



Центр "Петербургское Востоковедение"
St.Petersburg Centre for Oriental Studies

ПЕТЕРБУРГСКОЕ ВОСТОКОВЕДЕНИЕ

**ST.PETERSBURG JOURNAL
OF ORIENTAL STUDIES**

**выпуск 7
volume 7**

Центр
«Петербургское Востоковедение»

Санкт-Петербург
1995

РЕЦЕНЗИИ

Women in Old Babylonian Ur

(In connection with: Marc van de Mieroop. *Society and Enterprise in Old Babylonian Ur. Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient, Bd 12. Dietrich Reiner Verlag, Berlin 1992*).

This is the third book devoted to the description and analysis of the society of Old Babylonian Ur: the first was D. Charpin's *Le clergé d'Ur au siècle d'Hammurabi* (Genève — Paris), 1986, and the second was my own *Men of Ur (Lyudi goroda Ura)*, Moscow 1990. The text of my book was actually ready in the early '80ies but lay for a long time with the publisher, so I was able to insert a few references to Charpin at the stage of proof-reading. Unfortunately, according to the current rule «*Rossica non leguntur*», there is only one single quotation from my book in M. Van de Mieroop's study, although he does quote fragments of the book which I did publish in English, and thus he could profit from at least some of my observations.

Charpin's book was a very serious and thoughtful contribution; I have very few remarks which I would want to make to his presentation. At the beginning of the book (p. 21) Charpin says that he was tempted to feel the persons in the documents as living human beings; suppressing this natural feeling, he keeps strictly to the text of the documents, declaring that any conjectures and hypotheses suggested by our imagination should all be kept out. In this he seems to me to overdo his rigorousness, sometimes reminding one of the fabulous German scholar who is said to have announced that *denken ist unwissenschaftlich*. It is of course the author's inalienable right to abstain from hypotheses, how plausible they may be. A weakness of Charpin's work lies in the fact that he has limited himself to the clergy; however, he does not state who belonged to the clergy, and who did not; it is not even sure that there existed a category corresponding to the medieval and modern notion of clergy; therefore the picture the author draws of

OB Ur society is incomplete, and some important data have been left unexplored.

Both Charpin and Van de Mieroop correctly proceed from the assumption that there existed three sectors in old Mesopotamian economy: temple, palace, and private citizenry — a thesis which I have maintained, against much opposition, in respect to the whole history of Ancient Mesopotamia at least forty years ago.

Van de Mieroop's book is devoted to the exploration of the entire history of OB Ur; this is done exhaustively, and in many respects his presentation may be regarded as final. He makes use, among others, of the very interesting document UET V, 666 which Figulla and after him Charpin had defined as a 'list of logs', not noticing that the figures in the text refer to areas: Figulla's *ḡ i š* should be read *g á n*, and the text a list of tilled and swamped fields, half of which belong to the palace, and the other half, to the temple (cf. in detail: *Lyudi goroda Ura*, pp. 234—236). Van de Mieroop (p. 83; curiously enough, the text is not included in the Index) thinks that the document lists only a part of the palace and the temple land. If so, it is not apparent what was the reason why this particular land was listed separately from other palace and temple land. The total area is about 15 sq. km. It is also not quite true that «the text gives no indication about the use of the land», because part of it is listed as *eškar <nāši> biltim* «allotments of the share-<croppers>», and some as *pilkātum* «shares»; some land is assigned to «villages» (*uru^{ki}*), and some is «fallow» (*nadī*). Van de Mieroop refers the reader to Butz in *Orientalia Lovanensis Analecta* 5, Leuven 1979, but the latter's treatment of the text does not seem to be quite satisfactory¹.

There are, however, two points on which I feel that Van de Mieroop has missed important information. One is, that he strictly uses only written evidence, ignoring evidence purely archaeological, as if the latter had nothing to add to social and economic history. The other is, that he concentrates on men and leaves the women of the OB society nearly entirely

¹ For a full translation see *Lyudi goroda Ura*, pp. 363—364.

out of consideration². I shall try to illustrate this by a few examples.

