* KI ^mKa-am-ma-*áš-ki-[i-ri]*¹³ LUGAL KUR ELAM.MA^k¹⁷ ^rDU^u¹⁸, ¹⁴ “This general of Babylonia departed (?) from Babylon for a battle with Kamniski[re], the king of Elam[us].” Ardaya was probably defeated by Kamniskires, because -144 Rev.' 21–22 records Kamniskires’ victorious march in Babylonia as follows:

^mKa-am-ma-*áš-ki-i-ri* LUGAL KUR ELAM.MA^k¹⁷ *ina* URU^{meš} *u* ÍD^{meš} *šá* KUR URI^{ki} *šal-ṭa-niš* GIN.GIN-*ak* x *ḫu-ub-tú* [... M]U-*a-ti i-ḫab-ba-t[u-ú-ma]*² *ši-lat-su-un i-šal-lal-lu-ú* ^{lú}UN^{meš} ^rx-x^{meš} *-šú-nu ú-ma-mi-šú-nu ina gi-lit-tú šá* ELAM.MA^{ki} MU-*a-ti ana* É² [x x x-]^r *u’*¹ *ḫat-tú u gi-lit-tú ina* KUR [GÁL-*ši*].

Kamniskires, the king of Elam, marched around victoriously among the cities and canals of Babylonia. They plundered this [... and (?)] carried off their spoils. The people [...] their ...s and their animals for fear of this Elamite to the house (?) [There was] panic and fear in the land.

Although Kamniskires’ attack constituted a serious threat to the Seleucid rule of Babylonia, he could not conquer the region. Some astronomical cuneiform tablets have date formulae of SE 168 (144/143 B.C.) and SE 169 (143/142 B.C.), and they are accompanied by the name of the Seleucid king, Demetrius II.¹⁵ Demetrius held Babylon at least until the end of SE 170 (142/141 B.C.) (Del Monte 1997, 243; cf. Boiy 2004, 167), because the diary -141F is dated with his name as follows (‘Rev. 26’): *na-šar šá* TA KIN.2.KÁM EN TIL ŠE *šá* MU.1-*me*-1,10.KÁM ^m*De-met-r[i]* LUGAL [...], “Observation from the intercalary Ulūl to Addar of the year 170, Demetr[ius] (was) king”¹⁶

Demetrius lost Babylon in the following year, SE 171 (141/140 B.C.). A diary of the year,

¹² *aššūt* or *aššut* “concerning” is the preposition attested in some NB letters (ABL 848 Obv. 4; CT 54 5 = SAA 18 105 Rev. 4). The translation here, “for,” is according to the context.

¹³ The string of cuneiform signs for the name Kamniskires reminds us of the strange spelling of the same name, *kwmškyr*, in the Parthian(?) legend on the small unit coins of Kamniskires-Orodes of Elymais (For the legend, see Haruta 1990, 460–463).

¹⁴ The reading ELAM.MA^k¹⁷ ^rDU^u¹⁸ is based on the collation of the tablet (....) TA LUGAL² in Sachs and Hunger 1996, 98.

¹⁵ Hunger 2006, No. 49 (LBAT 1267) Colophon 1–2 (SE 168); Hunger 2014, No. 168 (LBAT 1131+) ‘Rev. 4’ (SE 168); Rochberg 1998, Text 18 (LBAT 1467) Obv.1 (SE 169). These date formulae are shown with their transliterations by Del Monte (1997, 243) and Boiy (2004, 166).

¹⁶ *našāru* (*ša ginē*), “(regular) observation” is the Akkadian term for the astronomical diaries (see Sachs and Hunger 1988, 11).

