THE MEANING OF ṬUPPI

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1. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of the Akkadian term ṭuppi has long been the subject of lively debate within Assyriology, especially since it occurs in two passages in the Assyrian King List whose interpretation very much depends upon how the term is understood. The recent (2006) publication of volume 19 (T) of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, in collecting and ordering all of the relevant attestations (pp. 126-9), presents the CAD’s own approach to the issue and at the same time facilitates its reappraisal by other scholars—an opportunity that has already been seized by Freydank (2007). Another recent study has also appeared, by Janssen (2007), who focuses on the chronological issues surrounding the interpretation of ṭuppišu. Other studies which have discussed ṭuppi include the following: Oppenheim 1936; Landsberger 1949: 265-72; Weidner 1945-51: 85-7; Rowton 1951; Cavaignac 1955; Boese and Wilhelm 1979: 21-3; Gasche et al. 1998: 53-4; Reade 2001: 4-8, and Pruzsinszky 2009: 62-4.

In the course of studying the Neo-Babylonian house rental contracts the present author, in March 2007, arrived at a completely different understanding of the term to that presented in CAD. Investigation of these rental contracts led me to the conclusion that in them the phrase adi ṭuppišu (and its variants) means ‘for a one-year period,’ without regard to the calendar year (cf. Oppenheim 1936; Weidner 1945-51: 86). The house rental data on which this discovery rests are discussed in detail elsewhere, in the context of a study of the urban landscape of Babylonia (Baker forthcoming). However, it lies beyond the scope of that study to examine the other text groups in which the expression occurs and to explore its wider implications. The aims of this article are therefore: first, to present in brief the evidence and argumentation for this interpretation of ṭuppi; second, to examine the contexts in which ṭuppi occurs in all everyday documents and letters from the later second millennium (Nuzi) and the first millennium BC (Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian), and third, to consider the implications of these findings for the interpretation of ṭuppi in historical contexts, namely the Assyrian King List and the 8th century inscription of Ninurta-kudurrū-usur, governor of Mari and Sūhu.

1. This study arose originally out of work conducted under the auspices of the START Project ‘The Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC’ led by Michael Jursa at the University of Vienna and funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). The broader-based investigation leading to the preparation of this article was carried out within the framework of the project ‘Royal Institutional Households in First Millennium BC Mesopotamia’ led by the author as part of a National Research Network “‘Imperium’ and “Officium” - Comparative Studies in Ancient Bureaucracy and Officialdom,’ also funded by the Austrian Science Fund (grant S 10802-G18), since March 2009. The transliterations of unpublished texts cited here were prepared by C. Waerzeggers (especially Borsippa tablets), M. Jursa (BM 103496) and the author. Unpublished tablets held in the British Museum are cited by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

2. THE BASIS FOR THE PROPOSED INTERPRETATION OF ṬUPPI

The expression adi ṭuppi ṭuppi (and variants) occurs in a variety of Neo-Babylonian contract types (see the examples cited in CAD T 126-8 and in section 3 below), including the house rental contracts which were the starting point for the findings outlined here.² The arguments for interpreting the ṭuppi-clause as ‘for a one-year period’ may be summarised as follows:

a) One-year lease periods are never mentioned in the house lease contracts, despite the fact that lease periods of three or fewer years are the most frequently attested among those leases which specify a finite term. The corpus of house rental contracts consulted is sufficiently large (195 tablets) that we can be certain this reflects the actual situation. Given the relative frequencies of short-term (<1 year), two-year and three-year leases, it is scarcely conceivable that one-year leases were never issued. To accept this pattern at face value we should have to accept that one-year leases were deliberately avoided, or that for some reason they were not written down: neither scenario is plausible. There is, then, no obvious reason why one-year leases are entirely absent from the corpus. On the other hand, this problematic ‘gap’ is easily explained if adi ṭuppi ṭuppi is understood to mean ‘for a one-year period’. I suggest therefore that where the two- and three-year leases typically have a-dî 2-ta mu.an.naši (‘for two years’) etc., the one-year leases avoid using an expression formed with mu.an.na = šattu (‘year’) but rather use the ṭuppi-clause instead.³ These observations apply not only to house lease contracts but also to other categories of documents which specify finite time-periods, as can be seen from the numerous examples cited below.

b) An interpretation of adi ṭuppi ṭuppi as ‘at the appropriate future time’ or ‘upon future notice, proper notice’ (CAD T 126) is rendered problematic by the fact that very nearly half of the extant Neo-Babylonian house-lease contracts have no specified term at all and therefore have to be considered to be indefinite, with the implicit possibility of either party giving notice as and when they saw fit. This obviates the need to insert a clause which means ‘upon future notice’ or the like.⁴

c) A small number of Neo-Babylonian documents actually make it clear that we are dealing with a one-year term. In particular, an unpublished tablet from Borsippa contains the following passage:

\[\text{BM 82620}\]

Borsippa, 25-VI-22 Dar I (500 BC)

| 1 | i41 gin kû.babbar šá gi-in-nu i-di č-šû |
| 2 | šá ṭup-pi-šû šá ta ii ne mu.21 kam |

². For the sake of brevity, when I refer to ṭuppi, the ṭuppi-clause or to adi ṭuppi ṭuppi this should be understood to encompass also the known range of variant formulations; for the distribution of specific formulations according to period/text genre, the reader may consult CAD T 126-8. It is clear from examining the Neo-Babylonian contexts in which the ṭuppi-clause occurs that no difference in usage can be discerned among the variant writings.

³. An apparent counter-example is given in CAD Š/II 200 (šattu 1.b.d’): bttatš šinâta adi UD MU.AN.NA ina pantšu, ‘these houses are at their disposal for one year’ (AnOr 70 70: 9). The same interpretation is given in CAD U-W 142 (anû 1.a.2.’c’) where it is treated as an emphatic expression. However, the temporal expression here is surely better read a-di uq-mu an-na, ‘until this day,’ which fits better the circumstances outlined in the document (discussed further in Baker forthcoming) and is not without parallel (see CAD A/I 117 s.v. adi A.2.b. citing RA 12 6.7). In NB annâ is more often spelled an-na-a, but an-na is also possible; see CAD A/II 140 (annâ n.).

⁴. Note that Rowton (1951: 188) argued this point the other way around, i.e. that adi ṭuppi represents a way of inserting a period of fair notice into those lease contracts for which no finite term is specified: ‘subject to (proper) advance notice’. The force of this argument is severely weakened by my finding that almost half of the house lease contracts neither give a finite term nor include the ṭuppi-clause. In fact Rowton made a similar observation (p. 191) and argued on that basis that ‘until further notice’ could not have been the original meaning of the ṭuppi-clause, because of its evident superfluity in such cases.
The contract is for house rent, specifying the exact period for which the rent has been paid. This period is expressed twice, first by ša tuppišu (‘for a one-year period’) and then by stating the precise 12-month period. Similarly, the tablet VS 4 3 (discussed below) uses both adi tuppišu and a precise 12-month period to refer to the same interest-free year. Compare, in a similar context, the following passage which employs only the tuppi-clause:

*L 1652 (Joannès 1989: 95, 246-7)*

Borsippa, 28-XII-30 Dar I (491 BC)

9 … … i-di é-šú
10 [ša (edition: a-di)] tup-pi-šú ina šu PN
11 maḫ-rat

‘She (the lessor) received the rent on her house [for] a one-year period from PN (the lessee)’.

Note that in the context of a receipt, as with the two documents just discussed, it makes little sense to speak of a payment received whereby the sum in question relates to ‘an appropriate period’ or the like; it can only refer to a finite period already known to both parties.

Another document that supports our case is the apprenticeship contract BM 40743 discussed by Hackl (2010: 713, n. 3686); it involves an apprenticeship of six years, plus a one-year period (tuppi tuppi) of additional service, with a third party assuming warranty for the apprentice for the total period of seven years.

In the light of these arguments put forward on the basis of the Neo-Babylonian everyday documents, it seems reasonable to conclude that the tuppi-clause does indeed refer to a one-year period. But what of the texts of other genres and/or periods in which the expression occurs? In the following pages I shall present the relevant passages from all of the tablets presently known to me which include the tuppi-clause; it will be seen that none of them contradicts the proposed interpretation, and in fact some of them offer further, circumstantial support in favour of it. In many instances this revised interpretation of the tuppi-clause permits an improved understanding of the contents of individual documents (or document groups) and letters, therefore I shall also present such commentary as is necessary to elucidate these cases.

### 3. Tunû in Legal and Administrative Documents and Letters

In this section I shall examine the evidence of the everyday documents in chronological sequence: Nuzi, Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian (with an overlap comprising the NB letters from Kuyunjik on the one hand, and the NB documents from Babylonia during the period of Assyrian rule on the other).

#### 3.1 Nuzi_texts

The earliest attestation of *tuppi* comes in a Nuzi tablet, where it occurs in the expression ina *tuppûmûšu* (CAD T 128). According to my interpretation *tuppûmûšu* means ‘a year of days’ and forms a parallel to the expression araḫ ūmâtê ‘a month of days’ (i.e. ‘a whole month’). The revised understanding perhaps lends a tone of righteous indignation to the single passage in which it occurs:

5. CAD U-W 141-2 (*āmu 1.a.2’.c’) ‘a full month,’ with writings iti ud.meš(-te), iti *u*-mu.meš.
AASOR 16 no. 6 (SMN 309)

55 um-ma ki-bi-ia-ma ú-la-mi
56 1 udu-šu i-na iti-hi ša-a-šu la el-te-qé-mi
57 i-na ša-šu-pu-ú-mi-šu 1 udu-šu
58 el-te-qé-mi

‘Thus Kibia: “I did not take a single sheep of his during that month, (in fact) I have (only) taken one of his sheep during the whole year!”’

3.2 Neo-Assyrian texts

3.2.1 Royal grants and decrees

I have retained the classification adopted in the State Archives of Assyria series, but it is clear that the two tablets discussed here have also a significant administrative component (cf. the following section). In both cases the editors of SAA 12 offer the translation ‘according to its tablet’ for the expression ša ūppišu; they understand this to mean ‘as specified elsewhere’ (Kataja and Whiting 1995: xxxi). CAD Ṭ 128, however, attributes these passages to the lemma ūppi and translates ‘for the appropriate time’.

NARGD 42 // (SAA 12 69, ‘Decree of Expenditures for Various Ceremonies in the Aššur Temple’).