One is Paternoster Row 4—14. It is small, with a double vestibule leading into an unpaved room (probably formerly connecting the house with Paternoster Row 12), and from there to an inner room. One of the vestibules opens to the street not by a door but by a broad window; by this reason Woolley thought it was a shop, which I think is wrong. Here was found a largish (0,75 m) terracotta image (UE VII, p. 173, N 1; cf. also Mitchell's general catalogue); it was apparently found a little above the floor level; as I think, it may have been placed over the door to the inner room. It is a female figure holding a vessel from which water flows abundantly. Seeing that the inhabitants of the complex Paternoster Row 4—12 can apparently be shown to have been connected with the cult of Ningišzida, this may be an effigy of his spouse, Ningizazimua (?). In the inner room (a sanctuary?) there were discovered some other cultic clay reliefs, one of them very specific; it has not been published by Woolley, who refers to a very similar relief found in another place. This latter has been published (UE VII, pl. 84, 181), and it depicts a couple *in coitu*. The woman seems to be a sacred prostitute, *kezertum*, since the man holds her by a plait which was typical of the *kezrātum*. Hence we may surmise that the unpaved room with the «show-window», and the sanctuary were inhabited by a *kezertum* or her equivalent in Ur (this would probably be a *nin-dingir*, since no *kezertum* or *qadištum* have so far been identified in the OB documents from Ur³. The house was

occupied for several generations, but its first inhabitant may have been Likūnu, a *nin-dingir* and sister of one Allāia (U. 16826, UET V, 267), possibly also a sister of Iliēriš who lived in «house 24», i. e. in the space including Paternoster Row 4 and 12.

Neither D. Charpin nor M. Van de Mieroop have called their readers' attention to the fact that all women at Ur can be divided into two categories: one of them includes women under the patriarchal authority of a man (being his spouse, or probably also his widowed mother, or his daughter); such women could hold some property as practically their own, but they never appear in legal documents without the man under whose authority they lived; the other category includes women not under patriarchal authority (*Lyudi goroda Ura*, p. 193). These were *nin-dingir* priestesses and *hetaerae*. Such a woman was, e. g., one Bawurēšat (UET V, 93) who seems actually to sell her baby «in adoption» for 3,5 shekels of silver to two inhabitants of Paternoster Row 12 or 14, Imlikum and his wife Nuttuptum, both well known from other documents. If in the future the boy denies the paternity of Imlikum, he is to be sold. However the formula of adoption in UET V, 93 is *nam-dumu-ni-šè šu-ba-an-ti-eš* which is not quite typical for a sale. — To the category of women not under patriarchal authority belong also women who are identified by the name of their son instead of their father, like one Dulātum, a witness in the same document UET V, 93⁴. Note also the documents 185 and 190, which can be interpreted in the following way: Abuni was actually the natural son of the woman Birātum (not under patriarchal authority). He seems to have sold himself to the woman Gula-tabanni (also not under patriarchal authority) who re-sold him to one Šumiabiya. But the latter being indebted to one Šesipad, Abuni re-sold himself once again, this time as a slave, to Šesipad, the money being divided between his mother Birātum and Šumiabiya. The whole story, typical of the epoch, has deserved only an incomplete mention in Van

² For a list of women not under patriarchal authority in the texts of OB Ur see *Lyudi goroda Ura*, p. 194—195.

³ The texts of OB Ur mention only the following categories of priestesses: the *entum* (e n) who was unique, being the spouse of a god (Nanna or Ningišzida) but in her old age may have been substituted in the Sacred Marriage rite by her helper, the *lukur-èš* («the house lukur»), see *Lyudi goroda Ura*, ch. IX; and the *nin-dingir* (= *ukbābtum*?). One deity could have several *nin-dingir*-priestesses, so they probably were the god's concubines, while their Sacred Marriage rite could be played out, as suggested by Herodotus, with a chance stranger; if so, they corresponded to the *kezertum* and the

qadištum in other Babylonian cities, and the «show-window» finds its explanation.

