CHAPTER 5

Names of Officials ('Beamtennamen') Michael Jursa

As a distinct category of onomastics, the *Beamtenname* is defined by its containing of a reference to the name-bearer's superior, normally the king (Edzard 1998–2001, 109–10; Streck 2001). In the context of the onomastics of first millennium BCE Babylonia, this means, for all intents and purposes, names that contain the element *šarru* 'king'. Names containing as an element a king's entire name – such as the early Old Babylonian name Išbi-Erra-dannam-nādā – were no longer in use. This chapter will first investigate the typology of *šarru*-names. Then we will address the question, based on prosopography, how such typological '*Beamtennamen*' are actually represented among the names of officials, and to which degree names of this type are indicative of a specific socio-economic and administrative collocation of the name-bearers.

Typology of Names Containing the Element šarru 'King'

Semantically, a larger group of names expressing a wish or blessing for the king has to be distinguished from a much smaller group in which the king is essentially a stand-in for a theophoric element in that a wish is addressed to him. In the following discussion, references for names whose bearers were demonstrably royal officials will be flagged by adding the person's title or function. The absence of such a flag, however, does not necessarily mean that the person in question did not have a background in the royal administration; it only means that relevant information is lacking.

Wishes and Blessings for the King

By far the most *šarru*-names have the pattern DN-šarru-uṣur 'DN, guard the king'. Essentially the whole range of theophoric elements attested in the onomasticon appears in these names, from rare and mostly local

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deities¹ to the 'great' gods of the dominant Babylon theology. Of the latter gods, Nabû is the most frequently attested in *šarru*-names, with Bēl second. Temple names can take the place of the theophoric element;² infrequently, a variant with *ina* 'in' is found (Ina-Esagil-šarru-uṣur; BM 29311). Occasionally, the theophoric element reveals the non-Babylonian origin of the name-bearer. For instance, Yāḥû-šarru-uṣur was a Judean (CUSAS 28 2–4) and Milkūmu-šarru-uṣur probably an Ammonite (VS 3 53). Very rarely, a 'house' or 'clan' appears in the first place: the name of governor Bīt-Ir'annišarru-uṣur refers to the Ir'anni clan (Wunsch 1993 no. 169).

Variants of the DN-šarru-uşur type include:

DN-šarru-bulliț	'DN, preserve the king' (TCL 13 153; a rab ekalli
	official)
DN-balāț-šarri-ușur	'DN, guard the king's life' (BIN 1 8)
DN-kibsī-šarri-ușur	'DN, guard the king's steps' (AnOr 8 10; a <i>qīpu</i> official)
<dn>-amāt-šarri-</dn>	' <dn>, guard the king's word' (GC 2 322)</dn>
ușur	

Instead of an imperative, the verbal form can come in the preterite:

DN-šarru-ibni	'DN has created the king' (OECT 10 362)
DN-šarru-ukīn	'DN has established the king' (GC 2 298)
DN-šarru-utēr	'DN has restored the king' (BM 114616)
DN-balāț-šarri-	'DN ordained the king's life' (TCL 13 227; a mašennu
iqbi	official)

Rare names expressing a wish or blessing for the king are:

DN-rā [?] im-šarri	'DN loves the king' (TCL 9 103)
DN-šul(l)um-šarri	'DN, (establish) the well-being of the king' (YOS 6 11)
DN-itti-šarri	'DN is with the king' (CTMMA 3 38)
Itti-DN-šarru-lūmur	'Let me see the king with the help of DN' ³

Finally, Šarru-lū-dari 'May the king endure', attested as the name of a *qīpu* official (CTMMA 4 136), expresses a wish without explicitly addressing a divinity.

¹ Some examples are Amurru-šarru-uṣur (*Nbn.* 42); Dagān-šarru-uṣur (OECT 10 150); Gabbi-ilī-šarru-uṣur 'All the gods, guard the king' (*Cyr.* 177).