-140A, consists of four monthly sections (one of the four is now completely lost) and covers the period from Nisān to Du'uz (early April to early August) of SE 171. The diary shows the name of the new ruler of Babylon at the beginning of the tablet (Obv.' 1): [... ^mA]r-^šá-kám LUGALⁱ BAR, “[... A]rsaces (was) king, month Nisān.” “Arsaces” was the throne name of every king of the (Parthian) Arsacids (Strabo 15.1.36). The “Arsaces” of -140A indicates Mithridates I, who extended the Parthian Empire to the banks of the Euphrates (Just. *Epit.* 41.6.8). Boiy (2004, 167) argues that Mithridates conquered Babylonia before 1 Nisān, SE 171, and the date formulae of -141F ignores the change of the ruling dynasty from the Seleucids to the Arsacids in SE 170. Boiy’s argument is based only on the date formula at -245B Lower Edge 1: *na-šar šá gi-né-e šá* TA BAR EN KIN ^mAn-ti-’u-ku-su LUGAL TA IZI EN KIN ^mSe-^llu-^lk[u] ^lA-šú^l LUG[AL²], “(regular) observation from Nisan to Ulūl, Antiochus (was) king, from Ab to Ulūl, Seleucus, his son (was) king.” According to Boiy (2004, 148), the scribe of -245B first attributed the six months from Nisan to Ulūl to the late king Antiochus II, ignoring the accession of the new king, Seleucus II, and then specified the reign of Seleucus in the months Ab and Ulūl at the end of the formula. We may also restore Mithridates’s reign at the end of the date formula of -141F, if Boiy’s argument is correct. However, it is unsafe to apply the practice attested only once to our case simply. More probable scenario is that Demetrius II held Babylon at the beginning of SE 171, but the scribe of -140A attributed the whole of SE 171 to the new king, Mithridates I. The scribe compiled the diary in the month Ab, SE 171, or later. At the time of the compilation, Babylon had already been under the influence of the new ruling dynasty, the Arsacids. He probably avoided showing the name of the eliminated ruler, Demetrius II on the tablet. A special attention to the conqueror of Babylon can also be found in -330, which records the battle of Gaugamela and Alexander III’s entry into Babylon. Alexander is specially mentioned with the title “king of the world” in the diary (‘Obv.’ 15’, ‘Rev.’ 11’).

The Arsacid conquest of Babylonia seems to have occurred in Nisān, Ayar, or early Simān of SE 171 (van der Spek 2001, 450). Although the diary -140A records some historical events in the section on Nisān (Obv.’ 20–23), they mainly concern the goddess Ištar of Babylon. The section on Ayar is now lost on the diary tablet. Eventually, the section on Simān records the introduction of the Arsacid era, which would be used side by side with the Seleucid era (Shahbazi 1986), as follows (‘Rev. 3’): [... GIN^{meš} {ina} ^{kuš}[GÍD.DA^{meš}?] [... MU.1-me-7.K]ÁM² šá ^lši-i² MU.11-me-1,11.KÁM SAR^{meš} ^lx x GÜ.1D[É[?]], “[...] they went. Parchment documents [on which the year 107], which was the year 171, was written (lit. they wrote) were read [...].”¹⁷ AE 1 corresponds to SE 65 (247/246 B.C.). Therefore, SE 171 corresponds to AE 107.

The same diary, -140A, inserts the throne name of Mithridates, Arsaces, at the beginning of the next section, i.e. the section for the month Du’uz, as follows (‘Rev. 10’): [... MU.]1-me-1,11. KÁM ^mAr-šá-ka-a LUGAL ⁱšU, “[... the year] 171, Arsaces (was) king, the month Du’uz.” This insertion is irregular, because the year number and the ruler’s name in standard diaries are usually indicated at the top, the bottom end, and the edges of their tablets.¹⁸ Therefore the normal monthly sections of the standard diaries, except for the first ones on the tablets, begin only with their month

¹⁷ For this passage, see Sciandra 2012, 233.

¹⁸ Top: -137E Obv.’ 1; *et passim*. Bottom end: -141F ‘Rev. 26’; *et passim*. Edges: -137D Lower Edge 1’; *et passim*.

names.¹⁹ The irregular date formula at the beginning of the section for Du'uz (the fourth monthly section) of -140A should be inserted to express the debut of the Arsacids in Babylonia clearly (Oelsner 1975, 27–28). If this is correct, the Arsacid conquest could be dated to the previous month, Simān.