⁴ Dulātum's son Ludlul-Sin was a dependant of Imlikum; her sister Narāmum was probably a *hetaera*.

de Mieroop's list of archives from private houses (at the end of the book). To be compared are real adoptions, with the adopted son receiving the right to inherit from his adoptive father (e. g., UET V, 90 a. o.).

I would also like to point out the curious text UET V, 542 (U. 7802), where two women, both of them not under patriarchal authority and hence probably hetaerae, get monthly a considerable sum of silver from two men, who also pay for a debt of one of the girls. One of the men is Urdû, possibly short for Urdubšena, a gudá and gudabzu-priest of Šamaš, son of Apilkittim, who possibly was a brother of the well-known Kù-Ningal, son of Ur-Nanna.

The social position of the married wife is well formulated by Van de Mieroop (p. 216). However, I decidedly do not agree with his statement that «we are not always able to recognize women's names in the documents», and that «Due to the absence of gender designations, many (!) persons that we consider to have been men were actually women». In fact, we can in most cases easily discern that a name is female, and it would be curious if in cases where those women are involved who are not under patriarchal authority and hence act without collaboration with their father or husband, «many» should bear ambiguous names. Van de Mieroop's characteristic of women's position as expounded in the first two paragraphs of p. 216 and in the first sentence of the third, state the case adequately. But the division of women into those under and not under patriarchal authority should be pointed out, and the mention of slave women with children does not mean that slaves had families (p. 214), — the mother and the children obviously belonged to the family of the slave-owner, and the children of the slave-girl would in most cases be natural children of the slave-owner; cf. the interesting text UET V, 191, where the priest Kù-Ningal's legal sons redeem their father's natural son from slavery.

Note that old maids are unknown to Old Babylonian texts; probably a girl who could not profitably be married off was apt to become a hetaera, especially in the poorer families.

The woman Rubātum is mentioned by the author on p. 144 in connection with

the very interesting list of her dowry⁵, when she married Ṭābilišu (UET V, 793); we also know about the intricate marriage rites (UET V, 636). But it would be useful to learn about her husband who is attested in UET V, 151, 155, 439. She is to be distinguished from Rubātum in UET V, 539, who was not under patriarchal authority. A Rubātum is mentioned in UET V, 640, a text listing amounts of different kinds of wool, part of which was produced by Rubātum herself, although she was obviously rich. — This is an activity similar to that of Lamassi of Aššur, wife of the rich trader Pūšukēn, who supplied her husband with fabrics made of wool produced by herself and her slave-girls.

On p. 213 the author states that «An enormous number of infant burials was found by the excavators». This is true, but I would like to introduce a note of doubt in one notorious case. In the house Quiet street 7 there were found no less than 32 children's burials in clay vessels, most of them of the same size, all of them contemporaneous, and all at the same level (that of the ancient floor). The simultaneous death of 32 infants in one house is difficult to imagine. I have made an experiment and tried to put an eleven years' old girl into a cardboard box of comparative dimensions. The experiment succeeded. I found that if a skeleton was being buried in a vessel that size, the child might well have been of 12—13 years. Quiet street 7, where the burials were found, was the site of a school, as is well known from all the studies of the OB Ur material. Therefore I think it not impossible that these are the burials of school-children, massacred when Samsuiluna's troops sacked the city. I concede that this supposition is *unwissenschaftlich*, but I present it to the reader for what it is worth.

On p. 170 the author mentions «the Hurrian principality of Nuzi in northern Mesopotamia». However, Nuzi (Nuzu) was part of the Hurrian principality of Arraphé, and it lay outside of Mesopotamia.

The archive of the arbitrator in deeds referring to land (the *kakikkum*) seems to have been situated in the house erroneously identified as «the temple of Hendur-

⁵ S. Greengus, *Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites*, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 20 (1966), pp. 55—72 et al.

sang» by Woolley, an identification which is shown by Van de Mieroop to be wrong.

