

## A Middle Assyrian Hippology Fragment in the British Museum

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[The British Museum holds a fragment describing horse training, which can be related to similar tablets from the reconstructed Middle Assyrian library (M 2). As the presence of coughing can be demonstrated in one fragment in the Assyrian hippology corpus, it implies that this corpus deals to some extent with horse healthcare, contrary to the Hittite Instructions of Kikkuli (CTH 284).]

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In this short article a new fragment (BM 120122) of the Middle Assyrian horse training text is presented. This is a fragment of a larger tablet which measures 116 x 86 x 30 mm and was purchased in 1928 from Maj. V.E. Mocatta.<sup>1</sup> Similar fragments stored in the Pergamon Museum Berlin and the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul were studied and published by E. Ebeling in *Bruchstücke einer mittelassyrischen Vorschriftensammlung für die Akklimatisierung und Trainierung von Wagenpferden* (1951, henceforth *BVW*). To date, this remains the only edition of the Middle Assyrian hippology text. The fragments included within the *BVW* were identified with the letters A–U; following this method, the fragment published here could be labelled “W.” All of these fragments likely belong to the same tablet (rather than to multiple copies of the text) which can be provenanced to the reconstructed M 2 temple archive (Pedersén 1985, 38ff; an overview in de Ridder 2018, 22) at Aššur. When Ebeling (1951, 46–47) studied the material, it was impossible for him to offer a composite text. Individual lines could be reconstructed due to the repetitious character of the tablet; however, it was this same repetition that caused difficulties in reconstructing the correct order of the instructions. Unfortunately, the tablet offered here will not solve the puzzle entirely, and I was not able to make a physical join with any other fragment. Nevertheless, it seems possible that other pieces in Istanbul and Berlin awaiting publication will someday allow us to obtain a full composite text. An overview of the different fragments:

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1. While the tablets excavated during the German excavations in Aššur (modern Qal’at Sherqat) between 1903–1914 were officially divided between the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin) and the Archaeological Museum (Istanbul), several pieces ended up in different collections (see Grayson 1983; Pedersén 1985, 19–20; 1986, 161, 176).

	Museum no.	Excavation no.	Pedersén 1985
BVW A	VAT 10450	Ass. 285	M 2 3
BVW Ab	A 698	Ass. 7745	M 2 39
BVW Ac	A 608	Ass 19007	M 2 46
BVW B	VAT 8711	Ass. 7112	M 2 34
BVW C	VAT 9645	Ass. 3108	M 2 6
BVW D	VAT 1041	Ass. 171	M 2 1
BVW E	VAT 9561	Ass. 6555	M 2 24
BVW F	VAT 9542	Ass. 19259	M 2 56
BVW G	VAT 9751	Ass. 2108	M 2 5
BVW H	VAT 14425	Ass. 10199	M 2 42
BVW I	A 670	Ass. 8842	M 2 37
BVW K	A 710	Ass. 7294	M 2 37
BVW L	–	Ass. 5867	M 2 44
BVW M	A 93	Ass 19172a	M 2 53
BVW N	A 112	Ass 19172b	M 2 53
BVW O	–	Ass. 19255	M 2 55
BVW P	A 2489	Ass. 19207	M 2 54
BVW Q	A 610	Ass 19162	M 2 52
BVW R	A 692	Ass 19060	M 2 48
BVW S	A 691	Ass 5867	M 2 45
BVW T	–	Ass 13361	M 2 43
BVW U	A 640	Ass 6731a	M 2 26
BVW W	BM 120122	–	–
BVW Ko	VAT 9426	–	–