In this document, dated in 809 BC, the phrase ša ūppišu occurs three times. It refers to items due from a high official in the first instance and from groups of professionals in the other two instances. In the contexts in question it clearly implies delivery of the items on an annual basis. The editors’ translation ‘according to its tablet’ would suggest that a separate record was kept detailing the precise amounts of each item to be delivered by the personnel in question; however, this seems redundant since the current document itself is sufficiently precise to be considered self-contained from an administrative perspective. A temporal expression fits the context better, especially considering that elsewhere the tablet deals with deliveries for specific festivals (l. 35), for a certain month (l. 42), for several days (r. 6), and with daily deliveries (r. 20).

r. 18 6?! kuš.me ša udu babbar-e [x x x x x x a]n?q.bar ša ūppišu ḫūgi.dub gal-ū sum-an
‘The chief treasurer gives 6 white sheepskins, [......] and iron [...] for a one-year period’.

r. 20 ... ... 3 anše qī-ru ša ūppišu
r. 21 maš[a]r!-i-gi.meš ša āgar.k[ur uru xx xx sum-nu ...]
‘The guards of the well under the prefe[ct of ... give] three homers of bitumen for a one-year period’.

r. 21 [..... f]i-du ša ūppišu ḫū dug.liš.bur.meš sum-nu
‘The potters give [...] of clay for a one-year period’.

KAV 79 (SAA 12 80, ‘Schedule of Wine Offerings by the Magnates to the Aššur Temple’)

The tablet mentions Dūr-Šarrukin (l. 5), therefore a date in or after the reign of Sargon II is indicated.

r. 4’ 1 ANŠE 6 qa ša ūppišu
‘1 homer 6 litres for a one-year period’

6. CAD Ṭ 128: ‘I did not take a single sheep of his during that month. I have only taken one of his sheep at š .’
Note that the expression ša kal šatti (‘for the whole year’) also occurs in this text (l. 9, in a summary context); however, this by no means precludes a meaning ‘for a one-year period’ for ša ṭuppīšu in the same document.

### 3.2.2 Administrative documents

The single Neo-Assyrian administrative document to be considered here is a well-known tablet concerned with Babylonian scholars working in the royal library; a date in the 7th century BC seems likely.

**ABL 447 (SAA 11 156, ‘Babylonians Working in the Library’)**

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rev.
15 Id'utu-sum-na
16 ṭpe-er-'u
17 'en-dū-uš
18 an-nu-te 3
19 ša a-di ṭup-pi-šū
20 ēš.gār ū-gam-ma-ru-ni
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‘Šamaš-iddin, Perṣu, Bēl-ēpuš; these are the three who are finishing the series [or possibly: work assignment] (with) in a one-year period’.

### 3.2.3 Letters

In this section I include only those letters written in Neo-Assyrian dialect; the Neo-Babylonian letters from Kuyunjik are treated below.

**ABL 706+ (SAA 1 204, ‘Tracking a Ninevite Scribe’)**

It is worth citing the relevant passage in full here because it is clear that the translation of ṭuppīšu as ‘for a year’ fits very well with the sequence of events related in the letter:

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rev.
1 ma-a ina ša-lu-še-ni
2 i-tal-ka ma-a! ina pa-an
3 PN1 it-ti-ti-zi
4 ma-a ṭup-pi-šu dul-lu
5 ina ugu-ḫi-šu e-tap-āš
6 ma-a ina mu-im-ma
7 ma-a ina ti.la!'-ma ša! PN1
8 ma-a lū.uš-kib-si i-tal-ka
9 i-ti-ši-šu
10 ma-e-a-na kur.e-bir-īd
11 ú-sa-ga-li-uš
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‘He came two years ago, got a position with PN1, and worked for a year on his behalf. Last year, while PN1 was still alive, a tracker came and took him away. They deported him to the Land beyond the River’.

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7. Edition: ‘according to its (original) tablet’; CAD T 128: ‘within a suitable period’.
8. Edition: ‘... and worked punctually on his behalf’.
3.2.4 Legal documents

3.2.4.1 Labour contracts

Among the twenty-three labour contracts recently studied and (re-)edited by Radner, three involve a hire period expressed using _tuppi_. The author translates ša _tuppišu_ as ‘for his _tuppu_ (i.e., a fixed period of time)’ (e.g. Radner 2007: 205). Among these contracts the minimum attested length is one month and the maximum length has previously been understood to be 10 months, with most (14) contracts falling in the range 7-10 months (see Radner 2007: 199). The presence of three contracts with what can now be interpreted as a one-year term (_tuppišu_) fits the pattern well, and these cases now represent the longest attested hire periods.

_Ahmad 1996 no. 14 (Radner 1997: 205, no. 3)_

Assur, 613* BC.

3 PN1
4 dumu-šá _tup-pi-šú_
5 ana igi PN2
6 i-pa-lah-šú
7 10 gín kù.babbar
8 PN3 ad-šú
9 [i]g-re-šú ša _tup-pi-šú_ it-ti-ši

‘His son PN1 shall serve PN2 for a one-year period. His father PN3 has taken 10 shekels of silver as his wages for a one-year period.’

_KAN 3 11 (Faist 2007 no. 11; Radner 2007: 207-9, no. 5)_

Assur, 620* BC

envelope
2 15 gín kù.babbar ša PN1
3 _ina_ igi PN2 _ina ig-re-šú_
4 šá _tup-pi-šú_ i-ti-ši
5 10 gín kù.babbar _ma-kù-su_ šá _tup_[-l]-i-[šú]
6 a₃-na PN1 (... ...)
10 _a-na pu-uhl₃-[l]-hi i-ta-šu
11 _tup-pi-šú_ i-pa-lah-šú

‘Fifteen shekels of silver belonging to PN1 and made available to PN2. He has taken (the silver) as his wages for a one-year period. Ten shekels of silver are the compensation for a one-year period.

9. Radner has previously argued on the basis of this distribution of the various lengths of hire terms that _tuppi_ must mean a period of at most ten months (Radner 1997: 53-4 n. 270). However, there is nothing in the evidence cited that rules out the interpretation proposed here.
period to PN1, (PN2-PN8). They took (the silver) as a loan. He will serve him for a one-year period.

inner tablet
1 15 gín kù.babbar
2 šá PN1
3 ina igi PN2
4 ig-re-šú šá ṭup-pi-šú
5 i-ti-<ši>
5 ... 10 gín kù.babbar
6 ma-ku-su šá ṭup-pi-šú
7 a-na PN1 (... ...)

‘Fifteen shekels of silver belonging to PN1 are at the disposal of PN2; he has taken (the silver) as his wages for a one-year period. Ten shekels of silver are the compensation for a one-year period for PN1 (... ...).’

Radner (2007) 224-5, no. 22
Assur, 613* BC
7 PN ig-re-[šú]
8 ša [ṭup]-pi-šú šá 1pap\(^1\).meš-šú
9 i-ti-šú ṭup-pi-šú]
10 ṭu-pi-šú ... i-pal-lāḥ ...

‘PN has taken (the silver) as his wages for a one-year period, belonging to his brothers. He will serve for a one-year period.’

3.2.4.2 Other legal contracts

StAT 2 80 (‘Repayment of Debt’)  
Assur, 625* BC
8 ta* kù-šú šá ṭup-pi-šú\(^3\)
9 a-na PN1
r. 1 i-ti-din ṭup-pi-šú
2 za-kù ...

‘He has paid it with his silver for a one-year period to PN; for the said one-year period he is clear (of claims)’.\(^{10}\)

ADD 68 (SAA 14 97 ‘Ubbuku and Muškenu-la-ahi Lend Silver Against a Pledge’)

This document is cited in CAD T 128 under ṭuppī; however, following collation the recent edition SAA 14 97 reads the passage quite differently and ascribes the term to ṭuppu ‘tablet’ instead, an interpretation which is followed here.

10. Edition: ‘he has punctually paid it with his silver to Belet-ereš. He is absolutely clear’. The Glossary (StAT 2 pp. 238-9) incorrectly places these two occurrences under the lemma ṭuppu ‘tablet’.
3.3 Neo-Babylonian texts

3.3.1 Legal contracts

3.3.1.1 House rentals

As explained above, it was through studying the lease durations contained in the house rental contracts that I arrived at the conclusion that the ūppi-clause must indicate a one-year period. Typical formulations are: (1) é ... adi ūppišu ina pān PN (lessee), ‘The house ... is at the disposal of PN for a one-year period’; (2) PN adi ūppišu ... ina libbi ašib, ‘PN shall live in it (the house) for a one-year period’.

_OECT_ 12 A161

26-VII?-35 Nbk (570 BC)
4 ... 'a-di ūppišū
5 PN1
6 ... ina lib-bi a-šib
‘PN1 shall live in it (the house) for a one-year period.’

_BM_ 29748

Babylon, 8-XII-41 Nbk (563 BC)
1 é šā PN1 ...
2 šā da é ūPN2 ...
3 a-di ūppi-šū ina IGI PN3 ... u PN4]
‘The house of PN1 which is next to the house of PN2—for a one-year period (it) is at the disposal of PN3 and PN4’.

_Ner._ 29

Sippar, 20-X-1 Ner (558 BC)
(é šā PN1 .......)
4 a-na ūPN2
5 a-na aš-šu-bu-tu a-di ūppi-ana ūppi
6 a-na mu.an.na 2 gin 4-tū lá-tī kù.babbar
7 id-din ...
“(The house of PN1 ... ...)—he leased it to ūPN2 for residence for a one-year period, for (a rent of) 1 3/4 shekels of silver per year’.

_NBC_ 8378 (Joannès 1989: 93, 349)

Borsippa, 1-VII-2 Ner (558 BC)
1 é šā PN1 ... ...
2 ... šā da é PN2
3 PN3 ...
4 a-di ūppišū a-na mu 10 gin kù.babbar
5 ina lib-bi a-šib ...
‘The house of PN1 which is next to the house of PN2—PN3 shall live in it for a one-year period for (a rent of) 10 shekels of silver per year’. 
VS 5 23
Borsippa, 9-II-4 Nbn (552 BC)
1 é šd PN1
2 a-di ṭup-pi-šú PN2
3 ... PN3
4 ... ina .life-bi
5 áš-bu-’...
‘The house of PN1—for a one-year period PN2 (and) PN3 shall live in it’.

BM 102023
Borsippa, 5-II-8/9(?) Nbn (548/7 BC)
1 é šd PN1
2 šá da é-šú PN2
3 ù PN3 dam-šú
4 a-di-i ṭup-pi-šú ina .life-bi
5 áš-bu-u’...
‘The house of PN1 which is next to his (own) house—PN2 and his wife PN3 shall live in it for a one-year period’.