Both Charpin and Van de Mieroop give much attention to the family of the abrig Kù-Ningal(II) and his elder twin⁶ sons É-nam-ti-su-ud and É-šu-luḫ-bi-u₁₈-ru (the latter calling himself Šu-luḫ-lugal after the fall of the Larsa dynasty in Ur). Therefore it is a pity that Van de Mieroop misses altogether and Charpin misreads (p. 76) the important text UET V, 883. In my opinion, it should be read as follows:

₁[dub a-]šà(g)^{lim} abrig [^dEn-ki] ₂[a-]šà(g) Nir-da^{ki} ù a-šà(g) ka[r-ra] ₃[nig] Kù(g)-^dNin-gal abr[ig] ₄[a-]šà(g) Ra-ka-ba-at a-šà(g) Ra[x x x]₅ ù a-šà(g) uru^{ki} UD.[...] ₆a-[šà(g)] é ^dN[anna] ₇[...] É-šu-luḫ-bi-u₁₈-ru ₈[ù] É-nam-ti-su-ud ₉[dumu]^{mes} Kù(g) ^dNin-gal ₁₀[i]n-dab₅-bi-[eš] ₁₁[x (búr)] šu-nigin a-šà(g) é-^dN[anna] ₁₂[a-mir]-tu ù kurum₆ [abrig (?)] ₁₃[ni(g)] Kù(g)-^dNin-gal ad-d[a-ne-ně].

«₁ [Document of the f]ield of the abrig [of Enki], ₂[a f]ield (in the village of) Nir-da and a field in the po[rt], ₃[be]longing to Kù-Ningal the abrig, ₄the [fi]eld Rakabat and the field Ra[ḫabu?] ₅and a field in the village of UD [...] ⁷, ₆a fi[eld] of the temple of N[anna], ₇[...] Ešuluḫbiuru ₈[and] Enamtišud, ₉[the son]s of Kù-Ningal ₁₀[ha]ve received. ₁₁[6? búr] all in all, a field of the temple of N[anna], ₁₂[a gra]nt and a prebend [of an abrig (?)] ₁₃[belonging] to Kù-Ningal [their f]ather.

The restoration k a[r-r a] is based on the text UET V, 272, mentioning a gift of 3 sar in the port to Kù-Ningal from the *entum* En-Anedu. The figure [6 búr] is

⁶ That they were twins can be deduced from the following facts: they often appear together, and if they are mentioned separately, they both invariably appear as the eldest one; they both bear a name typical of priests — only they among all the sons of Kù-Ningal.

⁷ The restoration a-šà(g) uru^{ki} La[rsam] is impossible, because, although both Charpin and Van de Mieroop translate uru^{ki} as «city», from all contexts it is absolutely clear that uru means «city» but uru^{ki} means «village» or «hamlet».

correct to the order of magnitude, cf. the information about the size of the *amirtu*-grant of land to Kù-Ningal's son Enamtišud from king Rim-Sin (3 búr, UET, 35, U. 8808).

On p. 227 Van de Mierop says he does not agree with Diakonoff «who depicts rather dismal living conditions at Ur», and points out that the houses «contained luxury items», and the citizens «had capital in excess that could be used for investment». Of course, some of the citizens of Ur had excellent living conditions, as e. g. the merchant Ēianāšir, who, according to my own reconstruction (*Lyudi goroda Ura*, p. 98) owned a house which was made out of three original houses, probably with more than one storey. But rich houses were an exception, there were houses with only one or two living rooms and even without a latrine, while the families in question were often big enough.

All my remarks to Van de Mieroop's book are of secondary importance, and do not influence the main impression that the book is a solid and reliable summary of much of our knowledge about men of Old Babylonian Ur, and about Old Babylonian society and economy; it has the chance to stay as an important contribution to our knowledge of Babylonian social history. It is a pity the author did not have access to my book.

I. M. Diakonoff

The Dead Sea Scrolls.

Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations. Volume 1. Rule of the Community and Related Documents.
 Edited by JAMES H. CHARLESWORTH with F. M. Cross, J. Milgrom, E. Qimron, L. H. Schiffman, L. T. Stuckenbruck, and R. E. Whitaker. J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen — Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1994.

Настоящая публикация выходит в рамках грандиозного *Проекта Принстонской теологической семинарии по изданию рукописей Мертвого моря* (The Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea