Reading Neo-Babylonian Names

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Introduction

Many Neo-Babylonian names take the form of a sentence consisting of a subject (usually a deity), an object (usually the newborn child), and a verb.[1] Whenever the elements are spelled syllabically, there is usually no problem in reading and translating the name. In the first millennium BCE, however, it became increasingly common for scribes to spell the subject, object, and/or verb of personal names with logograms (Sumerograms). Sometimes a phonetic prefix or suffix was added to indicate pronunciation, but often such reading aids were not supplied.[2] In that case, verbal logograms are especially difficult to interpret for modern readers, as these signs can render a finite form (present, preterite, perfect), a non-finite form (participle, verbal adjective, infinitive), an injunctive form (precative, imperative), or even a verbal substantive. Two examples will suffice to illustrate the challenges that modern readers face when interpreting a logographically written Babylonian name.

The first example is the name spelled [Id]AG-A-MU. In this name, the verb spelled MU can hypothetically be interpreted as an imperative (*Nabû-aplu-idin 'Nabû, give the son!'), a preterite (Nabû-aplu-iddin 'Nabû gave the son'), a perfect (*Nabû-aplu-ittannu 'Nabû has given the son'), or a present (*Nabû-aplu-inaddin 'Nabû gives/will give the son'). However, such ambiguity did not exist in the minds of Babylonian readers, who knew that Nabû-aplu-iddin was the only permissible form of this name.

Another example is the name spelled [Id]IDIM-GI. This name is to be read Ea-ušallim despite the fact that the name Ea-mušallim also existed.

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The names Ea-ušallim and Ea-mušallim are obviously very similar, but they were not the same: an individual was either called Ea-mušallim or Ea-ušallim, but never both. In order to avoid confusion, scribes wrote the preterite form (*ušallim*) with the logogram GI while rendering the participle syllabically (^{Id}IDIM-*mu-šal-lim* or *mu*-GI). In other words, ^{Id}IDIM-GI was never to be read Ea-mušallim.

The latter example shows that Neo-Babylonian scribes used a coherent system for writing verbal logograms in personal names. This system can be reconstructed by comparing the different spellings that the ancient scribes used to render the names of the same individuals. In this chapter I present the results of this reconstruction and propose a simple method to determine the correct reading of verbal logograms in Neo-Babylonian personal names.[3]

Phonetic Reading Aids

Scribes could and did help the reader identify the correct rendering of logograms by adding phonetic suffixes and prefixes. The following tables collect all known Neo-Babylonian name elements that consist of a verbal Sumerogram and a phonetic prefix (Table 6.1) or suffix (Table 6.2). Entries where the transcription begins with a capital letter are one-element names.[4]

Table 6.1 *Name elements consisting of a verbal Sumerogram with a phonetic prefix*

Prefix	Transcription	Prefix	Transcription
bul-TIN-*iṭ*	bulliṭ	*mu*-(*še*)-DIB	mušētiq
e-KAR	eṭir, ēṭir	*mu*-GÁL-*ši*	Mušebši
i-BA-*šá*	iqīša	*mu*-GI	mušallim
i-DÙ	ibni	*mu*-GUR	mutīr
ik-KÁD	ikṣur	*mu*-SIG$_{(1)5}$(-*iq*/*qu*)	mudammiq
iq-E	iqbi	*mu*-SILIM	mušallim
i-SU, *ta*-SU	Erībāya, tarībi	*na*-PAB	nāṣir
it-MU-*nu*	ittannu	*nu*-ZALÁG	nūr
ka-KÁD	kāṣir	*šá*-DUB	Šāpiku, Šāpik-
li-GIŠ	līšir, Līšir	*tu*-TIN-*su*	tuballissu
li-SI.SÁ	Līšir	*ú*-SIG$_{(1)5}$-*iq*	udammiq
lu-IGI	lūmur	*ú*-TIN-*su*	uballissu
lu-È	lūṣi	*ú*-URÙ(-*šú*)	uṣur(šu)

[3] The details of this reconstruction are the subject of my forthcoming PhD dissertation (VU University Amsterdam).