Nbn. 500
Babylon, 2-II-11 Nbn (545 BC)
13 ... a-di-i ṭup-pi-šú é ina igi-šú
‘For a one-year period the house is at his disposal’.

YOS 19 10 (Joannès 1989: 93, 341)
Borsippa, 28-IV-11 Nbn (545 BC)
1 é šd PN1 ...
2 ... a-di ṭup-pi-šú
3PN2
4 ... ina šá áš-bat ...
‘The house of PN1—for a one-year period PN2 shall live in it’.

Nbn. 1030
Bīt-šar-Bābili, 3-II-17 Nbn (539 BC); collated
1 é šd an-mú-lugal-eši šd da é
PN1 u PN2 šd PN3
3 ... a-di ṭup-pi-šú PN4
... u PN5
4 bn-gal-la šá PN6 ina .life-bi áš-bu-’
(... ...)
5 [a]-di PN1 ṭup-pi-šú ina é áš-bu-’
‘The house in Bīt-šar-Bābili which is next to the house of PN1 and PN2, which belongs to PN3—for a one-year period PN4 and PN5, slave of PN6, shall live in it. (... ...) [Fo]r a one-year period they shall live in the house’.

11. The lease is to begin five days after the drawing up of the contract, i.e. on 14-II.
Borsippa, 10?-VI-1 Nbk IV (521 BC)
1  šá PN1 ...
2  ... šá ina ugu ūd šá da ū PN2
3  ... a-di ūt-pi-šá i-na i PN3

‘The house of PN1 which is by the river (and) which is next to the house of PN2—for a one-year period (it) is at the disposal of PN3’.

Borsippa, 29-II-11 Dar I (511 BC)
11  ... ūa-di ūt-pa-šá
12  ē ina ūgi-šá ...

‘For a one-year period the house is at his disposal’.

Babylon, 12-VIII-16 Dar I (506 BC)
13  ... ... a-di ūt-pi ana! ūt-pi!1
14  <ē> ina ūgi-šá-nu

‘For a one-year period <the house> is at their disposal’.

Borsippa, 23!! (copy: 33)-I-20 Dar (502 BC)
1  šá PN1
2  šá da ū PN2
3  a-di ūt-pi-šá PN3
4  a-na na-ūh-šu ina ūb!-bi a-ši-ib

‘The house of PN1 which is next to the house of PN2—for a one-year period PN3 shall live in it for rent’.

Babylon, 23-II-20 Dar I (502 BC)
7  ... a-ūši ūt-pi ūt-pi
8  ē ina ūgi ūPN1 ina ūb-bi āš-ba-at

... ...
12  ... 3-ša nam-ba!%-r[a-a-tu?]
13  ūgal-šu ūgala-šu a-di ūt-pi ūt-[pi]
14  ina ūgi ūPN ... ...

‘For a one-year period the house is at the disposal of ūPN, she shall live in it. ... ... Three namḫaru-vessels(?), large and small, are at the disposal of ūPN for a one-year period’.12

Babylon, 2-III-20 Dar I (502 BC)
(eš šá PN1 .......)

12. The female tenant is clearly being granted the use of specific utensils belonging with the house. If the proposed emendation is correct then we are dealing with vessels, possibly used for brewing.
4 ... a-na i-di é a-na
5 1/2 ma.na 2 gìn kù.babbar šá gìn.su šá na-da^1-nu u ma-ḥa-ri
6 a-na tšu-pi a-na tšu-pi a.s-na^1 PN2
7 ... id-din
8 '(The house of PN1 ...)—he leased (it) for house rent, for 1/2 mina 2 shekels of ginnu-silver for trading, for a one-year period to PN2'.

BM 21999
Borsippa, 5-XII-22 Dar I (499 BC)
1 é šá PN1
2 šá da é PN2
3 a-di tšu-pi šú ina igi PN3
9 The house of PN1 which is next to the house of PN2—for a one-year period it is at the disposal of PN3'.

CTMMA 3 120
Babylon, 24-II-25 Dar I (497 BC)
21 a-di tšu-pi tšu-pi
22 é ina igi-šú ul-tu
23 ud.1.kam.iš-sig₄
24 é! ina igi-šú
9 For a one-year period the house is at his disposal. From 1 Simānu (III) the house is at his disposal'.

BM 33966
Babylon, 5-V-36 Dar I (486 BC)
9 ... a-di-i tšu-pi tšu-pi^1
10 a-na PN ...
11 ... id-din
9 For a one-year period he gave (the house) to PN (for rent').

BM 96137
[Borsippa], 24?-x-x Dar I (521-486 BC)
1 [é šá P]N1 ...
2 ... šá mu-suš-su-l[u]
3 šá da é PN2 a-di tšu-pi^1
4 a-na i-di é [ina] igi PN3
9 '[The house of P]N1 with the alley, next to the house of PN2—for a one-year period it is [at] the disposal of PN3 for house rent'.

BM 103496
Babylon, 23-VIII-x Dar I (521-486 BC)
1 é šá PN1 ...

13. CAD T 126: 'he leased the house to PN for x silver, until further notice'.
14. Edition: 'For an indeterminate time the house is at his disposal'.
... PN2
... ina na-aš-par-tu
PN1 a-na
PN3 ...
... a-na ma-as-šar-ru-tu a-na

The house of PN1—PN2 on the instructions of PN1 has given it to PN3 for safeguarding (mašarātu) for a one-year period’.

BM 26653
Borsippa, 18-III-2 Xer (484 BC)
è im mar.tu
[šá] PN1 ...
... a-na i-di è
a-di ū-up-pi-šū a-na mu.an.na
{šá} PN2 ...
... ...
ina lib-bi āš-bat ...

The west(-facing) wing [belonging to] PN1—PN2 shall live in it for house rent, for a one-year period, for yearly (rent of) [2] shekels of white nuḫḫuṣu-silver’.

DT 25 (Bertin 3006)\(^\text{15}\)
Babylon, [x-x]-5 [RN] (Achaemenid period)
r. 1 a-di ū-up-pi ū-up-pi \(^\text{x1} [x x]
For a one-year period [...].’

3.3.1.2 Contract for repairs to house

VS 6 290
No place, date or witness list (perhaps a draft contract?). The tablet comes from the so-called ‘Šin-ili archive’ which is associated with tablets excavated in the Ninurta temple at Babylon (Pedersén 2005: 228-47, archive N14); it involves 1Babšarrat, wife of the archive-holder Tābija.
a-di ū-up-pi ū-up-pi bat qa
šá PN i-šā-bat
For a one-year period he shall carry out the repair work for 1PN’.

3.3.1.3 Boat rental contract

CT 4 44a (Bu. 88-5-12, 643)
Babylon, 22-XII 24 Dar I (497 BC)
a-di ū-up-pi u ū-up-pi gis mà ina i-gi-šu-nu
For a one-year period the boat is at their disposal’.\(^\text{16}\)

15. On the unusual nature of this document see Baker forthcoming.
3.3.1.4 Contracts concerning temple prebends

**BM 29202: 5 (Waerzeggers 2010 no. 113)**

Borsippa, 10-II-Acc. LabM (556 BC)

In this prebend lease contract the lessee is to pay 55 shekels of silver as the price of prebendary income until 2-XII. The term is then specified as *a-di ū-pi-šú* (l. 5), which the editor translates as ‘until the agreement term,’ and it is stipulated that the lessee is to pay the silver on a monthly basis. At first sight the date of the contract, 10-II, appears to be incompatible with a one-year period, given that the lease is said to run until 2-XII. However, it is not uncommon for NB transactions to be written down after they had come into operation, and although one might expect the beginning of the lease period also to be specified, I do not consider its absence to be fatal to the interpretation of ūppi proposed here.

**VS 5 21 (NRV 12)**

Dilbat, 10-XI-2 Nbn (553 BC)

In this prebend transfer document the donor declares that he has been ill for a year; this is given as the reason why he is unable to perform his duties and wishes to transfer his measurer’s prebend to his daughter in return for being looked after:

3  ū-pi ū-pi mar-šu-ka

‘I have been sick for a (whole) year.’

**BM 102033 (Waerzeggers 2010 no. 17)**

Borsippa, 24-I-9 Cyr (530 BC)

A contract for the performance of prebendary duties ‘for a one year period’ ([*a-di* ū-pi-šú, l. 6; edition: ‘until the end of the agreement’).

**VS 6 173**

Borsippa, 23-VII-Acc. Šamaš-eriba (484 BC)

A milling contract; see Waerzeggers 2010: 210, 224.

2  *a-di* ū-pi-šú PN

3  ... iti 8 ša-ka-ri šá qe-me gi-nu-ú

4  nap-ta-an-nu šá ṣa₄₄ ṣe₄₄-nu-ú-tu ina č ku-un-nu

5  šá é-zi-da šá ṣa₄₄-nu šá ṣa₄₄-ag ...

‘For a one-year period PN (will carry out) each month 8 work-quotas of flour (grinding) for the regular offerings, (for) the mealtimes of Nabû, the grinding work in the *bīt kunnu* of Ezida for the days of Nabû, ...’.

3.3.1.5 Leases of vats

**VS 6 40 (NRV 144)**

No place specified; 13-VI-34 Nbk (575 BC)

16. It is stated (l. 10-12) that the lease is to begin on the first day of the coming year (1-I-25 Dar), that is, in eight days’ time.

17. For example: AnOr 8 57 (tablet dated 12-XI-7 Cyr, lease beginning 1-X-7); BM 105211 (tablet dated 22-XI-9 Antigonos, lease beginning VI-9; for an edition see Joannès 2001: no. 2).

12 dan-nu-tú re-qu-tú la-bi-ru-tú
... ...
7 i-di-šú-nu šá a-di ṭup-pi ṭup-pi
8 PN e-ṭir
‘Twelve old, empty vats ... ... PN has been paid their rent for a one-year period’.