² Some examples are Esagil-šarru-uşur (*Camb.* 276; a *rab*... official); Eanna-šarru-uşur (YOS 7 89; an oblate); Bayt-il-šarru-uşur (CUSAS 28 17); Eašarra-šarru-uşur or Bīt-Ašarra-šarru-uşur (Wunsch 1993 no. 357; a governor of Šaḥrīn).

³ This could also be construed as a wish for divinely sanctioned royal patronage benefitting the namebearer. The name is attested once in Frame (1991, 38–40) (¹KI-^dEN-LUGAL-IGI). Frame normalised the name as Itti-Bēl-šarru-limmir, which would have to be understood as 'Let the king shine with (the help of) Bēl'.

Instead of the king, 'kingdom' (*šarrūtu*) can appear in names – for instance, in DN-kīn-šarrūssu 'DN, establish his kingdom', DN-šarrūssu-ukīn 'DN established his kingdom', and Tīrik-šarrūssu 'Let his kingdom be long-lasting'.⁴

Apart from the king, the crown prince is the only other member of the royal family who appears in names: DN-mār-šarri-uṣur 'DN, guard the crown prince' (BM 103477; a vice governor of the Sealand).

This name type falls out of use at the end of the fourth or very early in the third century;⁵ in fact, the later Hellenistic onomasticon does not contain any *šarru*-names at all;⁶ see the following section.

Blessings from the King

The second category of names – more varied than the first, but with far fewer attestations – focuses on the king not as the recipient of divine blessings implicitly requested by the bearer of the name, but as a fount of blessings in his own right. Functionally, the king replaces a divinity in such names. This is most explicit in the name Šarru-ilū²a⁷ 'The king is my god' (YOS 3 159; a *rab musabhirī* official), but the fact also evinces clearly from the following name pairs.⁸

Itti-šarri-balāțu — Itti-Marduk-balāțu Ina-șilli-šarri — Ina-șilli-Bēl Itti-šarri-īnīa — Itti-Nabû-īnīa Šarru-mītu-uballiț — Nabû-mītu-uballiț Mannu-akî-šarri — Mannu-akî-Nabû Itti-šarri-būnu — Nabû-būnu-šūtur

'Life comes from the king / Marduk' 'Under the protection of the king / Bēl' 'My eyes are on the king / Nabû' 'The king / Nabû has revived the dead' 'Who is like the king / Nabû?' 'The good comes from the king / Nabû, the good is overwhelming'

⁴ Persons bearing these name types can be found, among others, in the following texts: Waerzeggers 2014 no. 121; Wunsch 1993 no. 51 (a ša rēši official); YOS 6 11 (a šakin māti official).

⁵ Late references: CT 44 84, CT 49 9.

⁶ See also http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/hbtin/qpn-x-people (no hits for LUGAL or *šarru*; accessed 17.8.2019).

⁷ Spelled -DINGIR-ú-a, a singular suffix (also, e.g., YOS 3 94, YOS 7 120, YOS 19 164, etc.).

⁸ Examples of persons bearing the *šarru*-names listed here are: Itti-šarri-balāțu in BIN 1 69 (*rab batqi*, a high-ranking royal official); Ina-şilli-šarri in BE 8/1 138; Itti-šarri-inīa in JCS 28 6 (a *qīpu* of the Eulmaš temple of Agade); Šarru-mītu-uballiț in PTS 3313 (slave of the *qīpu* of the Eanna temple); Mannu-akî-šarri in GC 2 353; Itti-šarri-būnu in PTS 3476; Šarru-dūru in TCL 13 193; Şalam-šarri-iqbi in UET 4 201 (a governor); Šarru-ukīn in YOS 3 59 (recipient of an official letter); Lalè-šarri-lušbi in BM 94592. Examples of the parallel names with a theophoric element can be found in Tallqvist (1905). For Lalè-Esagil-lušbi, see BM 103452 (a *šakin māti* official).