The content of *BVW* in general can be summarized as following: it describes when and how much to feed horses, when and how far to let them run for practice and how to let them rest afterwards. In this regard, *BVW* is very different from the hippiatric texts from Ugarit, which concentrate on the treatment of sick horses (see Cohen/Sivan 1983, 2).<sup>2</sup> The Hittite text called “*Instructions of Kikkuli*” (CTH 284) is more useful for comparison, since it deals with similar horse-training topics.<sup>3</sup> If the length of this Hittite text is anything to go by (it is 1080 lines long, following Starke 1995, 3) we may understand why no composite texts can be reconstructed for *BVW*; only 290 very damaged lines were provided by Ebeling, who did not have access to fragment W.<sup>4</sup> The *Instructions of Kikkuli* and *BVW* are certainly not different versions of the same text; Kikkuli was the name of the eponymous horse trainer from Mittani and this text is written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, describing what Kikkuli did to take care of horses. *BVW* is written in the second person and in Assyrian dialect, much like the perfume texts (Ebeling 1948ff) and does not exhibit any influences from the Hurrian/Mittanian substrate. A Hurrian PN was reconstructed for the scribe by Ebeling (1951, 58): [*Ki-ik*]-*ki-ni su-sa-nu DUMU* [...] *BVW* A r. 5 (see also Richter 2016, 156b). However, as correctly pointed out by Jakob (2003, 221) it is equally possible to read the two preserved signs as the Assyrian element *kēnu* (Saporetti 1970, 120). The occurrence of the Hurrian

2. For a general edition of these texts, see Cohen/Sivan 1983; Cohen 1996; Loretz 2011.

3. The prime edition is Kammenhuber 1961.

4. See also Stol in Loretz 2011, 373.

loanword *tahapšu* ‘felt’ is not significant for a possible Hurrian origin, as this word is common in the Middle Assyrian corpus (Jakob 2003, 221).

*Transliteration*

- Obv. [...] ŠE<sup>-um?</sup> [ma<sup>2</sup>-la<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup>]-š<sup>u</sup> hu-la  
 [i+na tu-be-ka ... K]ASKAL<sup>-ni</sup> ma-la si-ip-sa-te  
 [te<sup>2</sup>-pa<sup>2</sup>-aš<sup>2</sup> (...) ta-ḥap]-še tu-ṛpa<sup>1</sup>-ta  
 [...] t]a-pa-ṭar ṛA<sup>1</sup>meš ta-ša-qi  
 5 [...] ½<sup>2</sup>]a.ām i+na up-ni ŠE<sup>-am</sup>  
 [i-šap-pa-ka-šu-nu e-ku-lu (?)] ṛU<sup>2</sup>meš tu-ma-ša-ad  
 [...] tu-ma]-ša-ad ka-na-ma-ri  
 [...] a-ṛdi ta<sup>1</sup>-ḥap-še  
 [ta-ra-kas (?) ma-la s]i-ṛip-sa<sup>1</sup>-te  
 10. [ta-la-bi (?) ta-kal-la i+na hu-l]i tu-ka-šad
- Rev. [...] ṛX<sup>1</sup> ŠE<sup>-um??</sup>  
 [...] ta]-ṛpa-ṭar<sup>1</sup> [i]-ṛna<sup>1</sup>-pu-š<sup>u</sup>  
 [...] 2<sup>-š<sup>u</sup></sup> ú ra-si-ni te-pa-á[š]  
 [...] ma-la] hu-la i+na tu-be-ka 3<sup>-š<sup>u</sup></sup>  
 5'. [...] i+na-pu-š<sup>u</sup> ta<sup>1</sup>-ra-kas  
 [...] ta-pa-ṭ]ar tu-uš-ga-ra-a-ar  
 [tu-ša-raḥ tu-ša-ap (...) A]meš ta-ša-qi ma-la su-’a-li  
 8'. [...] (?) 2<sup>2</sup>ta.ām i+na up-ni] ŠE<sup>-am</sup> ta-ša-pa-ka-šu-nu e-ku-lu

- Obv.  
 1–2) [...] barley [when?] you (prepare?) the path [well?] for the [first?] time  
 2–3) [...] you take] the road in accordance with the poles.  
 3) [...] (then) you will open up the [felt-cove]rs.  
 4) [...] you] will release and give them water to drink,  
 5–6) [...] half?] a palm of barley each [you will pour out for them, (and) they will eat].  
 6–7) You will rub grass(?), [...] you will rub.  
 7–9) In the early morning [... you will tie] with felt.  
 9–10) [you will make rounds in accordance with the p]oles and you will rein the horses (and) make the journey.