BRM I 69
Sippar, 13-XII-4 Dar I (518 BC)
1 5 dan-nu-tú re-qu-tú
2 la-bi-ru-tú šá la ba-at-qu
3 ū ku-up-ri šá PN1 ... ...
4 ... ...
5 a-di ṭup-pi-šú a-na i-di
6 i-a-na PN2
7 ... id-din ...
‘5 old empty vats without repairs or bitumen (coating) belonging to PN1— he gave (them) to PN2 for a one-year period for rent’.19

BM 94664
Borsippa, 19-I-28(?) Dar I (494 BC)
4 ... [ar-ki] ṭup-pi-šú
5 dan-nu-tú a₄ [8] a-na
6 PN1 i-nam-din
(8 empty vats belonging to PN1 are at the disposal of PN2). [After] a one-year period he shall give the aforementioned 8 vats (back) to PN1’.20

3.3.1.6 Laundry contracts
A group of nine Neo-Babylonian laundry contracts has been the subject of a recent study by Waerzeggers (2006); its includes several hitherto unpublished tablets which are to be added to the corpus of contracts containing the ṭuppi-clause. All of the laundry contracts which specify a finite term use the ṭuppi-clause, with one exception: CTMMA 3 103 (Waerzeggers 2006 no. 7) stipulates a period from Ululú (VI) of year 11 to Ululú of year 12 (of Nabonidus).21 This suggests that a one-year term was the norm with these particular contracts. In each case Waerzeggers translates the ṭuppi-clause as ‘for the agreed period’.

BM 29228 (Waerzeggers 2006: 83-4, no. 1)
[Borsippa], 10-XII-3 Nbn (552 BC)
1 [a-di] ṭup-pi-šú PN1
2 [₄a-dās] la₄-ku ...
3 ... i-ha₄š-e-ti

19. CAD T 127: ‘he rented to PN five empty used vat until further notice’.
20. The tablet is rather fragmentary but as it seems that the lessee is required to give the vats back to the lessor following the expiration of the term, I suggest restoring [ar-ki] ṭuppišù rather than [a-di] ṭuppišù.
21. The remaining contracts are anomalous: BM 96390 (no. 3) involves the swearing of an oath concerning the performance of duties and has a term beginning on 10-VIII but no end date; YOS 19 68 (no. 6) has no term specified, though the arrangements for the washerman’s wages to be paid in two installments, one at the beginning of the year and one at the end of the year, are compatible with a one-year term; BE 8 119 (no. 9) has no term specified.
THE MEANING OF TUPPI

[85x777] 4 šá é PN2
5 ... ...
6 ú-za-ak-ka u i-ḥar-ra

‘[For] a one-year period PN1 the [was]herman shall clean and whiten the ‘whites’ of the household of PN2 ...’.

VS 6 86 (Waerzeggers 2006: 90-1, no. 8)
Babylon, 28-XII-13 Nbn (542 BC)
1 zi-ku-tu šá ṭPN1 ...
2 ... ...
3 ul-tu ud.1.kam šá ́u bará a-di
4 ṭup-pi pu-ú ṭup-pi PN2
5 ú-za-ak-ku

‘PN2 shall do the laundry of ṭPN1 ... ... from the first day of the month Nisannu (I) for a one-year period ...’.

BM 102345 (Waerzeggers 2006: 84-5, no. 2)
Borsippa, 30-XII-6 Cyr (532 BC)
1 a-di ṭup-pi-šú PN1 ́u qal-la
2 ́ušá PN2 ... 
3 dul-lu ́u tug.babbar-ú-tu šá PN3
4 ...
5 ip-pu-uš ...

‘For a one-year period PN1, slave of PN2, shall carry out the laundry work of PN3’.

BM 29471 (Waerzeggers 2006: 86-7, no. 4)
Borsippa, 27-II-12 Dar (510 BC)
1 ul-tu ud.1.kam šá ́u sig₄
2 a-di ṭup-pi-šú PN1 ((erasure))
3 ... ...
4 dul-lu ́u tug.babbar.meš šá zi-ki-tu₄ gab-bi
5 ́u hi-áš-tu₄ šá PN2
6 ...
7 ip-pu-uš

‘From day 1 of Simānu (III) for a one-year period PN1 will do the washerman’s work, all of the laundry and the “whites” of PN2’.

BM 96262 (Waerzeggers 2006: 87-8, no. 5)
Borsippa, 9-VII-19 Dar (503 BC)
1 ́a-li ṭup-pi-šú PN1 ...
2 dul-lu ́u tug.babbar-ú-tu šá é PN2
3 ... gal-ú u qal-la ip-pu-uš

‘For a one-year period PN1 will do the washerman’s work of the household of PN2, great and small’.

22. In the edition the writing ́u tug.babbar₄ is understood literally as ‘washermen’. However, it seems likely that this is rather a writing of the abstract noun aššakātu, with the plural marker MEŠ standing for the ending -atu.
3.3.1.7 Promissory notes, debt-related contracts and receipts

VS 4 3 (NRV 160)

Babylon, 4-VIII-9 Šamaš-šum-ukīn (658 BC)
This contract concerns a loan which is interest-free for one year but which is to incur monthly interest as a penalty if the debt is not repaid by the end of that period.²³ The clause adi ūppišu šubullu iânu (ll. 4-5) reiterates the preceding clause which specifies the precise 12-month interest-free period running from Arahšammu (VIII) of the current year to (the end of) Tašrītu (VII) of the following year.²⁴ A translation ‘until proper notice’ (CAD Ṭ 127) makes no sense in such a context.

1½ ma.na kù.babbar šá PN1
ina ugu PN2 ḫu-bu-ut-ti
ul-tu {u₄₃-mu} ud.₄.k₄[m šá] apin
a-di₄₃-du₄ ul i-rab-₄bi₃ a-di ūppi-šú

2ur₃-ra-šá ia-a-nu ki-i ina qī-it
šá du₄₃ kù.babbar a-na PN1
la it-tan-nu itti₁ ½ gin kù.babbar
ina maḥ-ḥi-šú iti-ra-bi

‘Half a mina of silver belonging to PN1 is owed by PN2. From the 4th day of Arahšammu (VIII) until Tašrītu (VII) the interest-free loan (ūpittu) shall not increase; for a one-year period there shall be no interest payable by him. If, by the end of Tašrītu, he has not paid the silver to PN1, (then) ½ shekel of silver shall accrue against him per month.’

TuM 2/3 103 (Joannès 1989: 68, 191)

Borsippa, 20-I-20 Šamaš-šum-ukīn (649 BC)
This contract concerns security for a debt; the title deeds to the debtor’s field are in the hands of the creditor, who will become its owner if the debt is not repaid within a year:

1 ki-i a-di ūppi-šú
2 1 2/3 ma.na 3 gin kù.babbar PN1
3 it-ta-šá-am-ma a-na PN2
4 it-tan-na i-mah-ḫar-ma na₄₃ šiš šá 0,1.₄ še.numun
5 PN2 a-na PN1 i-nam-din
6 ki-i la it-tan-na a.śā pa-mi
7 PN2 id-dag-gal

‘If (with)in one year PN1 has brought 1 2/3 mina 3 shekels of silver and has paid it to PN2 and he has received it, PN2 shall give the sealed document concerning 0,1.₄ kur of arable land and shall give it to PN2; if he does not give (the silver), the field shall belong to PN2’.²⁵

BM 38246 (Weidner 1952-53: 40-I, no. 5)

Babylon, 20-XII-13 Kandalānu (c. 634 BC)

6 šit-ti kù.babbar šá i-re-ēḫ-ḫu-u i-na ūppi a-na ūppi

23. The interest quoted (ll. 7-8), ½ shekel per month on a capital sum of 30 shekels over a twelve-month period, amounts to 20% which is typical for this period.

24. For repetition of this kind - a feature not uncommon in Neo-Babylonian documents - cf. BM 82620 cited above.

25. Edition: ‘Si, d’ici le terme convenu, PN1 ... a apporté et remis à (PN2) ...’. 
The balance of the silver that remains outstanding, (with)in one year he shall pay the silver in its capital amount.\(^{26}\)

**UET 4 72**

Babylon, 19-VI-6 Nabopolassar (620 BC)

1 ma.na 15 gin \( \text{kù.babbar} \) \( \text{ḫu-bu-ut-tu-tu} \)

2 šá PN1 \( \text{ina} \) ugu

3 PN2

4 \( \text{ina} \ \text{ṭup-pi-šú} \) \( \text{kù.babbar} \) a-na PN1

5 \( \text{i-nam-din} \)

‘1 mina 15 shekels of silver, the interest-free loan belonging to PN1, is owed by PN2; (with)in one year he shall pay the silver to PN1’.

**BM 94604**

[Borsippa], 10-III-[(x)]+3 Nbk (602 BC or later)

3’ ... 1 ma.\( \text{na}\)\( ^{1} \) \( \text{kù.babbar} \) nu-du-nu-\( ^{ū} \)

4’ \( ^{1} \text{šá}\)\( ^{1} \) PN1 \( \text{a-di} \ \text{ṭup-pi-šú} \)

5’ \( \text{šá} \) la \( \text{ḫu-bul-\( \text{lu} \)\( ^{t} \) i-nam-din} \)

6’ ki-i \( \text{ina} \ \text{ṭup-pi-šú} \) la it-tan-\( ^{nu} \)

7’ \( ^{e-} \text{bu-ru a.\( \text{šā} \) ...} \)

8’ ... ...

9’ ... a-\( \text{ki-i} \)

10’ \( \text{ḫu-bul-\( \text{lu} \)\( ^{t} \) kù.babbar} \) ik-kal

‘In one year he shall pay one mina of silver, dowry (silver) of \( ^{1}\text{PN1} \), without interest. If he does not pay it in one year, then he (the creditor) shall enjoy the usufruct of the harvest of the field (...) as the interest on the silver.’\(^{27}\)

**TuM 2/3 55** (Joannès 1989: 144, 179)

Borsippa, 17-IV-6 Cyr (533 BC)

5 \( \text{ina} \ \text{ṭup-pi-šú} \) \( \text{kù.babbar} \) i-nam-din

... ...

8 ur₃,\( ^{a} \) t₃ \( \text{kù.babbar} \) a₃ \( ^{1} \text{[7 gin]} \) \( ^{5}\text{PN} \)

9 a-\( \text{di} \ \text{ṭup-pi-šú} \) \( ^{tak₃-kal} \)

‘He shall pay the silver in one year’s time. (...) \( ^{5}\text{PN} \) shall enjoy (...) as the interest on the said \( ^{1} \text{[7 shekels]} \) of silver for a one-year period’\(^{27}\).

**Cyr. 322** (Wunsch 2000 no. 226)

Babylon, 11-IX-8 Cyr (531 BC)

5 a-\( \text{di} \ \text{ṭup-pi a-na} \ \text{ṭup-pi} \)

6 i-gam-ma-ru-ma i-te-\( ^{u} \)

‘In one year they shall repay (the debt) in full’.