Şalam-šarri-iqbi — Bēl-iqbi	'The royal image / Bēl has spoken'
Salam-šarri-iqbi – Bēl-iqbi Šarru-ukīn – Nabû-ukīn	'The king / Nabû has strengthened
	(the name-bearer)'
Lalê-šarri-lušbi – Lalê-Esagil-lušbi	'Let me be satiated by the bounteousness
0	of the king / Esagil
Šarru-dūru – Nabû-dūr-ēdi	'The king is (my) fortress / Nabû is the
	fortress of the individual'

Also in this type of name, the crown prince makes an appearance: Mār-šarri-ilū'a 'The crown prince is my god' (YOS 7 195). Finally, it should be noted that the only Babylonian family name that invokes the king, LUGAL-A.RA.ZU(- \hat{u}), may belong to this name type. Its exact reading and interpretation are uncertain (Wunsch 2014, 310), but A.RA.ZU should stand for *taṣlītu* 'prayer' or for a form of *sullû* 'to pray'.

None of the names in this second group, which cast the king in a (quasi-) divine role, comes from a source that post-dates 484 BCE (i.e., the major break in the continuity of Late Babylonian history). The first group, which invokes divine support for the king, on the other hand, continues (though with less frequency) beyond 484 BCE until the beginning of the Hellenistic period. To some degree, these are proxy data for the development of Babylonian attitudes towards kingship. For the long sixth century, the continuing relevance of traditional sacralised kingship cannot be doubted. Thereafter, it was no longer common to consider the king on a par with the gods. The pertinent names are no longer attested, even among the numerous Babylonians who had close ties to the royal administration and who occasionally would still bear names invoking the gods' protection for the king. In the Hellenistic period, even this latter name type disappeared, probably because of the disappearance (from our view, at least) of royal officials of Babylonian origin.⁹

The Social Range of 'Beamtennamen'

For establishing the intended message of a '*Beamtenname*' (defined here as names invoking the king), it is easiest to start with the observation that the use of these names was restricted. Kings or members of the royal family did not bear them, unless they had been named before they or their

⁹ Given the narrowing down of the focus of the cuneiform documentation to the spheres of the Bêl temple of Babylon and the Anu temple of Uruk in the Hellenistic period. Note, however, the name Nidinti-šarri 'Gift of the king' attested in Hellenistic Uruk. There, it is at least sometimes a 'second name', suggesting that the name was chosen for a specific reason or occasion (e.g., YOS 20, 64, OECT 9, 47).

family members gained the throne, as was the case with Nergal-šarru-uṣur (Neriglissar) and Bēl-šarru-uṣur (Belshazzar), son of Nabonidus. *'Beamtennamen*' are also conspicuously absent among the Babylonian urban upper class – that is, the propertied landowners, be they priestly rentiers or more enterepreneurially oriented landowners.¹⁰ Only a few individuals bearing a family name had a *'Beamtenname'* as a given name or as a patronym.¹¹ This suggests that the message that a *'Beamtenname'* sought to project was not part of the general outlook of this class of people.

The 'bi-polar' temple administrations are the sector of state administration in first millennium BCE Babylonia that we are best informed about (Jursa 2015; 2017). There, descendants of local priestly families worked side by side with representatives of the central government. The latter were typically designated as *qīpu* '(royal) commissioner' or as ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti 'courtier (and) supervisor'. While both groups were dependent on royal approval, they hailed from different backgrounds. For priests, their origin in certain families was normally a precondition for their access to office.¹² The family background of the royal officials, by contrast, is less clear: they were very rarely even given patronyms, let alone family names (Jursa 2015). The crown, not their own family, was the principal point of reference that these individuals related to and from which they drew their legitimisation, as seen in their not infrequent conflicts with local priests (Jursa and Gordin 2018; Levavi 2018). This allegiance to the crown is what 'Beamtennamen' were intended to signal.