- Rev.  
 1') [...] barley.  
 2') [...] you will unyoke (the horses) and they will breathe.  
 3') [...] a second time and you will do *rasīnu*.  
 4') [... when] you (prepare?) the path well.  
 4'–5') A third time [...] they will breathe, and you will harness (them).  
 6'–7) [...] you will unyoke (them) and allow (them) to roll on the ground, [keep (them) warm, rub (them) down] and give (them) water to drink.  
 7'–8') Once phlegm [... two? palm of barley each] you will pour out for them and they will eat.

## Commentary

2) The noun *sipsātu* is a case of the Assyrian propensity to swap <s> and <š>. As such it is attested in NA as *šipšātu*, see de Ridder 2018, 147 § 223. The meaning of the noun remains uncertain. It is usually believed to be an architectural feature in NA sources, see CAD Š<sub>3</sub>, 85b; AHW, 1246–47. Parpola (1987, 156, 202) suggests that it may be a beam, also written logographically as <sup>gi</sup>ŠÚ.A in Assyrian.<sup>5</sup> Ebeling (1951, 51) believed the *sipsātu* to be wooden poles fencing the training area and compared it with Hittite *ušašanna* found in the *Kikkuli* text.<sup>6</sup>

3) The phrase *taḥapše tupatta* occurs one or two times in BVW, however always with the final sign missing. Ebeling reconstructed a verbal form of *pašāru* ‘to release’ (*tu-pa-[šar]* B:4; [*tu-pa-šar*] I r. 6). The CAD T (p. 40b) is more careful and leaves the form at *tu-pa-[x]*. Fragment W makes it clear that the verbal form derives from *petû* ‘to open’, with the same interpretation as we find for no. 1. The interpretation remains more or less unchanged; the horses are running while covered with *taḥapšu*. The textile *taḥapšu* has been demonstrated by Postgate (2000; 2014, 406–7) to be felt, used mainly in the Nuzi documentation for horse-armour but which also saw varied application in the production of boots, hats, coats and furniture in Middle Assyrian sources. For its status as a Hurrian loanword, see Richter 2012, 425–26. The use of *taḥapšu* in BVW fits well with the Nuzi material, e.g., *a-di ta-ḥap-še ta-ra-kas* ‘you will bind (the horses) with felt’ BVW F:6 or *a-di ta-ḥap-še il-lu-ku* ‘they will run (saddled) with felt’ BVW G:9. Compare the *Kikkuli* text: 1 DANNA *u-a-aš-ša-an-te-eš ú-ū[a-]an[-zi]* ‘one mile they will run covered’ CTH 284 II ii 3.’ See also Stark 1995, 41–42 n98; *uešš-* ‘to cover (horses)’ Kloekhorst 2008, 1004–7. The objection given by Stark that there is no direct parallel is based in part on his outdated translation of *taḥapšu* as “Riemen, Gurt.” Livingstone (1989, 151b) translates *taḥapšu* as ‘saddle’, which implies that one would be able to ride the horse while sitting on the felt. When the horses transpired too much, the *taḥapšu*-covers/saddles needed to be opened up or loosened in order for the horses to cool down a bit.

6) The verb *mašādu* ‘to strike’ is attested for the first time in BVW with the meaning ‘to rub’ in the D-stem, see also CAD M<sub>1</sub>, 351–52. The word preceding it remains unclear and the restoration Ú for ‘grass’ or ‘plants’ is tentative. Equally possibly is Ì ‘oil’ perhaps even [*pa*]-<sup>ḡ</sup>*nī* ‘faces.’

7) For *kannamāre* ‘in the early morning’ from *\*kal-namāre* (with NA *kallamāre*) see Streck 2017, 598; de Ridder 2018, 332–33 § 491, *contra* PI *na-ma-re* in Ebeling 1951, 43. Cf. Freydanck 2010, 665–66 and see also Jakob 2009, 41.