[4] With the exception of Bānītu, which is the name of a deity. One-element verbal names are discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

Table 6.2 *Name elements consisting of a verbal Sumerogram with a phonetic suffix*

Suffix	Transcription	Suffix	Transcription
ÁG-(*ú*)-*a*	Râmûa	MU-(*na*)-*a*[5]	Iddināya
APIN-*eš*/*iš*	ēreš	MU-*na*/*ni*/*nu*	ittannu
BA-*šá*(-*a*-(*a*))	iqīša, Iqīšāya	MU-*ú-nu*/*nu-nu*	Iddinunu
DIB-*iq*	mušētiq	NÍG.SUM-*tu₄*	nidinti, Nidintu
DÙ-(*na*)-(*a*)-*a*	Ibnāya	NIGIN₍₂₎-*ir*	upaḫḫir
DÙ-*atl*/*a-tú*	banâtu	PAB-*ir*	nāṣir
DÙ-*i*	bani	SIG₍₁₎₅-(*qî*)-*ia*	Damqia
DÙ-*eš*/*iš*/*uš*-ilī	ēpeš-ilī (FN)	SIG₍₁₎₅-*iq*[6]	-udammiq,
DÙ-*ia*	Bānia		-dam(i)qu-
DÙ-*na-al*[?]	banā	SIG₍₁₎₅-*qa*/*qál*/*qu*	damqā/u (FN)
	(W.Sem.)	SILIM-*im*	Mušallim(-DN),
DÙ-*nil*/*nu*	bāni/bānû		DN-ušallim,
DÙ-*nu-nul*/*nun*	bānûnu		Obj.-šullim
DÙ-*til*/*túl*/*tu₄*	Bānītu (DN)	SILIM-*lim*	šullim
DÙ-*uš*/*šú*	DN-īpuš,	SILIM.(MU)-*a*	Šullumāya
	Mīnu-	SIPA-*in-du*	ᶠRēʾindu
	ēpuš, Obj.-	SU-*a*	erība, Erībāya
	epuš		
DUB-*kil*/*ku*	Šāpiku	SI.SÁ-*ri*	Līšir
E-*bi*	iqbi	SUM-*din*	Nādinu (?)
GÁL/TIL/TUK-*ši*	-libši[7],	SUM-*in*	iddin
	-ušabši[8],		
	Mušebši-		
GAR-*nil*/*nu*	šaknu	SUM(.NA)-*a*	Iddināya
GAR-*un*	iškun	SUM(.NA)-*na*	ittannu
		/*nil*/*nu*	
GI-*a*	Šullumāya	SUM(.NA)-*ú-nu*	Iddinunu
GIN-*al*/*ial*/*iá*	Kīnāya	SUM(.NA)-*nu-nu*	Iddinunu
GIN-*in*	Mukīn-, -ukīn	SUM-*til*/*túl*/*tu₄*	nidinti, Nidintu
GIN-*ú-a*	kīnûa	SUM-*tú-a*(-*a*)	Nidintāya
GIŠ-*ir*	līšir	SUR-*ir*/*ril*/*rul*/*rat*	ēṭir(at)
GUB-*zal*/*zu*	azziz ?	SÙ-*ú-a*	Rīšûa (FN)
GUR-*ir*	utīr	TIN-*a*	Balāṭāya
I-*a*	Nâdāya	TIN-*iṭ*	Obj.-bulliṭ, DN-
			uballiṭ
I-*id*	naʾid	TIN-(*liṭ*)-*sul*/*šú*(-*ú*)	Balāssu, Uballissu-

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[5] In rare cases, when MU-a represents a patronym, it is sometimes read Šumaya.

[6] To be read Mudammiq- or -dam(i)qu- in family names.

[7] If the object is MU (*šumu* 'name'), for example, Šumu-libši, DN-šumu-libši '(DN,) May the name exist'.

[8] If the object is not MU (*šumu* 'name'), for example, Nabû-ušabši.