---

26. CAD T 127: ‘he will pay the balance of the silver that remains outstanding, in its original amount, upon proper notice’.

27. Edition: ‘jusqu’au terme convenu’ for \( \text{a-di} \ \text{ṭuppiša} \).
BE 8 93

Borsippa, 21-VI-6 Camb (524 BC)
In this case the arrangement involved repayment of the debt in two half-yearly instalments, the first to be paid six months after the contract was drawn up, the second after a full year had expired:

5  \(i-na \, \text{lib-bi} \, 2 \, \text{ma.na} \, kù.babbar \, \text{ina}^{ii} \text{šē} \)
6  \(\text{ina} \, \text{sag.du-šū} \, i-nam-din \)
7  \(\text{re-ḫe-et} \, 2 \, \text{ma.na} \, kù.babbar \, \text{ina} \, \text{ṭup-pi-šū} \)
8  \(\text{šā} \, \text{la} \, \text{ur₃} \, \text{ra} \, i-n-a-din \)

‘Out of it [sc. the total debt of 4 minas] he will pay 2 minas of silver in the month Addaru (XII) in its capital amount (and) he will pay the remaining 2 minas of silver in one year’s time, without interest’. 28

Camb. 88 (Wunsch 1993 no. 265)
Babylon, 14-V-1 Camb (538 BC)

1  \(1/2 \, \text{ma.na} \, kù.babbar \, \text{šā} \, \text{ú-ra-šī-šū} \, a-na \)
2  \(\text{ṣa-ra-pu} \, \text{šā} \, \text{a-gur-ru} \, \text{šā} \, \text{PN1} \)
3  \(...) \, \text{ul-tu} \)
4  \(\text{ii} \, \text{šū} \, \text{mu.I.kam}^{1} \, \text{kam-bu-zi-ia} \)
5  \(\text{lugal} \, \text{e₃} \, \text{a-di} \, \text{ṭup-pi} \, \text{a-na} \, \text{ṭup-pi} \)
6  \(\text{PN2} \, \text{ina} \, \text{šu}^{10} \, \text{PN1} \)
7  \(e-ṭir \, ...) \)

‘PN2 has been paid 1/2 mina of silver by PN1 for the urāšu-duty, for firing bricks, due from PN1 from the month Dûzu (IV) of year 1 of Cambyses, king of Babylon, for a one-year period’. 29

Camb. 348
Babylon, 16-XII-6 Camb (523 BC)

7  \(\text{a-di} \, \text{ṭup-pi} \, \text{ṭup-pi} \, \text{kù.babbar} \, \text{a} \)
8  \(1 \, \text{ma.na} \, 10 \, \text{gín} \, \text{ina} \, \text{sag.du-šū} \, i-nam-din \)

‘In one year they(!) shall pay the said 1 mina 10 shekels of silver in its capital amount’. 29

VS 4 149

Borsippa, 27-III-18 Dar I (504 BC)

7  \(\text{ina} \, \text{ṭup-pi-šū} \, \text{kù.babbar} \, \text{ina} \, \text{sag.du-šū} \, i-nam-din \)

‘In one year’s time he shall pay the silver in its capital amount’. 30

3.3.1.8 Slave sales

In slave sale contracts the ṭuppi-clause is sometimes used to define the period for which the seller(s) remained responsible for the death or escape of the slave(s) sold, after which time any such problem devolved to the buyer. In this context a translation ‘until further notice’ (cf. CAD T 128) is problematic. If a period of notice had already been agreed between the parties then we should expect it to be stated in the contract—the usual practice—rather than tacitly understood.

28. CAD T 127: ‘of the original principal of four minas, he will pay two minas of silver in MN ... he will pay the remaining two minas of silver upon proper notice, with no interest’.
29. The plural iṇamdina ‘they shall pay’ is expected since two debtors are named in the contract.
30. CAD T 127: ‘he will pay the silver in its original amount on proper notice’.
If it had not yet been agreed, then clearly an advantage was conferred upon whichever party
saw fit to nominate the term of notice. This crux is left unresolved, and to my mind such a
scenario is completely unworkable. The whole clause can only be explained if *adi *tuppi
tuppi ... arki *tuppi tuppi* in VS 4 27 is understood to refer to a fixed term, namely ‘for a one-year
period ... after a one-year period’. This usage directly parallels those cases where a shorter term
of 100 days is laid down.

**VS 4 27**

*Babylon, 18-VII-38 Nbk (567 BC)*

1. *a-di* *tup-pi tup-pi*
2. 1 ma.na 1/3 2 gín kù.babbar PN1
3. ....
4. *a-na* ¹PN2
5. ....
6. *i-nam*! (tablet: DA)-¹di³-in-ma ú-il-ti
7. šá PN3 u PN4
8. a-na ši-me ḫa-ri-iš
9. *ina* šu.II PN1 *ta-bu-ku*
10. *tu-ra-a* ‘a-na PN1
11. *ta-nam-din a*-¹di³ tup-pi tup-pi
12. ¹šá PN1 ši-<<> u kù.babbar a-na ¹PN2
13. *i-nam-din ar-ki tup-pi tup-pi*
14. ³šá PN2 ta⁻¹dag¹⁺gal

‘In one year PN1 shall give 1 mina 1/3 (mina and) 2 shekels of silver to ¹PN2 and she shall give
back to PN1 the document concerning (the slaves) PN3 and PN4 which she purchased from
PN1 for the full price. For a one-year period (responsibility for any) deceased or escaped slave
falls to PN1 and he shall pay (their value in) silver to ¹PN2; after a one-year period the slave
shall belong to ¹PN2’.

**Nbk. 346**

*Kish, 13-IV-39 Nbk (566 BC)*

8. .... ... *pu-ut ḫe-le-qu*
9. *ù mi-tu-tu šá PN1*
10. *a-di-i tup-pi a-na tup-pi PN2*
11. *ù ³PN3 na-daš-šu-ú*

‘PN2 and ³PN3 bear responsibility for the flight or death of (the slave) PN1 for a one-year
period.’

### 3.3.1.9 Apprenticeship contracts

Like the lease contracts, apprenticeship contracts also never specify a one-year term using *šattu*
but rather they use the *tuppi*-clause. These documents are the subject of detailed studies by J.

31. Note that Rowton (1951: 185), writing of legal contracts, already objected forcefully along these lines to
interpretations such as ‘for the customary period’ etc., stating: ‘To use so ambiguous a term would be simply to
invite litigation; indeed, the very fact that it was capable of so many meanings would effectively debar the phrase
from use in a legal context’.

32. E.g. TCL 13 248 (cited CAD T 128).
Hackl (2010; Hackl in press) which make use of the present author’s findings concerning the *tuppi*-clause. Here I draw attention to a subgroup of these contracts which use the formula *adi tuppi tuppi u n iti.meš*. These cases have hitherto been the subject of rather tortuous explanations which break the clause into two constituent parts, one indefinite and the other finite (‘n months’). However, it is now clear that the expression *adi tuppi tuppi u n iti.meš* is simply a way of expressing a period of between 12 and 24 months. Examples of such clauses in apprentice contracts include the following:

**BM 41442 (Abraham 2004: 360-2, no. 84)**

Babylon, 15-XII-26 Dar I (495 BC)

3... *a-na la-ma-a-du lu* mu-ú-tu

4 *a-di ūt-pi ūt-pi ū 3 iti.meš ...*

‘... in order to learn the baker’s profession for a one-year period plus 3 months (i.e. for 15 months)’.

**BM 31803 (Jursa 2007: 204-7, no. 10)**

Babylon, 26-VI 53 Antiochus (259 BC)

In this case I reproduce the entire operative section of the document since the *tuppi*-clause occurs several times and is crucial for understanding the text:

1 *[mi]ta-nit-tu* du[mu.mulur’s]-1?-[x x x ina ḫu-ud lib-bi-šū]*] 

2 *[id-din]-1 lu*dumū-šū ta u[d.x.kam šā ti.x mu.53.kam]* 

3 *a-na la]-ma-a-dul ū lu* iš'-pa]-1[ru-ú-tu] 

4 *a-di ūt-pi ūt-pi ū 2 iti*

5 *a-na lu*bad-ta]b-ta-na-a-din-iṭ a-šū lu en-a-mu 

6 *[ tad-di]n dumū-šū ta u lu-dul šā ti.x 1]* 

7 *[gal]-ū u qal-la u-lam-mad-su ina ūt-pi ūt-pi 2 iti*

8 *[ina] lib-bi 6 iti’maš ninda.ši.ā tu-nit-tu*

9 *ana 1 lu*bad-ta)b-ta-na-a-din-iṭ 

10 *tup-pi tup-pi 2 iti 1 lu*bad-tab-ta-na-a-din-iṭ 

ana’1 lu-din-i i-nam-din (erasure) ki-i 

ul-te-mi-du-uš-šū 2 gīn kù.bat-bar ép-šū qiš-šā-su 

i-le-qu ki-i la ul-te-mi-du-uš-šū 

5 gīn qa-šū-ū ép-šū i-nam-din ki-i a-d[i] 

15 *[la ql]-tū ūt-pi ūt-pi ūt-pi 2 iti 1a]* 

mi’ta-nit-tu ana’1 id-din-i lu[dumū-šū] 

la-igi 1 lu*bad-tab-ta-na-din-iṭ[l tap-ta-kur]* 

6 gīn kù.bat-bar qa-šū-ū ép-šū [ta-nam-din] 

rev. *1ał-nu-a₁ [ti-ū]*

‘Tanittu, da[ughter of] I..., voluntarily gav[e] Iddini], her son, [to Ea-ta]btanā-bulliṣ son of Bēl-aplu-iddina, from da[y x of month x, year 53, in order to le]arn the weav[er’s(?)] craft, [for] a one-year period plus 2 months. He shall teach him the work in byssus and the work in wool, [gr]eat and small. In the one-year period and 2 months, for 6 months [of] it Tanittu shall give bread to her son Iddini, and for the remainder of that one-year period plus 2 months, Ea-
tabtanâ-bullî shall give (it) to Iddini. If he teaches him, he shall take 2 shekels of silver as his gift; if he does not teach him, he shall pay 5 shekels of refined silver. If before the completion of that one-year period plus 2 months Tanittu takes away Iddini, her son, from Ea-tabtanâ-bullî, she shall pay 6 shekels of refined silver. They have each taken (a copy of the contract).'