2. Appointments of the New “General above the Four Generals” and “the General of Babylonia”

We have not found any piece of historical accounts about Ardaya's fate after his defeat by Kamniskires. Instead, the section for the month Simān of -140A seems to record the announcement of the appointment of the new general in Babylonia by the Arsacids, as follows ('Rev. 5'–6'): ITI BI U₄.22.KÁM^{kuš}GÍD.D[A *ana m]uḥ-ḥi^{lú} pa-hat E^{ki} u^{lú} pu-li-te-e MU-a-tì SAR x x [x] [....] ina^{lú} GAL ú-qu-tu ina KUR UR^{ki} [x] [....] [x] ina É IGI.DU₈.A GÛ.DÉ, “That month, the 22nd, a parchment document [....] written to the governor of Babylon and these citizens [....] to the office of the general in Babylonia [....] was read in the theatre.”²⁰ The general's name is Nikanor. Diary -140B mentions him and another general, Antiochus,²¹ as follows (Rev. 9–10): ^mAn-ti-'u-uk-s[u^{lú}GAL] ERÍN^{meš} KUR UR^{ki} [šá ana UG]U [4²² ^{lú}GAL ú-qu-tu^{lú} u^mNi-[i-ka-'nu-ú-[ru] [^{lú}GAL ERÍN^m]^{es23} KUR UR^{ki}, “Antiochus, [the gen]eral of Babylo[nia, who is abo]ve the four offices of generals, and Nikanor, [the gener]al of Babylonia.” Diary -140A 'Rev. 8' reports Antiochus' appointment by the Arsacids probably on 24 Simān, SE 171 as follows:²⁴ [*ana^{lú} GAL ERÍN^{meš} šá ana m]uḥ-ḥi 4^{lú} GAL ú-qu-tu šá KUR UR^{ki} <ip->pa-qid,²⁵ “he (Antiochus) was appointed [as the general who is a]bove the four offices of generals of Babylonia.” Antiochus' appellations in -140A and B look like compositions of the official titles “general of Babylonia” and “general above the four generals.” However, he is simply called ^{lú}GAL ERÍN^{meš} šá ana muḥ-ḥi 4^{lú} GAL ERÍN^{meš} ú-qa, “the general above the four generals” in -140C Obv. 37, 'Rev. 31'.**

The official title “general above the four generals” is probably an Akkadian translation of the Greek official title *ho epi tōn anō satrapeiōn* “one who is above the Upper Satrapies” (Mitsuma 2002, 42; 2007).²⁶ The Greek title is attested in two Greek inscriptions published by Robert and reedited by Rougemont.²⁷ The office was the governor-general of the Upper Satrapies, i.e. the satrapies east of the Euphrates under the Seleucids.²⁸ Pirngruber criticized this identification for these three arguments: 1) The earliest attestation of “the general above the four generals” or similar titles appear at -229B 'Obv.' 9', but the crown prince Antiochus (later Antiochus I) was already appointed as “the one who is above the Upper Satrapies” in SE 18 (294/293 B.C.); 2) Molon was also a holder of this title under Antiochus III, but his authority did not extend to Mesopotamia and

¹⁹ -144 'Obv. 19', Rev. 1, 23; -137D Rev. 29; *et passim*.

²⁰ For the theatre of Babylon (É IGI.DU₈.A, *bīt tāmarti*), see van der Spek 2001.

²¹ For this person, see Monerie 2014, 128.

²² The reading UG]U [4 is based on the collation of the tablet ([a²]-na² in Sachs and Hunger 1996, 140.

²³ Sachs and Hunger (1996, 140) also restores the lost signs as [^{lú}GAL² ERÍN]^{meš}.

²⁴ The date and the name of Antiochus are recorded at 'Rev. 7'.

²⁵ The verb should be emended to its N preterite 3cs form, because it is used for describing the event at the specific point.

²⁶ For the title “general above the four generals,” see also Potts 2007.

²⁷ Robert 1950, 73–75, pl. XXIII = Rougemont 2012, no. 67; Robert 1963, 76 = Rougemont 2012, no. 70.

²⁸ For the Euphrates as the western boundary of the Upper Satrapies, see Polybius 5.48.10–17; 1 Maccabees 3.37; Jerome, *Commentariorum in Daniele* 3.11.7–9.

Babylonia; 3) The fullest form of the Akkadian title is ^{lú}GAL ÉRIN^{meš} kurURI^{ki} šá ana muḫ-ḫi 4 ^{lú}GAL ÉRIN^{meš} -ú-tú, “general of Babylonia who is above the four offices of generals” and indicates that the competences of the office were restricted to Babylonia from the beginning (Pirngruber 2012, 221). However, those three arguments seem not necessary to negate the identification of “the general above the four generals” with “the one who is above the Upper Satrapies.” The crown prince Antiochus was not just the governor-general of the Upper Satrapies but the co-regent of his father Seleucus I and called “king” in Akkadian sources from 294/293 B.C. (Del Monte 1997, 226–227).²⁹ Molon’s authority seems to disagree with that of the “general above the four generals,” who was generally stationed at Seleucia on the Tigris.³⁰ However, we have no attestation of “the general above the four generals” in the early reign of Antiochus III and cannot know whether the authority of the office in those days was restricted or not. The composite appellations for the office in the Seleucid period³¹ seems not to be its title’s fullest form but to indicate that a “general above the four generals” concurrently held the office of “the general of Babylonia.”

