The article *A Neo-Assyrian Text Describing a Royal Funeral* published recently by John McGinnis in this journal contains a phrase which calls for comment, "obverse, col. I 8'-12': \(NA\ r\ a-ra-na\ 9-a-sar\ t\ a-a\-lil-[i]-s\ a^{10}\ ina\ URUDU\ dan-ni\ K\ -s\ a\ ak-nu-uk\ ma^{12}\ ú-dan-ni-na\ ši-pat-\ s\ a^{13}\). "I sealed the entrance to the sarcophagus, his resting place with tough bronze and cast for it a potent spell."  

E. Ebeling had translated this passage by "den Sarg, den Ort seiner Ruhe, mit starkem Erz versiegelte ich seine Öffnung, machte kräftig seine Beschwörung". In his review of Ebeling's *Tod und Leben* W. von Soden paraphrased it by using these words: "Der steinerne Sarg wurde durch ein schweres Bronzeschloß und eine Fluchbeschwörung gegen Grabräuber und Dämonen zugleich gesichert." These three scholars agree in interpreting \(ši-pat-\ s\ a\) as *šiptu*, "incantation" plus possessive suffix 3rd feminine singular (corresponding to KÁ-sá in the preceding line).

The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* offers, however, a divergent interpretation: "I sealed the opening of the stone coffin, his resting-place, with strong copper and reinforced the seal" (transcribed \(ši-pat-sa\, CAD\ AII,\ p.231b); "I sealed the opening of the stone sarcophagus with heavy copper (bands) and made the tags secure" (transcribed šipassa, *CAD* K, p.137a). It is obvious that in this dictionary \(ši-pat-\ s\ a\) is con-

1) SAAB I/1, 1987, pp.1-12, pl. I. The present situation of the tablet goes beyond the join K: 6323+K. 7856 shown on pl.I. T.Kwasman succeeded, in September 1987, in joining two more fragments, +K. 14241 (unpublished)+80-7-19, 122 (ADD 978). A new edition of the enlarged text will be published by Kwasman in another issue of this journal. After careful inspection of the tablet I.L. Finkel came to the conclusion that obverse and reverse are to be interchanged and Kwasman followed Finkel's suggestion. Obverse col. I. has now to be counted as reverse col. IV.


sidered an accusative of šipassu, "clay tag, bulla", without any possessive suffix. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, lemma šipassu, "gesiegelte Tonbulle" (p.1244a) does not list the reference in question.

This note aims to adduce corroborating evidence to support CAD's interpretation of ši-pat-ša. As for ina eri danni bābša aknuk-ma a new attempt will be made to arrive at a more satisfactory translation.

1. ši-pat-ša, "clay tag", not "its incantation"

   a) The spelling of ši-pat-ša does not necessitate separating this reference from other attestations of the word šipassu. At least two analogous spellings (with -t) occur: ši-pat-su MSL 7, 104:478 (Hh X 478) and šāḫ]-pat]-šu CT 11, 46 II 50 (Diri IV 135); they are to be explained as an incorrect application of the graphemic principles which govern the orthography of suffixes after dentals.

   b) The ending -ša can easily be explained as accusative singular šipassa while NA-a-ra-nu though logical object is to be considered syntactically a nominative (casus pendens, GAG § 128c).

   c) The verb kanāku with object bābu, "to seal a gate" conveys the idea of using clay tags which the seal can be rolled onto. There is at least one reference in which the terms bābu and šipassu occur together: i-na ba-a-bi ā-pā-tim ši-pā-sū id-a, "attach clay tags to the gate and to the windows", TC 1, 30:9-10 (OA).

2. bābu "gate of the burial chamber", not "opening of the stone coffin"

   a) The opening of the stone coffin or sarcophagus might possibly be called bāb arāni but this term definitely does not apply to its stone lid where the sealing would be expected.

   b) It is, therefore, more convenient to stick to the basic meaning of bābu, "gate". Once the entrance to the chamber in which the sarcophagus has been placed is safeguarded not only the stone coffin but also the funeral gifts are sufficiently protected.

4) Compare also the spelling lišal-bit-su-ma for lišalbissu-ma discussed by K. Watanabe, ASJ 6, 1984, p.112.

5) See M.T. Larsen, BibMes 6, 1977, p.95 and p.102, fn.32.


7) The fact that these gifts are mentioned l.13'-24' after the report on the sealing of the gate does not preclude that they were placed inside the burial chamber before closing its gate.
c) It can be inferred from the text that both a metal device (ina eri danni) and a certain quantity of moist clay (ṣi-pat-ša₇) were needed to seal the bābu.

d) In a recent study⁸ R.L. Zettler has shown how (gates and) doors were sealed: a metal hook fastened to the door was hooked around the door knob that was anchored by means of a plaque into the door jamb. Hook and knob were then surrounded by a clay covering which the seal was rolled onto.

e) Referring to Zettler’s analysis of clay bullae in which the metal hook has left its impression E. Leichty studied the lexical material related to door sealing⁹. The result of this investigation makes it virtually certain that namzaqum denotes the “latch-hook” (not “key”, the meaning offered by AHW and CAD). This hook “appears to be made of bronze ... or copper” (loc. cit., p.191); “the weight of a bronze namzaqum is given as three and half minas” (p.192).

f) There can be little doubt that the sealings depicted by Zettler (pp.215-234, figs.5-16) were called šipassu. As far as they display impressions of metal objects these were left by the bronze or copper latch-hooks. Hence, in all likelihood, ina eri danni also points to these hooks.

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