In one apprenticeship contract the tuppi-clause occurs not in the specification of the duration of the apprenticeship (5 years) but rather it denotes the period for which the slave’s owner is to supply the slave apprentice with clothing:

*Cyr. 64 (Wunsch 1993: 228-9, no. 278)*

Babylon, 20-VII-2 Cyr (537 BC)

6 ... ... [a-di]

7 tup-pi tup-pi us-mu 1 silà ninda hi a ù

8 mu-sip-tu 4 PN1 a-na PN2

9 ta-nam-din

‘... [for] a one-year period 4PN1 shall give PN2 1 litre of bread per day and a muşptu-garment’.35

In another case, an apprentice cook is required to work for his master for an additional three months beyond the one-year period (tuppi tuppi) laid down as the formal apprenticeship term:

*BM 114717 (Hackl 2010: 704, n. 3637)*

Sippar, 18-X-8 Dar I (514 BC)36

14 [3°]1 iti[ešš] <e-lat> [tu]p*[a]t*1 <a> tup-pi m[u]-a-tî

15 [k]u*[a]ššišš [ba*-š*]-šù1 i*[pal]-šù1 <u>*šù1

‘He shall serve him for three months <on top> of that one year period, in lieu of his “gift”’.

3.3.1.10 Age designations for slave children and adopted children

The term tuppi features as an age designation in the contracts cited below. In the first example it features in the formulation märat tuppi tuppi which is used in exactly the same way as the expression mär(at) šatti ‘(under a) year old’ (CAD Š/II 205, with reference to infants, animals and beer). A finite age designation fits these contexts perfectly well.37

*SAM 1588 (Wunsch 2003/4: 240-3, no. 22)*

Adoption contract, Sippar, 27-II-[x] Dar I (521-486 BC)

6 4PN dumu!sal1-ka

7 sa-ḫir-tu₂ dumu.sal ṭup₂?-pi ṭup-pi

‘(Give me) 4PN, your small daughter, the one-year old girl’.38

35. Edition: ‘Bis zu dem in der Urkunde festgesetzten Zeitpunkt wird N. pro Tag 1 silà Gerste (sic) und (Arbeits)kleidung für A. geben’. CAD T 127: ‘PN will give to PN2 a daily allowance of x bread and clothing for as long as necessary (the period of apprenticeship specified as five years)’.

36. The tablet is cited in CAD T 127 with the siglum BOR 2 119; for a new edition see Hackl in press.

37. Note the direct parallel 4PN märat šattišu, ‘4PN, the one-year old (girl)’ (4PN dumu.sal mu-šù, *Nbn.* 75: 11).

38. Edition: ‘4PN, deine kleine Tochter, die ...-Tochter’.
CBS 1594 (Stolper 2001: 103)

Slave sale, Bit-Minû-ana-Bēl-dānu, 22-XII-9 Dar II (414 BC)

4    ...  
5    dumu sal-su e-ni-iq-tum ši-iz-bi šá ṭup-pi-i-šá

3.3.1.11 Miscellaneous and uncertain contexts

There is a relevant passage in another Neo-Babylonian contract which has hitherto been misunderstood. The tablet in question is a copy of an original, as evidenced by the occurrence of ḫē-pī in a number of places. The first few lines run as follows:

Nbn. 475 (Wunsch 1993B: 151-2, no. 182)

Copy of a work contract; Babylon, 20-XI-10 Nbn (545 BC)

1    [PN]₄²₄uḫaldi₄₅₄-qal-la šá₁₄₄mu₄₄₄-amar.utu

[...]muḫaldi₄₅₄-qal-la šá₁₄₄mu₄₄₄-amar.utu a ²da-bi-bi

5    ip-pu-uš ḫē-pī kam šá₁₄₄i₄₅₄zíz

The slave’s name is better preserved in r. 5: [²r₄DN]-ṣa-bit-šu²-i₄₅₄i₄₄. The divine name Nabû is the mostly likely restoration.

39. CAD ḫ ṭ 128: ‘a suckling of an appropriate age’.

40. The slave’s name is better preserved in r. 5: [²r₄DN]-ṣa-bit-šu²-i₄₅₄i₄₄. The divine name Nabû is the mostly likely restoration.

41. CAD ḫ ṭ 126 appears to reject Wunsch’s interpretation of line 3 since it contrasts ‘(passage) long-since broken’ with ‘(passage) broken by me’.
THE MEANING OF TUPPI

Commentary

6 It seems likely that the time-period expressed in ll. 5-6 runs up to the end of Addaru (XII) since the next provision stipulated in l. 7 follows on from the end of Addaru. Therefore the clause of ll. 5-6 represents a provisional arrangement for the remainder of the current year while the one-year term proper (specified in l. 2 by adi ṭuppi ute ṭuppi and probably reiterated in l. 7) was intended to start after the end of Addaru (l. 7), that is, on the New Year.

Translation

‘[PN] the baker, slave of Iddin-Marduk, [son of] Iqišā, descendant of Nūr—{Sin—for} a one-year period he shall practise the baker’s craft with Nabû(-)?-ša-bit-qāṭī, slave of Iqiša-Marduk, descendant of Dābībi. {From day x} of the month Šabātu (XI) until the end of {Addaru (XII)} he shall give 30 bread (loaves) per day. [From] the end of Addaru for a [one-year period ... ... Nabû(?)]-ša-bit-qāṭī shall give [...] to Iddin-Marduk as his mandattu.’

VS 6 92
Borsippa, 5-XI-[x] Nbn (555-539 BC)
1 'a-di ṭup-pi-šū PN

5 na-āš-par-ta-šū ta-al-lak

‘For a one-year period ‘PN ... ... will be in his service’.

CT 49 175
Place lost, date broken but Seleucid era (c. 189-187 BC)
2’ [...] x¹ ta ud.5.kam šá iš gan mu.10+[x ...]
3’ [...] ṣe-lu-ku lugal am ep[a]-i ṭup-pi-[šū ...]

‘[...] from the 5th day of Kislmu (IX), year 10+[x] of [...] and Seleucus, kings, for a one-year period [...]’.

3.3.2 Neo-Babylonian letters

3.3.2.1 From Kuyunjik

ABL 716 (SAA 18 181, ‘Petitioning the King’)

rev.
11 ... iš sukkal u iš sa-är-te-nu
12 lugal ina ma-a-ti ip-te-qid um ma di-i-nu kit-ti
13 a-ti mi-šá-ru ina ma-ti-iá di-i-na ṭup-pi ana ṭup-pi
14 [a-di l]a! lugal-lu-ú-da-a-ru a-na ḫa-za-nu-tu
15 [ip-pi]-qī-du iš sa-är-te-nu di-na-a ip-ta-ras

42. Line 3’ refers to more than one king, therefore Seleucus must be a co-regent; this is compatible with a date in 189-187, the co-regency of Antiochus III and his son Seleucus IV.
The king appointed a vizier and a chief judge in the land, saying: “Dispense truth and justice in my land!” One year before Šarru-lû-dâru [was appointed to the mayorship, the chief judge decided my case. ...”

CT 54 24 (SAA 18 36, ‘Precautions against Rebellion’)  

r. 12 [x k]i-i āš-mu-ú ūtup-pî a-na [tūp-pî x x]  

‘I have heard that for one year ...’

ABL 462 (de Vaan 1995: 261-5)  

Letter from Bēl-ibni to the king:  

9 ... ki-i tūp-pî û tūp-pî  
10 a-ga-a 2 ḫal-li-ma-a-nu a-na " qa-행정  
11 a-na ugu gî sa-num-ru la ḫāš-pu-ra  

‘(the gods of the king my lord ... know) that during this last year I sent two rafts to the woodcutters for samullu-wood’

ABL 1311+ (de Vaan 1995: 311-17)  

In another letter from Bēl-ibni to the king, the following passage occurs in a broken context:  

r. 33 ... [tūp-pî u?] [tūp-pî ki-i al-l[ik ...]  

‘... when I went one year ...’

ABL 1216 (SAA 10 109, ‘Omen of the Kingship of Esarhaddon’)  

rev.  
4 ... ... tūp-pî a-na tūp-pî [x x x x]  
5 gab-bi-šu-nu i-da-ku ki-i it-tu šâ ina muḫ-ḫi-šû la ba-na-a-[tu tal-li-ku]  
6 ū šu-û mim-ma šû la ba-na-a ...  

‘For a year he censored all [...s], if a sign untoward to him [occurred], and that was anything but good’

3.3.2.2 From Babylonia  

UET 4 189  

rev.  
18 am-me-ni  
19 tūp-pî ū tūp-pî a₄  
20 tē-em-ka la ḫāš-me  

‘Why is it that for a whole year now I haven’t heard any news of you?’

---

43. Edition: ‘... the chief judge for a period of time decided my case.’ CAD T 126: ‘some time ago, even before he (the king) appointed PN as mayor, the chief judge rendered a decision in my case’.

44. Edition: ‘I have heard that for a period of [time ...]’.

45. Edition: ‘(Und die Götter des Herrn der Könige, meines Herrn, sowari sie existieren, wissen würfahr,) daß ich während dieses ganzen übereingekommenen Termins zwei Flöge zum Holzfäller für samullu-Holz geschickt habe (und daß sie bis jetzt nicht zurückgekommen sind!)’


47. Edition: ‘For a period of time ... ...’.
4. ṬUPPI IN HISTORICAL TEXTS

The term ṭuppi occurs in two historical texts. First, it is used in two places in the Assyrian King List (AKL); the relevant passages are cited in full below following the composite edition of Grayson (1980-83: 101-115). Second, ṭuppi figures once in an inscription of Ninurta-kudurri-usur, a governor of Sűhu and Mari in the 8th century BC. For all three passages the CAD offers no translation. 48 Here I shall simply present the relevant passages in transliteration for the reader’s convenience, before proceeding to discuss them in the following sections (§5-6).