However, the appellations for Antiochus in -140A and B require another interpretation, because he is mentioned together with Nikanor, “the general of Babylonia,” in -140B. Those appellations for Antiochus might reflect the restriction of the jurisdiction of “the general above the four generals / one who is above the Upper Satrapies” into Babylonia in the Arsacid period. When the Arsacids occupied Babylonia, a province on the western boundary of the Upper Satrapies, and appointed their own “general above the four generals,” Antiochus, his jurisdiction should have been restricted. If the general had the real power as the governor-general of the Upper Satrapies, his jurisdiction would cover whole realm of the Arsacids and his authority would exceed or parallel that of the king. Avoiding such a situation, the Arsacids might have restricted the jurisdiction of “the general above the four generals” into only one province, Babylonia. The composite appellations in the diaries from the Arsacid period may reflect such a change.³² If this is correct, we can think that Antiochus became “the general above the four generals” and Nikanor “the general of Babylonia” when the Arsacids occupied the region. Although both offices had their jurisdictions only over Babylonia, we can think that the former commanded the latter, judging from the original authority of “the general above the four generals” as the governor-general of the Upper Satrapies and the function of “the general of Babylonia” as the mere commander of the army in Babylonia.

Ardaya, the Seleucid general of Babylonia, may have kept his office until the appointment of the new general of Babylonia, Nikanor, under the Arsacids or lost his position at some point between his defeat by Kamniskires and the Arsacid conquest of Babylonia. The document of BM 35183 provides us with a missing piece of information about Ardaya’s fate.

²⁹ Bengtson (1944, 407) lists Antiochus III (under his brother Seleucus III) and Antiochus, the eldest son of Antiochus III as the governor-general of the Upper Satrapies (Generalstatthalter des Ostens). However, we do not have any cuneiform source to know Antiochus III’s status before his accession nor attestation of “general above the four generals” from the reign of Seleucus III. Antiochus, the son of Antiochus was appointed as the governor-general in the spring of 193 B.C. and died in Addar 193/192 B.C. (Mitsuma 2002, 52). He was called “king” when he held the office (Del Monte 1997, 236–237), and no “general above the four generals” is attested in cuneiform sources from his term of the office.

³⁰ -178C 'Rev. 18'–22'; -140B Rev. 9–11; -140C Obv. 37–38; -137C 'Rev. 16'; -134B 'Rev. 9'; -133B Rev. 19–20; -124A 'Rev. 19'; -119A2 'Obv. 16'–17'.

³¹ Attested at -193B 'Obv. 29'; -178C 'Rev. 18'; -152 'Rev. 14'; -149B 'Rev. 11'.

³² Attested at -136B 'Obv. 12'; -132B Rev. 21, 25; -124A 'Rev. 19'.

III. The Text of BM 35183

The tablet BM 35183 (Sp. 2 736) is now preserved in the British Museum. This small fragment measures 83.3 × 71.7 × 29 millimetres. Cuneiform text is only preserved on one side. Since the side is flat, it is probably the obverse of the original tablet. When the author rotated the tablet upside down and observed the reverse, the side showed a layer of clay curving up toward the bottom and right ends. This means that we have the lower left part of the original tablet. In fact, the left edge of the preserved part shows the ends of some inner layers.

The text of BM 35183 shows a typical form of a monthly section of “standard” and “short” astronomical diaries.³³ The arrangement of its entries is as follows:

Part 1: daily report of the sky,

Part 2: price list of six commodities (barley, dates, mustard, cress, sesame, and wool),³⁴

Part 3: summary of the positions of the five visible planets,

Part 4: report of the level of the Euphrates, and

Part 5: account(s) of unusual historical event(s).