Table 6.2 (*cont.*)

Suffix	Transcription	Suffix	Transcription
KÁD-*ri*	Kāṣir		DN, DN/v.-bullissu
KAM-*eš*	ēreš	TIN-*ṭu*	balāṭu, Balāṭu
KAM-*tu₄*	Erišti-	TIN-*uṭ*	abluṭ
KAR-*a*	Ēṭirāya	TUK-*ši*	see GÁL/TIL/ TUK-*ši*
KAR-*ir/ri/ru/rat*	Ēṭir(at)	TUKUL-*ti*	tukulti
KAR-*šú*	šūzibšu	URÙ-*ir*	nāṣir
KAR-*tu₄*	ᶠĒṭirtu	ZALÁG-(*mir*)-*ir*	unammir
KU₄-(*e-reb*)-*šú*	Erēbšu	ZALÁG-*e-a*	Nūrea
LAL-*iṣ*	tāriṣ	ZALÁG-*za-na/nu*	Nūrzānu
		lim-ZALÁG-*ir*	limmir, lummir

Some entries can denote both a full name and an element of a larger name. For instance, BA-*šá-a* can appear in a compound name of the type DN-iqīša ('DN granted'), but it can also stand on its own as the hypocoristic Iqīšaya.

Verbal Logograms Without Reading Aids

In order to identify the correct reading of the verbal logogram when it is written without phonetic complements, the following two-step method can be used. The first step is to identify the format of the name in question. In Babylonian names, the verbal element appears in nine common constellations: as the name's only element (v.), preceded or followed by a deity's name (DN-v., v.-DN), together with another verb (v.-v.), followed or preceded by an object or subject (v.-obj., obj./subj.-v.), in combination with an object or subject and a deity's name (DN-v.-obj., DN-obj./subj.-v.), or in combination with a deity's name and another verb (DN-v.-v.).[9] These categories can be further divided based on grammatical features: the verbal form used (present tense, preterite, perfect, precative, imperative, participle, verbal adjective, substantive) or the person (first, second, or third-person singular).[10] Table 6.3 presents all common name formats, along with their subtypes and some examples, but without

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[9] Pronominal prefixes and suffixes are not considered separate elements, nor are vocal endings -a, -āya, -ia, etc. (e.g., Iddināya) since these are fixed to the preceding element.

[10] No plural verbal forms were used in Neo-Babylonian names, as opposed to Old Babylonian, Middle Babylonian, and Neo-Assyrian names.

Table 6.3 *Common formats of Babylonian names with a verbal element*

Name format	Subtype	Examples
v.	pres. 1/3.sg.	Upāq
	pret./perf. 1.sg.	Ātanaḫ
	pret./perf. 2.sg.	Tattannu
	pret./perf. 3.sg.	Iddināya
	part.	Nādinu, Nāṣiru, Multēširu
	imp.	Uṣuršāya
	prec.	Līšir
	verb.adj.	Nadnāya
	subst. (incl. inf.)	Nidintu
DN-v.	DN-pres. 1/3.sg.	DN-upāq
	DN-pret./perf. 1.sg.	(Ana-)DN-ātanaḫ
	DN-pret./perf. 2.sg.	DN-tattannu
	DN-pret./perf. 3.sg.	DN-iddin, DN-ittannu
	DN-part	DN-nādin, DN-nāṣir
	DN-imp.	DN-uṣranni, DN-uṣuršu
	DN-prec.	DN-līšir
	DN-verb.adj.	DN-naʾid
	DN-subst.	(Itti-)DN-balāṭu/ssu
v.-DN	pres. 1/3.sg.-DN	Upāq-(ana)-DN
	pret./perf. 1.sg.-DN	Ātanaḫ-DN
	pret./perf. 3.sg.-DN	Iddin-DN, Ittannu-DN
	part.-DN	Mukīn-DN
	imp.-DN	Uṣuršu-DN
	prec.-DN	Lūṣi-ana-nūr-DN
	verb.adj.-DN	Nadin-DN, Naṣir-DN
	subst.-DN	Nidinti-DN
v.-v.	pret./perf. 2.sg.-imp.	Tattannu-uṣur, Tattannu-bullissu
	pret./perf. 2.sg.-prec	Taqbi-līšir
v.-obj.	part.-obj.	Nādin-aḫi
obj./subj.-v.	obj.-pret./perf. 1/3.sg.	Aḫu-iddin
	obj.-imp.	Aplu-uṣur
	obj./subj.-prec.	Aḫu-lūmur, Aḫu-līšir
DN-v.-obj.	DN-part.-obj.	DN-nādin-aḫi, DN-nāṣir-aḫi
DN-obj./subj.-v.	DN-obj.-pres. 1/2/3.sg.	DN-šūzubu-ileʾʾi
	DN-obj.-pret./perf. 1/3.sg.	DN-aḫu-iddin, DN-aḫu-ittannu
	DN-obj.-imp.	DN-šumu-uṣur
	DN-obj./subj.-prec.	DN-aḫḫē-lūmur, DN-šumu-līšir
DN-v.-v.	DN-pret./perf. 2.sg.-imp.	DN-tattannu-uṣur
	DN-pret./perf. 2.sg.-prec.	DN-tultabši-līšir