However, it is by no means true that the majority of officials bore such names. Of the twelve royal commissioners in Sippar, only five had a *'Beamtenname'*;¹³ in Uruk, only five of thirteen (Kleber 2008, 30–2). Of the thirty courtiers listed in Bongenaar's Sippar prosopography (1997, 108–12), eight have a name including the element *šarru*; in Uruk, it is 30 per cent (Jursa 2011, 165, n. 34). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, among the

¹⁰ For the distinction between rentiers and entrepreneurs, see Jursa (2010, 265–315).

¹¹ They should be considered exceptions that prove the rule. Some very rare examples are: Nabû-mukīn -zēri/Nabû-šarru-uşur/Bēl-napšāti (OECT 10 131 and *Camb.* 388); Nabû-itti-šarri/Nabû-ahbē-bulliţ /Bēl-etēri (CTMMA 3 38); Bēl-ibni/Nabû-šarru-uşur/Gahal (Waerzeggers 2014, 371); Itti-Bēl-šarru-lūmur/Nabû-šumu-līšir/Eppēš-ilī (Frame 1991, 38); Innin-šarru-uşur/Nergal-ušallim/Sîn-leqe-unninnī (AnOr 8 24; YOS 6 33); Innin-šarru-uşur/Kudurru/Hunzû (GC 1 353); Šamaš-šarru-uşur/Marduk-šāpik-zēri/Sîn-leqe-unninnī (YOS 7 96); Nabû-mukīn-zēri/Nabû-šarru-uşur/Sîn-tabni (JCS 28 5).

¹² For example, Kümmel 1979; Bongenaar 1997; Kleber 2008, 5–52; Waerzeggers 2010, 33–76. These studies contain convenient lists of office holders.

¹³ Bongenaar 1997, 47–50, with additional attestations by Da Riva (1999) and Zawadzki (2001).

twenty-one palace officials named in what is preserved of the pertinent part of Nebuchadnezzar's '*Hofkalender*', just one person had a '*Beamtenname*' (Da Riva 2013). In light of this data, the question arises as to whether it was entirely optional for officials to bear such a name.

There is no direct evidence about the moment and circumstances when an official received a '*Beamtenname*'. If such a name was selected by a person's parents, or by the name-bearer himself, this might be seen as an aspirational act – an indication of a hoped-for career or allegiance. If such a name was awarded at his actual appointment to office, it was very likely conferred upon him by the same authority that invested him with the office.

Ethnicity is likely one important factor here. From a social and ethnolinguistic point of view, the royal administration had a different setting than the city and temple administrations. In the bilingual environment of Babylonia in the sixth and later centuries, the crown was far more open to the use of Aramaic than the temple administrations or the Babylonian urban bourgeoisie. The Aramaic scribes (sepiru) that appear in the documentation from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II onwards were usually employed by the crown. In the Persian period, royal Aramaic scribes were made obligatory members of the board of temple administrators (Jursa 2012). An investigation of the largest distinct group of royal officials – the courtiers (ša rēši) and their fifth-century homologues, the chamberlains (ustarbaru) - shows that many of these men were of non-Babylonian origin. Some were Arameans or generally West Semites;¹⁴ a significant number was of Egyptian extraction, especially after the Persian conquest (Hackl and Jursa 2015); and yet others were of Elamite or Iranian origin, or they bore names that resist etymological explanation (Jursa 2011). Arguably, many of these courtiers were at least partly deracinated professionals of administration who owed what privileges they had to the king. Their identity rested in their name and title, as the naming customs in administrative and legal documents bear out: while an ordinary Babylonian needed to be named with his patronym and, if applicable, with his family name to be fully defined from a legal point of view, for a courtier his own name and his title were sufficient: there was no legal need for further details.