The text of BM 35183 has the same arrangement. 'Obv.¹⁷ 2' shows the last part of a sky report. 'Obv.¹⁷ 3' shows the end of a price list of the six commodities and the beginning of a planetary summary. 'Obv.¹⁷ 4' shows a part of a report of the Euphrates' level. At last, a long historical account appears on 'Obv.¹⁷ 5'–14'. Although Ardaya, “the general of Babylonia,” is mentioned in this part, the tablet BM 35183 cannot be joined to the tablet of -144, which also shows some historical accounts about him. The latter tablet, BM 34609 + 34788 + 77617 + 78958, has ample space for accepting some more fragments, because its upper half is completely lost. However, the sizes of the scripts and line spaces of these two tablets are different. BM 35183 puts four lines in a two-centimetres-high space, but BM 34609+ puts five lines in a space of the same height.

Following is the transliteration and English translation of the text of BM 35183 and comments on it. A copy of the tablet ('Obv.¹⁷ only) is shown in Figure 1.

BM 35183

'Obv.¹⁷

1' [x x x x x x] ʽxʽ [...]

2' [x x x x x x] ʽDIRʽ AN ZA SI ʽGIN xʽ [... ITI BI KILAM]

[...] clouds were in the sky. The north wind blew. [...] That month, the equivalent was:]

3' [x x x a-na 1] GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *ep-šú i-nu-šú* ʽMÚL.BABBARʽ [ina ITI BI ILLU]

[... for one] shekel of wrought silver. At that time, Jupiter [was in That month, the river level]

4' [x x x x x] ʽxʽ PAP 2ʽ8ʽ 1/2 ʽnaʽ 27 2 SI GIN PAP 2ʽ8ʽ [na]

[...] total: twenty-eight and a half was the *na* (gauge). The 27th, it rose two fingers, total: twenty-eight was [the *na* (gauge).]

5' [x x x x x x] ŠU *ana* ^{uru}GÚ.DU₈.A^{ki} KU₄ U₄.17.ʽKÁMʽ [...]

³³ For these groups, see Mitsuma 2015, 53–56.

³⁴ For the commodities mentioned in the list, see Slotsky 1997, 23–42.

- [....] entered Cutha. The 17th, [....]
- 6' [x x x ^mar-d]a-a-a ^{lú}GAL ERÍN^{meš} KUR URI^{ki.meš} MU-a-t[*i*]
[....] this [Ard]aya, the general of Babylonia, [....]
- 7' [x x x x] ^{lú}GAL ERÍN^{meš} KUR URI^{ki.meš} EN ^{lú}IR^{meš} -šú u ^{lú}ERÍN^{meš} -šú [....]
[....] the general of Babylonia with his servants and his troops [....]
- 8' [x x x x] ina qí-bi šá ^mar-da-a-a ^{lú}GAL ERÍN^{meš} [KUR] ^{lú}URI^{ki.meš} [....]
[....] at the command of Ardaya, the general of Babylonia, [....]
- 9' [x x x] 38 TA UD Ú DIŠ AMA TA UD [x x x] [.... ^{lú}GAL]
- 10' [ERÍN^{meš} KUR] ^{lú}URI^{ki.meš} MU-a-ti ŠUB-di ITI BI ^{lú}U_{4.22}.KÁM x [....]
abandoned this [general of] Babylonia. That month, the 22nd, [....]
- 11' [x x x] ^{meš} 3 MUŠEN^{lú} u a-a-ri^{meš} šá ana muh-*hi* KU [x] [....]
[....]s, three birds, and rosettes which were toward [....]
- 12' [x] [x x] ^{lú}UKKIN šá ^{lú}UŠ. ^{lú}BAR^{meš} SUM ^mEN. IGI ^{lú}zak-^{lú}za-^{lú}ku u ^{lú}[....]
gave [....] to the council of weavers. Bēl-lūmur, the *zazakku* and [....]
- 13' [x ina] qí-bi šá ^{lú}DUMU NIBRU^{ki} ^{lú}EN pi-^{lú}ir u ^{lú}E^{ki.meš} [....]
[....] at the command of the son of Nippur, the overseer of a labor contingent, and the Babylonians [....]
- 14' [x x] ^{meš} ana ^mEN. IGI ^{lú}x [x] [x] [....]
[....]s to Bēl-lūmur, the [....]