additional prepositions, adverbs, etc.[11] Note that a verbal Sumerogram can be used not only as a verb but also as an object. For instance, the sign GIN can denote an object (e.g., in the name DN-kīnu-uṣur 'DN, protect the true (heir)!') and a verb (e.g., in DN-šumu-ukīn 'DN established the name (son)').

The rules for reading verbal logograms, set out later in the chapter, pertain to these nine common name formats. Before turning to this rule scheme, however, we need to consider a number of special or rare name types that cannot be fitted into this scheme.

First-Person Singular Preterite

First-person singular preterite forms are rare in Neo-Babylonian names. These elements are mostly spelled syllabically or the reading of the logogram is self-evident[12] because of extra elements (such as the preposition *ana* (*muḫḫi*) 'to' or the interrogative pronoun *mīnu* 'what?') or because the verb refers to a human action (e.g., *šasû* 'to invoke', *ṣullû* 'to pray'). Names that use this verbal element generally express a lament or a statement of devotion by one of the parents. The following list contains all attested names of this type, of which the verbal element is written with a logogram:

- Mīnu-ēpuš-ilī 'What did I do, my god?' (*ēpuš* written DÙ)
- Ana-muḫḫi-DN-āmur 'I looked towards DN' (*āmur* written IGI)
- (Ana-DN-)(obj.)-ēreš '(From DN) I requested (obj.)' (*ēreš* written KAM/APIN-*eš*)
- Ina-qibīt-DN-azziz 'By order of DN I stood (?)' (*azziz* written GUB (*zal/zu*))
- DN-uṣalli 'I prayed to DN' (*uṣalli* written SISKUR$_x$)

Present Tense

Rarely, names contain a verb in the present tense instead of the more common preterite. Such names are usually spelled syllabically, in which case their interpretation is unproblematic, or the reading of the logogram is

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[11] For compactness, preterite and perfect forms are sometimes combined, as are 1/3.sg., verb.adj./subst., and imp./prec. when these forms use the verbal logogram in the same way in Neo-Babylonian names. Most examples given in Table 6.3 are based on three common verbs, written with the signs MU (*nadānu* 'to give'), ÙRU (*naṣāru* 'to protect'), and GIŠ (*ešēru* 'to be well'). Occasionally other verbs are used when the specific name form is not attested for these three verbs.

[12] Self-evident to the Neo-Babylonian reader, who had common knowledge of permissible names, but maybe not to us.

self-evident because of extra elements, rare verbs, or on semantic grounds.[13] Names in this category generally express a question, a character trait of the deity, or a statement of devotion. The following list includes all attestations of this name type, of which the verbal element is written with a logogram:

- DN-kittu-irâm 'DN loves the truth' (*irâm* written ÁG)
- Ša-Marduk-ul-inni 'What is of Marduk does not change' (*tenni*/*inni* written BAL)
- Ile$^{??}$i-(obj.)-DN / DN-obj.-ile$^{??}$i 'DN is able (to . . .)' (*ile$^{??}$i* written DA/ Á.GÁL)
- Lâbâši(-DN) 'I will not be put to shame (, DN)' (*lâbâši* written NU.TÉŠ)
- Irâš-ana-Akītu/Esagil '(S)He rejoices over Akītu/Esagil' (*irâš* written SÙ)
- DN-qajalu-išemme 'DN hears the attending' (*išemme* written ŠE.GA)
- Nabû-maqtu-idekke 'Nabû raises the fallen' (*idekke* written ZI)
- Abī-ul-(t)īde 'I do/(S)He does not know my/the father' ((*t*)*īde* written ZU)