4.1 Passage A: the reign of the usurper Aššur-dugul

The first relevant passage in AKL concerns the reign of the usurper Aššur-dugul (no. 41), who reigned after the forty-year rule of Išme-Dagan, son of Šamši-Adad:

Grayson 1980-83: 106 (exemplar B, the ‘Khorsabad List’)
§14 1aš-šur-du-gul dumu la ma-ma-na la en ę́ gu.za
6 mu with lugal-ta dū-uš
§15 ina tar-šī 1aš-šur-du-gul-ma dumu la ma-ma-na
1aš-šur-ibila-ı-dı 1pab-ı30
1d30-na-mir ıp-qi-ı15
ıškur-ša-šu-šu ıda-da-si
6 lugal with ni dumu la ma-ma-na
kā ṭup-pi-šū lugal-ta dū-uš

4.2 Passage B: Aššur-dan and his sons in the AKL

The second relevant passage of the AKL concerns the reigns of the two sons of Aššur-dan I (no. 83), namely Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur (no. 84) and Mutakkil-Nusku (no. 85):

Grayson 1980-83: 111 (exemplar B, the ‘Khorsabad List’)
§51 1aš-šur-dan-an dumu ıd maš-ibila-é-kur 46 mu with ki.min
§52 ıd maš-tukuli-ti-ššur dumu ıaš-šur-dan-an
ṭup-pi-šū lugal-ta dū-uš
§53 ımu-tak-kil inusku šeš-šú ki-šú i-duk a-na kur-kur-ni-āš
e-bu-uk-šú ṭup-pi-šú ımu-tak-kil inusku ę́ gu.za
uk-ta-il kur-a e-mid

4.3 Passage C: the inscription of Ninurta-kudurri-usur

The third historical passage which mentions ṭuppišu comes from an inscription of Ninurta-kudurri-usur, the aforementioned governor of Sűhu and Mari. The text was first published by Cavigneaux and Ismail (1990: 343-57, no. 2); it has since been re-edited by Frame (1995: 294-300, no. S.0.1002.2):

col. i
7 … 3 itu with
8 ina muḫ-ḫē ṭup-pi-šū ina sag ę́ gar.kur-ū-tu-ia šá i-na ę́ gu.za
9 šā ad-ia u-ši-bu 2 LIM ıhā-tal-šu … …

48. CAD T 129: ‘mng. uncert. with ref. to terms of office’. Cf. AHw 1394: ‘3) in nA Königslisten v Kurzregierungen unter 1 Jahr’.
5. THE STATUS OF THE SUFFIX -ŠU IN ŢUPPIŠU

One question that needs to be resolved is whether or not the suffix -šu in ţuppišu should be taken literally as the 3rd person singular possessive pronominal suffix.\(^{49}\) In fact, as far as the Neo-Babylonian economic documents are concerned, it is clear that -šu as part of ţuppišu finds no antecedent in the subject of the clause and should not be translated. The form ţuppišu alternates freely, without any discernible nuance in meaning, with the variant formulations such as adi ţuppi ţuppi. They are clearly synonymous, therefore the suffix -šu carries no weight. Second, it is important to note that the expression used in lease contracts and the like is always adi ţuppišu and never adi ţuppišunu, although in other sections of the standard lease contract the plural suffix is regularly attached where appropriate (for example, bitu ina pānišunu, ‘the house is at their disposal,’ in the case of multiple lessees). These facts indicate that the -šu is redundant in these cases and so the term should not be translated as ‘his ţuppi’ etc. Moreover, the same applies to ţuppišu in Neo-Assyrian texts: some of the passages in decrees and administrative documents cited above could be expected to have ţuppišunu, were the suffix not redundant (e.g. SAA 11 156; SAA 12 69).

Apparently this represents a departure from Old Babylonian practice whereby in everyday documents possessive pronominal suffixes were regularly attached to temporal expressions (Stol 1996).\(^{50}\) Although ţuppišu is not among the terms cited in Stol’s study,\(^{51}\) it seems likely that the suffix -šu in the first millennium attestations of ţuppišu had its origins in the same phenomenon.\(^{52}\) Stol observes that the suffix in temporal expressions occurs most frequently in contracts recording the hire of people. The examples he cites concern clauses stipulating the duration of the lease, e.g. ana warḫišu (‘for his (one) month’), and ana šattišu (‘for his year’).\(^{53}\) He shows that in these cases the possessive suffix refers to the person who is the object of the rental agreement, and not to either of the principal parties.\(^{54}\) On the other hand, in property rental contracts it apparently refers to the lessee (Stol 1996: 422).

This question of the status of -šu in ţuppišu is important for determining to whose reign (if any) ţuppišu should be attached in the three historical passages cited in the preceding section and discussed in greater detail below.\(^{55}\) In some editions -šu has been translated as ‘his,’ whereas in others it has been ignored in translation. Where it is translated ‘his,’ then in connection with passages A and C, the question arises: who is the antecedent of -šu ‘his’? For example, in the case of passage C, the translation of Gasche et al. (1998: 53) assumes that ţuppišu means ‘his ţuppu,’ referring to Ninurta-kudurri-ušur’s father. On the other hand, Cavigneaux and Ismail (1990: 347) disregard the -šu, treating the ţuppišu as part of Ninurta-kudurri-ušur’s own reign. Since the text features in the first person, as though spoken by

\(^{49}\) It is only in Neo-Babylonian texts that variant formulations with reduplicated ţuppi, omitting the suffix -šu, are found; disregarding the initial preposition, these comprise: ţuppi ţuppi, ţuppi u ţuppi, ţuppi ana ţuppi and ţuppi pā ţuppi.

\(^{50}\) I am most grateful to W. van Soldt for drawing this article to my attention. The study of Blau (1979) is also of interest here, especially his remarks on the ‘tendency towards concreteness’ (p. 35).

\(^{51}\) As noted above, the earliest attestation known to me (and to CAD) occurs in a Nuzi text.

\(^{52}\) Another such vestige is evident in the expression mārat šattišu (Nbm. 75: 11; see above, §3.3.1.10).

\(^{53}\) The regular occurrence of šattišu in OB documents confirms that it was only later that ţuppi came virtually to replace šatti as a temporal expression for ‘one year’.

\(^{54}\) Stol 1996: 421 with n. 28. The example cited is: a-na itu.1.kam-ša l i-gu-ur-ši (BM 79479: 5-6), where one man hires a woman from another man for one month; in this case the suffixes -šu and -ši can only refer to the hired woman. Other passages cited by Stol confirm this observation; moreover, in the case of two hired people, the suffix -šunu is used. In Neo-Babylonian the suffix -šu is gender neutral.

\(^{55}\) The problem was also noted by Pruzsinszky 2009: 62 n. 225.
Ninurta-kudurrī-ushur himself, there are two possible alternatives: either -šu represents an actual possessive suffix, in which case the referent must be someone other than Ninurta-kudurrī-ushur himself, or it is redundant and can effectively be disregarded for the sake of translation. In the light of the foregoing discussion, I would argue against translating the suffix -šu in these cases. Rather, in the absence of evidence to the contrary I would assume that it was redundant in these historical passages, just as it was in the everyday letters and documents discussed above.

The etymology of tuppi remains elusive and the arguments adduced here in support of our interpretation can shed no direct light on this particular issue. It seems difficult to reconcile the proposed meaning with Rowton’s suggested etymology (< tapāpu, cf. Arabic tff) and his conclusion that tuppi means ‘end-bit (of a time-period),’ both of which were taken up by Von Soden in AHw (p. 1394). On the other hand, the suggestion of Hackl (2010: 713 n. 3686) is not compelling since tuppu (D-stem of tepû) is rarely attested in the meaning ‘to enter (a date, etc.) into a document’; moreover, the attestations are of Old Babylonian date whereas tuppi is first attested in texts dated several centuries later. It seems to me that a derivation from tuppû ‘tablet’ cannot be ruled out, but in that case also it is impossible to trace the route by which tuppi acquired the meaning proposed here. It is equally possible that there is some connection with ana tuppi šatti which occurs in astronomical texts, but unfortunately this expression too is rather obscure.

6. DISCUSSION

Until now, it has been practically obligatory for editors of Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian texts containing the tuppi-clause to insert a footnote to the effect that its precise meaning remains obscure. I hope to have convinced the reader that this is no longer necessary. Establishing that tuppi means ‘a one-year period’ enhances our understanding of a wide range of legal contracts, not to mention those passages in administrative documents, decrees and letters which have hitherto evaded satisfactory explanation. In an administrative context, moreover, the ability to distinguish between tuppû ‘tablet’ and tuppi as a temporal expression can now be placed on a surer footing which will make it easier to evaluate administrative practices.

There seems no good reason not to assume that tuppi in the historical texts has the same basic meaning as argued above for the everyday documents, that is, a one-year period. The formulation tuppišu compares well with the OB temporal expressions with possessive pronominal suffix discussed by Stol (1996) and is surely to be related to that phenomenon, even though it is only attested somewhat later. It is important to note that AKL does not include a single one-year reign expressed with šatti; only reigns from two years upwards are

56. Gasche et al. (1998: 53, n. 242) note that -šu has no apparent antecedent; as a parallel they cite ABL 447 r. 18-20, discussed above.

57. The extant manuscripts of AKL date between 912 and 722 BC (Azize 1998: 2-3). Of course, tuppišu could have been introduced into the text considerably earlier in its redaction history, the earliest possible date being shortly after the reign of the 18th century ruler Aššur-dugul (as the king with whose reign tuppišu is first associated in AKL). Reade’s suggestion (2001: 4) that the 13th century scribes assigned the six bab tuppišu reigns 16 years implies that by that time they had no idea what tuppi had originally meant, but this is problematic given the chronological distribution of tuppi in the everyday letters and documents.

58. See the passages cited in CAD T 101 (tepû 2.).

59. CAD T 128-9 translates ‘the balance(?) of the year’.
documented. This mirrors the apparent absence of one-year terms among the Neo-Babylonian legal contracts, which observation led to the present findings and is the cornerstone of my argumentation. Yamada (1994: 26+48) observes that tuppî in the AKL ‘only appears in contexts of political confusion’. Considering my interpretation of tuppîšu as one year, this is not so surprising since reigns of such short length were more likely to be associated with troubled times. Nevertheless, it remains noteworthy that of all the reigns extant in AKL, not a single one is said to have lasted a single year, unless we accept the proposed meaning of tuppîšu. In terms of Mesopotamian chronology, the implications of this conclusion are not so very great since the scholarly consensus has tended to attribute to tuppîšu a period of between 0 and 2 years (see Gasche et al. 1998: 53 for a summary). I suggest the following translations for the relevant historical passages:

A Aššur-dugul (no. 41)
1aš-šur-du-gul dumu la ma-na-na la en aššur-dugul
6 mušši lugal-ta dü-uṣ
ina tar-ṣi 1aš-šur-du-gul-ma dumu la ma-na
1aš-šur-ibila-i-di 1pab-šš0
1dš-30-na-mir 1ip-qišš15
1dšš-šuk-ša-lu-lu a-da-si
6 lugalensi dumu la ma-na-na
kâ tuppîšu lugal-ta dü-uṣ
‘Aššur-dugul, a son of a nobody with no claim to the throne, ruled for 6 years. During the time of Aššur-dugul, son of a nobody, Aššur-apla-idi, Nāšir-Sīn, Sīn-nam-nir, Ipqi-Ištar, Adad-salulu (and) Adasi—6 kings, son(s) of nobody—(each) ruled for (only) the beginning of a one-year period’.