Courtiers of non-Babylonian extraction must have been under pressure to integrate also with respect to their name. Such a scenario probably lies

¹⁴ For example, Addu-yatin, vice-governor (*ša rēši šanû*) of Hindanu (Bongenaar 1997, 108). Other West Semitic *ša rēšis* can be found in AfO 16 42, *Cyr.* 335, *Dar.* 301, VS 6 69, YNER 1 5, BM 79363 (Sack 1994, 101), BM 103452 (AfO 50, 265). Note the Iranian courtiers in YOS 6 169 // 231, UET 4 I // 2 66.

behind the double name of 'Maše-Emūn, son of Sa-x-tukku, the royal courtier, whose name is Iddin-Nabû' (Bloch 2018 no. 80, ca. 28 Dar I). While this man took an unmarked Babylonian name, it is highly likely that in many other cases a name was chosen that reflected the allegiances of the courtier, a '*Beamtenname*'. I would suggest that this is the raison d'être of many of these names not only for courtiers but also for royal officials in general. Sometimes, we get confirmation of this hypothesis in the form of non-Babylonian patronyms or non-Babylonian ethnic affiliations of bearers of '*Beamtenname*'. Of a total of eighty-two bearers of '*Beamtenname*' for whom patronyms are known, twenty men had a demonstrably non-Babylonian background.¹⁵ Some of these individuals are:

Nabû-šarru-uşur, the Egyptian (UCP 9/1 29)

- Sîn-šarru-uşur, son of Pasia (probably an Egyptian patronym; *Nbk.* 382) Zababa-šarru-uşur, son of Il-ta-ma-mu, the Elamite (YOS 19 253)
- Gabbi-ilī-šarru-uṣur, son of Iltehr-hanan (an Aramaic patronym; *Cyr.* 177)

Šarru-dūru, son of ^cEdrā (an Aramaic patronym; TCL 13 193)

- Bayt-il-šarru-uṣur, son of Nabû-rapa' (an Aramaic patronym; BM 74520)
- Nabû-šarrūssu-ukīn, son of Nabû-iltala (an Aramaic patronym; BM 27967+; BM 94541)
- Šarru-lū-dari, son of Abu-nūr (an Aramaic patronym; JCS 24 106)
- Šamaš-šarru-ușur, son of Milki-rām (a Phoenician patronym; Jursa 1998 no. 2)
- Abī-râm, son of Sîn-šarru-uṣur (son with an Aramaic name; OECT 10 113)
- Ahu-lakun, son of Nergal-šarru-uṣur (son with an Aramaic name; BE 8/ 1 85)

The evidence is sufficient to argue that '*Beamtennamen*' will very often have been a signal of achieved or intended integration and loyalty given by, or required from, (relative) outsiders. However, while such a signal was not required from everyone – not all officials bore '*Beamtennamen*' – is it possible to say that whoever actually did bear such a name did have a close relationship to the crown?

¹⁵ Given the size of the sample (overwhelmingly from the long sixth century), this is probably fairly representative. It does of course not follow that the remaining 75 per cent were Babylonians, their all-Babylonian onomastics notwithstanding.

It is not possible to give an entirely conclusive answer to this question: we simply do not have sufficiently clear prosopographical data to establish the institutional affiliation of every single bearer of a '*Beamtenname*'. Several points are clear, though. First, as stated earlier, the likelihood that a bearer of a '*Beamtenname*' was a member of one of the well-established urban clans, and especially of a priestly clan, is very remote. Second, the more unusual *šarru*-names are strong signals for an affiliation with the royal administration. This is true, for instance, for the types DN-balāț-šarri-iqbi, DN-šarrūssu-ukīn, DN-šulum-šarri, and DN-mār-šarriuşur. All (or nearly all) bearers of such names can be shown to have been officials based on their titles or the context of their attestations.