Long Names With or Without a Theophoric Reference

Most names consist of one, two, or three elements (see Table 6.3) and the rules set out later in the chapter pertain to these common names. Three-element names without a theophoric reference (DN) and four-element names often contain a preposition, an interrogative pronoun, or another unique element that makes these names easily recognisable. There are no set rules for interpreting the verbal element of such names; only common sense or familiarity with the Babylonian name repertoire will help determine the correct reading. Some examples include:

- Lūṣi-ana-nūr-Marduk 'May he come out to the light (of?) Marduk' (*Lūṣi* written È)
- Nergal-ina-tēšî-eṭir 'Nergal, save from confusion' (*eṭir* written SUR/KAR)
- Zēr-kitti-līšir 'May the true heir prosper' (*līšir* written GIŠ/SI.SÁ)
- Nabû-ina-kāri-lūmur 'May I see Nabû in the harbour' (*lūmur* written IGI)
- Nabû-itti-ēdi-alik 'Nabû walk(s?) with the lonely!' (*alik* written DU)

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[13] For instance, in the name spelled ^{Id}DN-obj.-DA, a past tense is less likely ('DN was able') than a present tense ('DN is able').

Inverted Names

There are a few names that deviate from the standard Akkadian word order (subject-object-verb). A rare name type follows the word order object/subject-verb-DN. It is found in only four names so far: Zēru-līšir-Nusku 'Nusku, may the heir be in good condition!' (subj.-prec.-DN, hapax, *līšir* written SI.SÁ), Atta-tale''i-Bēl 'You are capable, Bēl' (subj.-pres.-DN, hapax, syll.), Lētka-idi-Zarpanītu 'Zarpanītu, give your attention!' (obj.-imp.-DN, hapax, *idi* written ŠUB), and Aḫu/Aḫḫē-iddin-Marduk 'Marduk granted (a) brother(s)' (obj.-pret.-DN, *iddin* written MU/SUM.NA). The most interesting category of inverted names follows the word order DN-verb-object. The verbal element in such names takes the form of an imperative: Sîn-rīmanni-aḫu (hapax, when not a scribal error; 'Sîn, grant me a brother!'), Nabû-zuqup-kīnu 'Nabû, support the true (heir)!' (*zuqup* written GUB), Nabû-uṣur-napištī 'Nabû protect my life!' (*uṣur* written PAB/URÙ), and Nabû-šukun-rēmu 'Nabû, place compassion!' (*šukun* written GAR). The name Nabû-uṣur-napištī might hint at the reason for the inversion. This phrase was part of a well-known mirror-like expression *DN, uṣur napištī, balāṭa qīša* 'DN, protect my life, health grant (me)!' popular on seals in first millennium BCE Babylonia.[14] Poetic use is also attested for the sequence *zuqup*-object[15] and *šukun*-object,[16] which might explain the inversion in the names DN-zuqup-kīnu and DN-šukun-rēmu. In short, deviation from the normal word order in Neo-Babylonian names was a rare phenomenon and one that may have had its origin in the wish of the name-giver for poetic euphony.

Rules for Reading Verbal Sumerograms in Neo-Babylonian Names

Having dealt with the special cases, we now turn to the rules for reading the verbal element of common names when the ancient scribe rendered it *only* logographically, without phonetic markers or unique elements. As we will see, these rules depend on the name format – that is, the number of elements in the name and their order, as presented in Table 6.3. It should

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[14] Reiche and Sandowicz (2009, 205–12). On seals, the verb *uṣur* is spelled both PAB and *ú-ṣur*.
[15] In the DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA incantations one finds *zu-qup* SAG.MEŠ-[*ia*] 'support [my] head!' (Lambert 1974, 282:158).
[16] The inverted expression *šukun ḫidûtam* 'make merry' is attested in the Old Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh Epic (George 2003, 278–9: iii 8).

be noted that these rules form a *discrete* orthographic system: a sign could only be used for one name within a particular name format. For instance, the spelling DN-PAB could not be used to render both DN-nāṣir (a participle of the verb *naṣāru*) and DN-uṣur (an imperative of the same verb). In personal names, perfects and verbal adjectives are never found spelled only logographically but always with at least one syllabic part.

One-Element Names Consisting of Only a Verbal Element (v.)

