The Montserrat Fragment of the Instructions of Ur-Ninurta

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The basic aim of this note is to provide a hand-copy of MM 487b, namely source E of The Instructions of Ur-Ninurta (= InUrN), and to point out through the transliteration a number of minor improvements and suggestions to the editions of my venerable predecessors.¹ M. Civil, *OrNS* 41 (1972) 89, first drew attention to the fragment (mentioned as MM 487), and eventually published a photograph and edition of the text in *AuOr.* 15 (1997 = *Fs. P. Guieu Camps*) 43–53. B. Alster included source E in his edition of the composition in *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer* (Bethesda, MD 2005) 221–240. A treatment of the revised last four lines of the text is W. Sallaberger, *CRAI* 54 (Winona Lake 2012) 16f.

As stated by Civil, MM 487b is a fragment of the obverse of a Middle Babylonian tablet, possibly from Babylon.² The fragment preserves lines col. i 1'-18' = InUrN 18-33; col. ii 1'-14' = InUrN 56-68.

Transliteration

Col. i

5' [ni₂-te-a-ni diğir *i-te₍₄₎*]-*ʿeħ-ħu-u₂* ʿmu¹-un-¹da¹-[ab-sa₂-e-a]
[x x x] *ša₂* si[zku]r₂-ra *i-na-aq-qu₂-u₂* im-ma-an-ġ[a₂-ġa₂-a]
[mu diğir-r]a-na *šu-qu₂-ru-šu* mu-un-na-kal-[la]
[nam-er]im₂ ku₅-ru-de₃ *dup<pu>ru* im-ma-da-ab-te-ġe₂₆-a
[ki diğir-r]a-ni-ta si-sa₂-bi i₃-dib-be₂
[niġ₂ u₂]-gu de₂-a-ni in-na-ab-su-su

¹ The hand-copy and a new photograph of MM 487b are presented here by the kind permission of the Benedictine Community of the Abbey of Montserrat; it is a pleasure to record my gratitude to P. Pius-Ramon Tragan, keeper of the Museu Bíblic. This contribution is part of the research project FFI2011-23981.

² Because O. Pedersén could not match MM 487b with any of the clay tablets and fragments available in photograph or description in the Babylon “Grabungsdokumentation” during his thorough catalogue work (see his *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon*. Saarbrücken 2005), the question-mark following “Babylon” as the provenance of the fragment will have to remain for the time being.

MM 487 b (103 × 84 × 18 mm)

Notes

The restoration of the gloss in line i 3' (InUrN 20) is based on a new reading of the traces of the last three signs and allows a translation “He who voluntarily approaches his god”; cf. $sa_2 = kašādu$.

Line ii 6' (InUrN 61) is problematical. The line is almost fully preserved in source A (TIM 9, 1), a text syllabically written and of low quality; it reads 'ki[?]1-su-zu ku-na-am₃ 'še¹-zu [d]aḥ-ba-a-b. The first two signs of the gloss in the Montserrat fragment did not help Civil or Alster to understand the meaning of the verb or first sentence. Civil, *AuOr.* 15, 52 left it accordingly untranslated: “Do ... in your threshing floor”, and Alster, *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer*, 234, offered the provisional translation “Do the threshing(?) in your (own) threshing floor” based on a misunderstood reference given by Civil; indeed he confused line 98 of *The Farmer's Instructions* with line 96 leading him to suggest the aberrant equivalence $KU = ba_9(?)$ (line 98 has dur_2-dur_2 “to trample”, said of oxen threshing the grain). The interpretation offered here is admittedly highly tentative; cf. $ku-nu = qerēbu$ in OBG^T and Antagal (for references see CAD Q 228 s.v.). The resulting, conjectural translation of the line, namely “Bring your men on your threshing-floor, and add more of your grain”, does not disagree, however, with the general advices on agriculture of this didactic composition (cf. e.g. line 46).