Comments

- 2' For the phrase, DIR AN ZA “clouds were in the sky,” see Sachs and Hunger (1988, 29). ITI BI KILAM “That month, the equivalent was:” is the typical introductory phrase of the price lists of commodities in the diaries (-144 'Obv. 31–32', Rev.' 15; -140C Obv. 30, 'Rev. 24'; *et passim*). Many of the price lists end with the phrase a-na 1 GÍN KÛ.BABBAR ép-šú, “for one shekel of wrought silver” (-144 'Obv. 32–33', Rev.' 16; -140A 'Rev. 20'; *et passim*) or its variant a-na 1 GÍN KÛ.BABBAR ep-šú (-153 'Rev.' 2'; *et passim*). This phrase is also attested at the beginning of line 3'. This indicates that the original price list of BM 35183 begins from the right lacuna of line 2' and the introductory phrase can be restored there.
- 3' The phrase ITI BI ILLU “That month, the river level” can be restored in the right lacuna of this line. This is the typical introductory phrase of the reports of the Euphrates' level in the diaries (-144 'Obv. 13', 33', Rev.' 17; -140A 'Rev. 21'; *et passim*). Line 4' shows a part of a river level report. Since the date “the 27th” is mentioned there, the preserved part is very close to its end. Judging from the length of the left lacuna of line 4', the original report should begin from the right lacuna of line 3'.
- 4' The first number 2^{lú}8^{lú} 1/2 could also be read as 2^{lú}7^{lú} 1/2, but 2^{lú}8^{lú} 1/2 is better. This indicates a number of units on *na*. *Na* was a kind of gauge on which the level of the Euphrates was read. The river level was measured from the assumed peak flood level downward. The unit used in connection with *na* equals four fingers (Sachs and Hunger 1988, 34–36; Brown 2002, 40). The river level rose two fingers and reached twenty-eight on the 27th. Before that,

the river level should have been twenty-eight and a half.

- 9' This line is left untranslated. Although the signs are well preserved in this line, it is very difficult to find any good syntactic relationship between them. If the number 38 is a (part of a) year number, it should be followed by the sign KÁM.
- 11' The numeral “3” is only preserved in its upper half. However, the sign should not be “4,” “5,” or “6.” Lower vertical strokes of those signs should appear just below the beginnings of their upper ones (see the signs A on this line and NÍG on the next line as examples of the similar composition of strokes).

Since the sign MUŠEN clearly has two, not three, vertical strokes, it can clearly be differentiated from RI. MUŠEN can represent plural “birds” by itself (see CAD, s.v. “iṣṣūru;” 6 MUŠEN “six birds” appear at BE 6/1 118: 1).

A-a-ri^{meš} can be interpreted as “rosettes” or “donkey foals.” Although the latter seems to be more appropriate to the context, in which three birds are also mentioned, *hāru* (*ha’aru*, *ajaru*) “donkey foal” is a West Semitic loanword only attested in Mari (CAD, s.v. “hāru”). If the birds are mentioned with rosettes, they seem not to have been real ones, but figures of birds decorating something together with the rosettes. An MB catalogue of jewels in a Nippur gold treasure records 1 *e-rum* KÛ.GI *ša har-ba-qa-ni ù a-a-ra-ni* NA₄.ZÚ N[A₄ ...], “one golden staff (decorated) with a *harbaqānu*-bird and rosettes of obsidian and ... stone” (PBS 13 80: 5).

- 12' ^{lu}UKKIN *šá* ^{lu}UŠ. ^{lu}BAR^{meš}, “the council of weavers,” is also attested at CT 49 190: 2'. If line 11' and the left half of line 12' belong to the same sentence, it may report that the decorated object was given to the council.

The official name *zazakku* is spelled ^{lu}*zak-za-a-ku* at BE 8 42: 1, and ^{lu}*zak-za-ku* in VAS 3 35: 5. For these spellings, see CAD, s.v. “zazakku.”

The historical account of BM 35183 seems to begin with someone's or some group's entrance into Cutha and the date designation “the 17th” (‘Obv.’¹² 5'). The next line (‘Obv.’¹² 6') shows the name and the title of Ardaya, “the general of Babylonia,” for the first time on the fragment. ‘Obv.’¹² 7' shows that Ardaya was accompanied by “his servants and his troops.” ‘Obv.’¹² 8' reports some action by Ardaya's command. However, ‘Obv.’¹² 10' seems to report that someone “abandoned” him. If this incident is interpreted as one step of Ardaya's downfall, which was caused by his defeat in the war with Kamniskires in Araḥsamna SE 167, or the conquest of Babylonia by Mithridates at some time in the first three months of SE 171, the monthly section of BM 35183 can be dated between Araḥsamna SE 167 and the beginning of SE 171. We cannot date the section to Du'uz SE 171 or later, because the new general of Babylonia, Nikanor, was appointed in Simān.