Nearly all one-element names are spelled syllabically or with a phonetic complement that makes their reading self-evident. The only signs that may represent a one-element name without a phonetic complement are substantives, including infinitives. Only four names are presently known that are written with only a logogram: [I]GI (Šullumu 'Well-being'), [I]KAR (Šūzubu 'To save'), [I]ŠU (Gimillu 'Favour'), [I]TIN (Balāṭu 'Life'). These logograms cannot represent verbal adjectives because none of these verbs appear in this form in either the name format verb.adj.-DN or DN-verb. adj. In other words, *Šullum-DN, *Šūzubu-DN, *Gamil-DN, and *Baliṭ/ Balṭu-DN are not found in the repertoire of Neo-Babylonian names.[17]

Two-Element Names Consisting of a Verb Preceded by a Deity's Name (DN-v.)

When the logogram represents a 'birth' verb, it should be rendered in the preterite 3.sg. as the deity is the subject of the verb. 'Birth' verbs are verbs that describe the god causing the birth of the newborn child – for example, to create, give, return, replace, etc.[18] Sometimes the ancient scribe indicated the correct reading by adding a phonetic complement to the verbal logogram (e.g., DN-iqīša 'DN gave', written DN-BA-*šá*),[19] but often no such markers were used. The following list contains all attested names of this type, of which the verbal element is written only with a logogram:

- DN-ibni 'DN created' (written DN-DÙ)
- DN-iqbi 'DN commanded' (written DN-E or DN-DUG₄)
- DN-utīr 'DN returned' (written DN-GUR)

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[17] Note that *bal-ṭu*-DN, son of Ìl-(ḫ)a-qa-bi (VS 5 55:3) is West Semitic.
[18] Stamm 1939 (28, 136) uses the term '*Danknamen*' for these names.
[19] BA is nearly never found alone (exceptions are BIN 1 85:3 and OIP 114 35:1, both letters), which practically makes BA-*šá* a frozen sign combination. This also applies to GÁL/TIL/TUK-*ši* in the name DN-ušabši 'DN created' and GAR-*un* in the name DN-iškun 'DN placed'.

- DN-iddin 'DN gave' (written DN-MU or DN-SUM.NA)
- DN-ukīn 'DN established' (written DN-GIN or DN-GI.NA)
- DN-erība 'DN replaced' (written DN-SU)

There are four more signs that may represent 'birth' verbs in Neo-Babylonian names, but only when they are used without an object: DN-GI (DN-ušallim 'DN brought to gestation'),[20] DN-KAR (DN-ušēzib 'DN let leave to posterity'),[21] DN-SIG$_{(1)5}$ (DN-udammiq 'DN showed favour (to the parents?)'), and DN-TIN (DN-uballiṭ 'DN kept alive and in good health').

In all other names – that is, when the logogram represents a verb that is not a 'birth' verb – it should be rendered in the precative ('May DN . . . !' or 'DN, may . . . !') or as a participle ('DN is the one who . . . '):

- DN-līšir 'DN, may (the child) prosper' (written GIŠ or SI.SÁ)
- DN-lūmur 'May I see DN' (written IGI)
- DN-lēʾû 'DN is the one who is capable' (written Á.GÁL or DA)
- DN-kāṣir 'DN is the one who strengthens' (written KÁD or KÀD)
- DN-tāriṣ 'DN is the one who stretches over (to protect)' (written LAL)
- DN-ēṭir 'DN is the one who saves' (written SUR)
- DN-gāmil 'DN is the one who spares, is merciful' (written ŠU)
- DN-nāṣir 'DN is the one who protects' (written ÙRU or PAB)

Two-Element Names Consisting of a Verb Followed by a Deity's Name (v.-DN)

When the logogram represents a 'birth' verb in the D/Š-stem, it should be rendered as a participle.[22] The following list contains all attestations of this name type, of which the verbal element is written with a logogram:

- Mudammiq-DN 'The one who treats kindly is DN' (written SIG$_{(1)5}$)
- Mukīn-DN 'The one who establishes is DN' (written GIN or GI.NA)[23]
- Mušallim-DN 'The one who keeps well is DN' (written GI)

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[20] CAD Š$_1$ 226 s.v. *šalāmu* 11f and CAD M$_2$ 256 s.v. *mušallimu* 2: 'bringing (pregnancy) to term'.