In other cases, we may well lack information that would allow us to place bearers of '*Beamtennamen*' in their proper context. To quote one example, a relatively large number of such names are found among the shepherds and chief shepherds working for the Eanna temple, such as the 'chief of cattle' (*rab būli*) Arad-Bēl, son of Šarru-ukīn (AnOr 8 67; etc.), and his brother Anu-šarru-uṣur, son of Šarru-ukīn, who also was a shepherd (YOS 7 140, 161). Two *šarru*-names in two generations must be indicative. Nothing in the attested activities of these men suggests a close relationship to the crown, but we know that shepherds were to some degree outsiders who had a contractual relationship with the temple, and they may well have been drawn from a segment of the Urukean population that depended on the king.

On the other hand, however, we regularly encounter *šarru*-names among temple 'oblates' (širku). Two examples from the Eanna temple are Anu-šarru-uşur (TCL 13 170) and Eanna-šarru-uşur (YOS 7 89). These individuals owed service obligations to the temple and did not have a close - or, indeed, any - relationship to the crown; in fact, we can probably exclude the existence of such a relationship. This is sufficient evidence to state that a 'Beamtenname' is not a fail-safe indication for identifying an official. The reason why humble oblates like those mentioned earlier might bear a 'Beamtenname' eulogising the king – a kind of name that is, after all, quite rare and thus 'marked' – cannot be established. The reason will have lain in their personal histories. One possible pathway is suggested by the following evidence: 'Ea-šarru-bullit, slave of Nabûšarru-uşur, the courtier' (YOS 6 138) and 'Šarru-mītu-uballiț, slave of the qīpu' (PTS 3313). These slaves of two royal officials bear 'Beamtennamen'. The message of the names – which were almost certainly given to them by their masters – reflects the values of the name-givers, the masters. It is thus conceivable that oblates with 'Beamtennamen' had a similar background to

these two slaves: they might have been manumitted slaves of officials who had been gifted to the temple to serve it as *širkus*.

Conclusions

Names built around the element *šarru* 'king' either eulogise or bless the king, or they cast him in a quasi-divine role. The second type falls out of use after the end of the long sixth century, the first becomes obsolete in the early decades of the Hellenistic period. Overall, these names are rare and therefore 'marked'. In most cases they will have indicated a close relationship to the king. When such names are borne by officials - as they often, but not universally, are - they may emphasise their allegiance to the crown with a view towards masking or cancelling an outsider's identity. We also see such names used for slaves and temple dependents; in these cases it is likely that the names were chosen by someone with authority over these people who had a close relationship to the crown. Names of this type are very rare among the members of the prestigious urban clans, especially among priests, and their occasional occurrence in such circles must be considered an exception with probably specific reasons that remain unknown. In other words, while a 'Beamtenname' on its own is not sufficient evidence to identify an official, it is very good grounds to assume that the name-bearer is not a priest. Therefore, we can say that Amurru-šarru-uşur, chief administrator (*šatammu*) of the Amurru temple Ekurgal (YBC 4038; Sack 1977, 43-4), is almost certainly an exception to the rule that the *šatammu* was usually chosen from the ranks of local priestly families.

Further Reading

Beamtennamen, as defined here, has hitherto not been collected in a single place. Many can be found in prosopographic resources such as Knut Tallqvist's *Neubabylonisches Namenbuch* (1905), in the indices of text editions, and in prosopographically oriented studies of temple archives. Hans Martin Kümmel's *Familie*, *Beruf und Amt im spätbabylonischen Uruk* (1979) and Kristin Kleber's *Tempel und Palast* (2008) cover the Eanna temple at Uruk. For Sippar, there is Rocío Da Riva's Der Ebabbar-Tempel von Sippar in frühneubabylonischer Zeit (2002) and Arminius C. V. M. Bongenaar's *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar* (1997). Finally, Caroline Waerzeggers' *The Ezida Temple of Borsippa* (2010) and Bastian Still's *The Social World of the Babylonian Priest* (2019) present information about the Ezida temple in Borsippa. Note further Michael P. Streck's review of Bongenaar's book (2001). For Neo-Babylonian officialdom, in general, see, for example, Michael Jursa (2014, 2017).

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