‘Obv.’¹² 12' shows that something was given to “the council of weavers,”³⁵ and mentions Bēl-lūmur with his title *zazakku* in an unusual spelling. The official *zazakku* was the overseer of temple affairs for Babylonia (Beaulieu 1991, 103; Dandamayev 1994), or the special secretary of the king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Joannès 1994), especially in the reign of Nabonidus (555/554–539/538 B.C.). The official called *zazakku* was also attested at the top of the temple Esagil in the

³⁵ For the professional *kiništus* in Hellenistic Babylon, see Boiy 2004, 202.

Seleucid period. Three diaries of SE 143 (169/168 B.C.) contain an identical historical account about a *zazakku*, who was appointed by the king (-168A 'Rev. 12'-13'; -168B 'Rev.' 12'; -168C 'Rev. 4'-5'). He was a jeweler, a brother of the *šatammu* of Esagil, i.e. the chief administrator and high priest of the temple,³⁶ and his representative. A diary of SE 148 (164/163 B.C.), -163C₂, attests a *zazakku* official, who was also the representative of the *šatammu* of Esagil (-163C₂ Rev.' 17). This *zazakku* was probably the same person as the *zazakku* of -168A/B/C (Boiy 2004, 200). The same *zazakku* may be attested in the chronicle BCHP 15, which could be dated to SE 150 (162/161 B.C.) or SE 151 (161/160 B.C.) (Spek n.d.). The main part of this chronicle describes the theft of the gold, which was given to the temple council (*kiništu*) of Esagil,³⁷ and the trial for the theft. The gold was given by a dignitary serving “the general of Babylonia” (BCHP 15 Obv. 2–3). Before the trial for the theft was held, the gold was measured at the command of the dignitary, a trustee (*bēl piqitti*) of the *zazakku*, and the temple council (BCHP 15 Obv. 7–12). This action and the *zazakku*'s position at the top of Esagil attested in -168A/B/C and -163C₂ suggest that the *zazakku* in the Seleucid period was the overseer of temple affairs, although the jurisdiction of the office might have been restricted within Esagil. The *zazakku* was a royal official, because the jeweler of -168A/B/C was appointed to the office by the king. However, he (and the *zazakku* of -163C₂) was also the representative of the *šatammu* of Esagil. This indicates that the person in the office of *zazakku* could also be a part of the bureaucratic structure of Esagil. A person Bēl-lūmur as the *šatammu* of Esagil is attested in two documents of the 120s and the 110s B.C. (*BOR* 4, 132: 7, 17; -119B₁ 'Obv.' 11') and an undated document (CT 49 149: 2).³⁸ If he is the same person as Bēl-lūmur mentioned in BM 35183, and if the aforementioned dating of the document on the tablet is correct, the document shows his past office in the late 140s B.C. and indicates that a person once served as the *zazakku* could become the *šatammu*.

'Obv.¹ 13' shows a command by a son of Nippur, who was the overseer of a labor contingent, and “the Babylonians.” The diary -141C also records another command by a son of Nippur, as follows ('Obv.' 11'): [...]³⁹ U₄.17.KÁM *ina qí-bi šá 1-en* ^{lú}DUMU ^{lú}NI^{ki}BRU^{ki} *šá ú-še-piš ku-um* ^{md}MAŠ[...],³⁹ “[...] The 17th, at the command of the son of Nippur, who acted for Ninurta-[...]” This Nippurean was probably the same person as the overseer mentioned in BM 35183, a diary which can also be dated to the late 140s B.C. If this identification is correct, we may consider Ninurta-[...] as the *šatammu* of Esagil and that the Nippurean acted for the *šatammu*. The Nippurean is mentioned together with ^{lú}E^{ki}.meš^l, “the Babylonians” in BM 35183 'Obv.¹ 13'. The *šatammu* of Esagil and “the Babylonians of the *kiništu* of Esagil” are often mentioned together in the diaries,⁴⁰ and the words “the Babylonians of the *kiništu* of Esagil” are sometimes abbreviated to “the Babylonians.”⁴¹ “The Babylonians” of 'Obv.¹ 13' seems to be an abbreviation of the same kind. It is also possible that the words ^{lú}UKKIN *šá É-sag-gíl*, “of the *kiništu* of Esagil” are restored in the right lacuna of the line. If “the Babylonians” of BM 35183 are the members of the *kiništu*,

³⁶ For the character of the *šatammu*, see van der Spek 2000, 437; Boiy 2004, 196–197.