[21] CAD E 420–1 s.v. *ezēbu*, causative to meaning 2d; or CAD E 419 s.v. *ezēbu*, causative to meaning 2a1ʹ 'to (let) leave something with or to': for example, 'in the womb Enlil left his scion'. Note that when the logogram KAR is used for the verb *eṭēru*, it is usually spelled with a phonetic component *-ir/rV*, except in names that are not easily misread, such as DN-ēṭir-napištī (DN-KAR-ZI.MEŠ).

[22] The only exception to this rule is the name Uballissu-DN 'DN made him live' (preterite D 3.sg.), always spelled with the pronominal suffix attached to the verbal logogram (TIN-*su*-(*ú*)-DN).

[23] Participle *mukīn-* in Neo-Babylonian names is always written *ki-(i)-in-* (without *mu-*) when syllabically spelled.

- Mušebši-DN 'The one who brings into being is DN' (wr. GÁL(-*ši*)/ TUK(-*ši*)/TIL)
- Mušēzib-DN 'The one who saves is DN' (written KAR)

When the logogram represents a 'birth' verb in the G-stem, it should be rendered in the preterite 3.sg.: Iqīša-DN, Ibni-DN, Iqbi-DN, Iddin-DN, and Erība-DN. In these names, the verbal element is spelled and translated in the same way as names of the type DN-iqīša discussed earlier.

In the remaining names of this type the verbal logograms should be rendered as a noun: Nisḫur-DN 'Benevolent attention of DN' (NIGÍN), Gimil-DN 'Favour of DN' (ŠU), and Nūr-DN 'Light of DN' (ZALÁG). These readings are based on instances where ancient scribes used both a syllabic and a logographic spelling for the same individual's name.

Two-Element Names Without DN Written with Two Logograms

Here we can observe how Neo-Babylonian scribes helped their readers make sense of onomastic logograms in other ways than by using phonetic complements. Whenever a name consists of two verbal forms (v.-v.), the first element (always a preterite or perfect 2.sg.) was spelled syllabically: for example, [1]*ta-at-tan*-ÙRU (Tattannu-uṣur 'You have given (the child), now protect (it)!') and [1]*taq-bi*-SI.SÁ (Taqbi-līšir 'You commanded (the child's birth), may it prosper!'). This practice indirectly helps the reader make sense of names with two logograms. When the first logogram can *only* represent a verb (a participle), the second logogram must be an object; vice versa, when the second logogram can *only* be an object, it follows that the first one must be a verb (a participle), because had the name consisted of two *verbal* elements, the first had been spelled syllabically. In a similar vein, when both logograms could be verbs (e.g., MU-GIN), the second logogram has to be the verb and the first one the object, in accordance with the normal word order of Akkadian sentences (subject-object-verb).

The transcription of the name then depends on whether or not the verb is a possible 'birth' verb: if it is, the verbal form needs to be rendered in the preterite 3.sg.; if it is not, it needs to be rendered in the imperative or precative. Note that the common name spelled MU-PAB/ŠEŠ is an exception: this name should be read Nādin-aḫi 'The one who gives a brother' (participle-object) rather than *Šumu-uṣur, even though the theophoric name spelled DN-MU-PAB/ÙRU is to be read DN-šumu-uṣur 'DN protect the name!'.

Three-Element Names Written DN-Logogram-Logogram

The rules for reading such names are similar to those for two-element names of the type logogram-logogram discussed in the previous section. When the first logogram can only represent a verb, the name should be read DN-participle-object. The same applies if the second logogram can only represent an object. In all other cases the name is of the type DN-object-verb. If the verb is a possible 'birth' verb, the verbal logogram should be rendered in the preterite 3.sg. If it is another type of verb, it should be rendered as an imperative or a precative (-*līšir*, -*lūmur*, or -*libši*). The following list contains all attestations of the latter name type, of which the verbal element is written with a logogram:

- (DN-)qātēšu-ṣabat '(DN,) Seize his hands!' (written DAB)
- (DN-)aḫḫē-šullim '(DN,) Keep the brothers well/in good health!' (written GI)
- (DN-)mātu-tuqqin '(DN,) Put the country in order!' (written LAL)
- (DN-)aḫu-bulliṭ '(DN,) Keep the brother alive and in good health!' (written TIN)
- (DN-)kudurru-uṣur '(DN,) Protect the heir!' (written URÙ/PAP)

Ambiguous Spellings

Sometimes scribes did not follow the rules for writing verbal Sumerograms in names. Upon closer inspection such apparent exceptions can often be explained from the context. For instance, the name spelled DN-GI should normally be read DN-ušallim (see Introduction to this chapter), but when the syllabically written name DN-*mu-šal-lim* had already been used in a previous line, the scribe could use DN-GI as a (lazy) repeat later on (BaAr 3, BM 46544:4, r. 18).