Gasche et al. (1998: 53), referring to the two AKL passages (A and B), explain that the term tuppîšu ‘will be understood to refer, respectively, to the last regnal years of kings 41 (Aššur-dugul) and 83 (Aššur-dān I). However, in the light of my argument that -šu no longer has any grammatical import, the case for understanding bāb tuppîšu in A to refer to the reign of Aššur-dugul dissolves and we are left with ‘six kings, son(s) of nobody, (each) reigned for bāb tuppîšu’. The expression bāb tuppîšu has perplexed scholars. Of all the meanings of bābu cited in CAD the most plausible is ‘opening, beginning (in transferred mngs.)’ (CAD B 14, 25-6, mng. 5). In that case bāb tuppîšu would mean ‘the beginning of a year’. Since I have argued that tuppîšu has no antecedent in Aššur-dugul, the phrase cannot mean here ‘(at) the end of his (the previous king’s) reign,’ as proposed by Gasche et al. Given my understanding of tuppîšu as ‘a one-year period,’ it seems clear that the passage is saying that none of these six usurper kings completed a full year on the throne; this, of course, is clear also from the fact that they are said to have ruled ‘during the time of Aššur-dugul’. If any one of them had completed a

60. For example, a two-year reign (2 mušši) is assigned to Aššur-apla-idi (Grayson 1980-83: 112, §56). A one-month reign also occurs: Aššur-šadân reigned for one month (1 iti udensi-te) before the throne was usurped by Aššur-rabi (Grayson 1980-83: 108, §32).

61. They translate: ‘… 6 kings, sons of nobodies, exercised kingship (at the) beginning of his tuppû’ (Gasche et al. 1998: 53).


63. Alternatively, though perhaps less likely, one might think of ‘section’ (cf. CAD B 26, mng. 6), with bāb tuppîšu referring to ‘part of a (regnal) year’.

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full regnal year, one might expect him to have warranted a regular entry formulated like that of Ninurta-tukultî-Aššur in B (N \( \text{tu}p-\text{pi-šú} \) lugal-ta \( \text{dù-uš} \)).

As Gasche et al. (1998: 53, n. 238) observe, there are no wider-reaching chronological implications arising from this passage since all six kings are subsumed within the six-year reign of Aššur-dugul himself. However, our interpretation of the scenario also depends on precisely how we are to understand \( \text{tu}p\pi\) in this particular context: does it refer to a one-year period from the time when a king took the throne, that is, comprising the remainder of the predecessor’s last regnal year and then that part of his own first regnal year up until he himself lost the throne? Or does it refer to a one-year period counting from the beginning of his first regnal year proper? I suspect the latter, that is, that the expression \( bāb \text{tu}p\pi\) refers to the beginning of a regnal year, since the redactors of the AKL were essentially interested in counting full (regnal) years: what was important to them was (a) who was king at the beginning of the year from which the new reign was counted?, and (b) how many years did that king complete? However, these issues no doubt deserve further detailed consideration by scholars who are better versed than the present writer in matters of 2nd millennium chronology. At any rate, the case for \( \text{tu}p\pi\) equating to a one-year reign in the following passage seems less controversial:

\[ B \]
\[ \text{Ninurta-tukultî-Aššur (no. 84) and Mutakkil-Nusku (no. 85)} \]
\[ i\text{d}maš-tukul-ti-aš-šur dumu 'aš-šur-dan-an} \]
\[ \text{tu}p-\text{pi-šú} \] lugal-ta \( \text{dù-uš} \)

‘Ninurta-tukultî-Aššur son of Aššur-dûn ruled for one year’.
\[ 1\text{mu-tak-kil-š}\text{nusku šeš-šú i-dak a-na 'k}\text{ar-du-ni-dš} \]
\[ e-bu-uk-šú \text{tu}p-\text{pi-šú} 1\text{mu-tak-kil-š}\text{nusku 'g}\text{u.za} \]
\[ uk-ta-il kur-a e-mid \]

‘Mutakkil-Nusku, his brother, fought with him and carried him off to Karduniaš. Mutakkil-Nusku (himself) held the throne for one year (and then) died.’

In the case of passage B, I suggest that Ninurta-tukultî-Aššur and his brother Mutakkil-Nusku each reigned for a single regnal year. The translation ‘for a one-year period’ seems unproblematic in this particular context, and the assertion of Gasche et al. (1998: 53) that \( \text{tu}p\pi\) in each case refers back to the reign of Aššur-dûn has to be rejected, for the reasons explained above.

Finally, in the case of passage C the following translation is proposed:

\[ C \]
\[ \text{Ninurta-kudurrî-üşur} \]
\[ … 3 iti\text{me}i \]
\[ ina muh-\text{hi tu}p-\text{pi-šú} ina sag 'g}\text{ar.kur-ú-tu-ia šá i-na 'g}\text{u.za} \]
\[ šá ad-ia ú-ši-bu … \]

‘Three months into a (first) year, at the beginning of my governorship after I had sat upon my father’s throne, …’

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64. Oppenheim (1933: 86) concluded that \( \text{tu}p\pi\) meant a 12-month period divided between two calendar years, to be distinguished from a first regnal year (= 1 \( \text{satu} \)); however, as we have seen, the latter does not occur in AKL.

65. Grayson (1980-83: 112) translates: ‘… (MN) held the throne for “his tablet” (and then) passed away. For Ninurta-tukultî-Aššur’s enforced sojourn in ‘Babylonia’ see Llop and George 2001-2; they translate \( \text{tu}p\pi\) as ‘(während) einer kurzen unbestimmtem Zeitspanne’ (p. 16).
7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The line of reasoning adopted here in addressing the *tuppi* problem differs radically from that employed by previous scholars and avoids the element of circularity that is sometimes inherent in discussion of the issue. The difficulty in extrapolating a generally applicable meaning for *tuppi* based on close analysis of the contents of individual texts (or text types) is evident from the fact that the very same sources have given rise to such widely varying interpretations of *tuppi*. The present study attempts to break this deadlock by employing a method that has not been used before in addressing this problem. It originates in a corpus-oriented approach (cf. Baker 2011: 321) which involves examining the distribution of key features among a significant number of roughly contemporary everyday documents and attempting to account for previously unobserved patterns. In this case, the pattern to be explained is the striking absence of one-year contract terms, an absence which cannot be owed to chance, given the size of the corpus. I suggest that only the *tuppi*-clause can reasonably fill this gap, that it must therefore refer to a one-year period, and that this interpretation holds true for the other contexts in which *tuppi* occurs, including AKL.

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66. ‘Kaum waren drei Monate vergangen, am Anfang meines Statthaltertums, …’ (Cavigneaux and Ismail 1990: 347); ‘Three months had hardly passed, at the beginning of my governorship, …’ (Frame 1995: 295); ‘Three months into his (i.e., my father’s) *tuppu*’ (Gasche et al. 1998: 53).
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The meaning of the Akkadian term *uppi* has been hotly debated by Assyriologists for the greater part of a century. The present article argues that *uppi*, commonly found in temporal expressions, can only refer to a one-year period. This proposal arises out of the observation that, among a substantial corpus of Neo-Babylonian house rental contracts, there is not a single one that refers explicitly to a one-year lease period. Since rental periods of relatively short duration are otherwise rather common, this unexpected gap in the data is difficult to explain unless the expression *adi uppišu* (and variants) is understood to mean ‘for a one-year period’. The same principle applies to other categories of document which involve a finite term, such as apprenticeship contracts. The article discusses the implications of this finding for our understanding of the contents of a wide range of everyday legal and administrative documents and letters, some of which provide circumstantial evidence in support of the proposed interpretation. It also examines the historical texts in which *uppi* occurs, namely, the Assyrian King List and the 8th century inscription of Ninurta-kudurr-ušur, governor of Mari and Sūlu. It is argued that the suffix *-šu in uppišu* is redundant, a conclusion which affects the interpretation of these historical passages since the *-šu has sometimes been understood to refer to an antecedent other than the ruler in question. The implications of the proposed understanding of *uppišu* for Mesopotamian chronology are not so very great since the consensus has tended towards assigning a period of between 0 and 2 years for the *uppišu* reigns in AKL. Nevertheless, this interpretation of *uppišu* as a one-year reign/period of office clarifies some hitherto rather enigmatic passages in these historical texts.

RÉSUMÉ

Le sens du mot akkadien *uppi* a fait l’objet de vifs débats entre assyriologues depuis près d’un siècle. Le présent article propose que *uppi*, qu’on trouve communément dans des expressions temporelles, ne peut que désigner une période d’un an. Cette proposition résulte de l’observation que, dans le corpus non négligeable des contrats néo-babyloniens de location de maison, aucun texte ne se réfère explicitement à une période de location d’un an. Étant donné que des périodes de durée relativement courte sont par ailleurs assez communes, cette lacune étonnante dans les données est difficile à expliquer, sauf si l’expression *adi uppišu* (et ses variantes) est comprise comme « pour une période d’un an ». La même conclusion s’applique à d’autres catégories de documents qui impliquent une échéance, comme les contrats d’apprentissage. L’article discute les implications de cette découverte pour l’interprétation d’une large série de documents juridiques et administratifs et de lettres, certains apportant des éléments de confirmation. Il examine également les textes historiques où *uppi* apparaît, à savoir la liste royale assyrienne et l’inscription du 8ème siècle de Ninurta-kudurr-ųšur, gouverneur de Mari et du Sūlu. On considère que *-šu dans uppišu* est redondant, ce qui affecte l’interprétation de ces textes puisque *-šu a parfois été compris comme se référant à un prédécesseur antérieur au roi concerné. La conséquence pour la chronologie de la mésopotamie de l’interprétation de *uppišu* ici proposée n’est cependant pas considérable, car le consensus avait tendu à affecter une durée entre 0 et 2 ans aux règles *uppišu* de la liste royale assyrienne. Cependant, cette interprétation de *uppišu* comme une période d’un an clarifie certains passages de ces textes historiques restés énigmatique.