10) This line is reconstructed in analogy with BVW F r. 13–14. The translation of the verb *kalû* as ‘to hold back > rein in horses’ follows CAD K, 101a. For *kašādu* ‘to reach’ > D-stem ‘to make a journey,’ is a use of the verb otherwise only attested in OA, see CAD K, 281a; Kouwenberg 1997, 213.

r. 3’) The noun *rasīnu* appears to be an oblique plural. Following CAD (R, 182a) its meaning is unknown and occurs only in BVW. Von Soden offers the unexpected interpretation “etwa Teigklümpchen” as well as certain attestations from beyond BVW which undoubtedly need to be read differently.<sup>7</sup> The noun always has a genitive case ending despite being the object of the verb *epēšu* ‘to do’. This suggests that *rasīnu* is a foreign word. A translation ‘to sponge down (a horse)’

5. A similar meaning “Holzbalken” was previously suggested by Deller 1987, 249.

6. See also Starke 1995, 90–92; Rauwler 2006, 67a, 72 n85. Usually *ušašanna* is translated as track, going back to Indic *\*vāz<sup>h</sup>ana-* ‘driving (course).’ It only occurs in the *Kikkuli* text, Kloekhorst 2008, 981–82 (with further references).

7. For instance, *ra-si-ni<sup>sic</sup>* > RA-si Ì BAM 3 240:61’ (Scurlock 2014, 612).

for the idiom *rasīni epēšu* is offered in CAD E, 216b. While it is important to add this new attestation, its identical context does not allow for a better understanding.

r. 6'–7') Reconstructed in analogy with *BVW* A:5, I:10. The verbal form *tušarraḥ* in l 7' (*tu-ša-raḥ* *BVW* A:5, G:12, H:4, I r. 2, O r. 6, S:7, r. 5) is derived from the verb *šarāḥu* 'D: to keep warm' CAD S, 99a. We may compare this reading with the hapax noun *tašraḥu*, an 'occupation of warming horses' in EA 143:27 (AHw, 1337; Moran 1992, 229–30 n5).<sup>8</sup>

r. 7') The noun *su'ālu* 'cough, phlegm' can also be reconstructed on *BVW* E r. 6. This reading is incompatible with Ebelings original edition: <sup>6)</sup> [*qa-l*]i-a-te ma-la su-'a-? (read -l[i]) <sup>7)</sup> [*tu-ra-da-šu-nu e-ku-lu*] '[Rö]stkorn, soviel wie ... [wirst du ihnen hinzufügen, sie werden fressen]' (Ebeling 1951, 19–20). It remains unclear what else can be reconstructed in l. 7 as there are no comparable phrases preserved on the other fragments. Phlegm (*su'ālu*) is in fact usually regarded as (a symptom) of disease or associated with its curing (AHw, 1052–53; CAD S, 340; on the verb *salā'u* see Stol 2009, 29). In fact, in a contemporary Middle Babylonian letter (PBS 1/2 72) of the physician Šumu-libši, coughing up phlegm was the result of having medically treated the cough itself (*ganāḥu*), using potions (Sibbing Plantholt 2014, 179a). The verb *g-ṣ-r* 'to reproach, rebuke' (del Olmo Lete – Sanmartín 2015, 287) used in the Ugaritic hippiatric text (*ygṣr* l. 2), has in the past been translated as 'coughing' (Pardee 1985, 42–46), though explained as 'roaring' (Cohen 1996, 113–14). Regardless, both 'coughing' and 'roaring' can be regarded as sounds made with the throat, indicate of breathing issues. While the Ugaritic texts continues with a description of a remedy, this does not seem to be the case in the Middle Assyrian hippology text.

r. 8') Reconstructed in analogy with *BVW* A:6.

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8. Another attestation of this noun is perhaps found in the following passage: ANŠE.KUR.RA *ša us-ṛbuṛ-ni mKi-pá-ia ù tu-uš-ra-ḥu-šu* [text breaks off] 'the horse(s) that stay (here), Kipaya and his *tušraḥu*-man' BM 103203:4–6 (Freydank 2016, 96). This is an unusual Middle Assyrian letter, written in Nuzi-style (edition in Fincke 2014, 23–27).

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