Other ambiguous spellings are found in the limited group of family names – for example, [Id]30-SIG₅ is to be read Sîn-damqu not Sîn-udammiq – or in texts with limited readership. For instance, in letters *we* may not know how to read the name [I]BA-DN (OIP 114 35:1; Iqīša-DN, normally spelled BA-*šá*-DN, or Qīšti-DN, normally spelled NÍG.BA-DN), but for the senders and addressees it was obvious who was meant; neither did the scribe need to be careful or unambiguous for legal reasons. The same applies to lists of personnel produced for internal administrative purposes: these individuals were well-known in the institutions that employed them. For the same reason, the name of Borsippa's

chief temple administrator Nabû-nādin-šumi could be spelled in shorthand (Nabû-MU-MU; TCL 12 9:26 and TMH 2/3 12:23) instead of the 'correct' spelling Nabû-SUM.NA-MU or Nabû-*na-din*-MU. Nabû-MU-MU is normally to be read Nabû-šumu-iddin, but this individual was so well-known in the city that confusion was unlikely.

Permissible Names

Finally, we should recall that ancient readers were intimately familiar with the repertoire of names. This knowledge helped them make sense of ambiguous spellings. As an example, we can take the sign DU. This logogram could represent at least three different verbs: it could be read DU for the verb *alāku* 'to go', GIN for the verb *kânu* 'to be true, permanent', and GUB for the verb *i/uzuzzu* 'to stand'. All three verbal forms are found in Neo-Babylonian names, sometimes even in the same name format. Nevertheless, the ancient scribe and reader will have had no problem recognising the spelling DN-GIN-A as DN-mukīn-apli 'DN is the one who firmly establishes the son', and DN-DU-IGI as DN-ālik-pāni 'DN is the one who walks in front' and not *DN-kīnu/kittu-lūmur, 'May I see the true (heir)/truth!' nor *DN-mukīn-pāni 'DN is the one who establishes the front'. Although theoretically possible, these last names did not exist. Similarly, they will have identified DN-GIN-ÙRU/PAB as DN-kīnu-uṣur 'DN, protect the true/legitimate (heir)' because the name *DN-mukīn-ahi 'DN is the one who firmly establishes the brother' was not part of the Neo-Babylonian name repertoire.

FURTHER READING

Die akkadische Namengebung by Johann J. Stamm (1939) remains a useful starting point for onomastic studies. The volume has two parts: an extensive introduction and a main part that discusses the various categories of names. The introduction looks into such diverse aspects as shortening, word order, verb (tense, person, and gender), geography, theophoric element, family, and newborn child as elements in the name, renaming, and time of naming. Its main paragraph (§ 6) discusses the various ways of classifying names, a system that Stamm blurs by also introducing an alternative and arbitrary classification, group A and B. After the introduction, he structures the main part in a rather confusing mix of the categories from § 6. Aside from these arbitrary classifications, the work is still a valuable tool for students wishing to examine an unknown name (pp. 325 ff.: I. Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der Namen) and to look for verbs and nouns in names (pp. 354 ff.: II. Verzeichnis von Namensbestandteilen).

In his Neo-Babylonian name book, Knut L. Tallqvist (1905) gathered all Neo-Babylonian names recorded in cuneiform texts published at the time. After an introduction, the book offers three indices: one with all known names (personal name, patronym, and family name) and their attestations, one sorted on deities and corresponding names and one sorted on words and verbs used in Neo-Babylonian names. Additional chapters list names of countries and places, temples, canals and rivers, streets, and gates. The introduction is still worth reading, especially paragraph III on shortening of names and paragraph IV on name formats.

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