³⁷ For the temple council, see Boiy 2004, 202–204.

³⁸ van der Spek (1986, 60) once dated CT 49 149 to SE 214 (98/97 B.C.), but the dating is not retained by van der Spek (2000, 440).

³⁹ The signs ^{md}MAŠ can be seen on the copy (Sachs and Hunger 1996, pl. 193; ^lx¹ in Sachs and Hunger 1996, 118).

⁴⁰ See e.g. -245B 'Obv. 4', -187A 'Rev. 8', -77A 'Obv. 27'.

⁴¹ See e.g. -178C 'Rev. 19'; -93A Rev.' 25.

the Nippurean accompanied by them acted for the *šatammu* of Esagil. The *šatammu*'s name is unclear in BM 35183, but we can surmise that Ninurta-[...] of -141C was the *šatammu*, because he was also represented by the Nippurean.⁴²

IV. Concluding Remarks

Although it is a small fragment, BM 35183 gives us some useful pieces of historical information. It shows that someone abandoned Ardaya, “the general of Babylonia,” probably at a point between his defeat by Kamniskires I in SE 167 and the appointments of the new “general above the four generals” and “the general of Babylonia” in SE 171 at the conquest of Babylonia by the Arsacids. The persons who served as those generals are as follows:

	General above the four generals	General of Babylonia
SE 167	?	Ardaya
SE 171	Antiochus	Nikanor

Another part of BM 35183 mentions Bēl-lūmur with his title *zazakku*. He can be identified with Bēl-lūmur, the *šatammu* of Esagil in the 120s and the 110s B.C. If this is correct, the same person who served as the *zazakku* in the late 140s B.C. became the *šatammu*, as follows.

Bēl-lūmur in the late 140s B.C.	<i>zazakku</i>
The same person in the 120s and the 110s B.C.	<i>šatammu</i> of Esagil

BM 35183 sheds new light on the collapse of Seleucid rule of Babylonia and increases our knowledge of the administration of Esagil in the late second century B.C. Unfortunately, the preserved part of the tablet is still just a fragment. We hope we will find the fragment(s) joined to BM 35183, complement the text of the new diary, and improve its understanding.

Acknowledgments

My thanks go to the Trustees of the British Museum for allowing me to study the tablets BM 34609 + 34788 + 77617 + 78958 (astronomical diary -144), BM 35053 + 35815 (astronomical diary -140B), BM 35183, BM 45703 + 45741 + 45748 (astronomical diary -140A) and to publish BM 35183. I also thank Christopher B. F. Walker for putting his provisional database of the tablets with astronomical and astrological contents of the British Museum Babylon Collection at my disposal, Stefan Zawadzki and Radosław Tarasewicz for their suggestions in reading the text on BM 35183, Reinhard Pirngruber for reading a manuscript of this paper and giving me useful comments. My thanks also go to Editage (www.editage.jp) for English language editing. All the remaining errors are, of course, mine. My research for this paper is funded by JSPS KAKENHI Grant No. 17H04527 and 26870111.

Abbreviations

AE	Arsacid era
BCHP	I. L. Finkel and R. J. van der Spek, <i>Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period</i> , scholarly ed., Livius.org. http://www.livius.org/sources/about/mesopotamian-chronicles/ (accessed August 19, 2016).
Just. Epit.	Marcus Junianus Justinus, <i>Trogi Pompei Historiarum Philippicarum epitoma</i>
SE	Seleucid era

⁴² The holder of the *šatammu* in the late 140s B.C. is not known. For lists of the already known *šatammus*, see van der Spek 2000, 438–440; Boiy 2004, 199.

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Fig. 1: BM 35183 'Obv.'^{1,2}

(Photographed and traced by the author, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)