While examining a number of lexical texts from Nippur in the University Museum, Philadelphia, I identified a duplicate to the Emesal vocabulary. UM 29-15-134 is the left side fragment of a big tablet measuring 6.6×9.2×2.4 cm. It once covered tablets I and II. The piece is partly restored with plaster, which was afterwards painted in the color of the clay. The writing is in a clear Neo-Babylonian hand. On the obverse only a few signs are left. The reverse contains remains of two columns (with three subcolumns). In the margin lines are counted by tens.

The piece is interesting first of all because it restores some lines in the reconstructed text in MSL 4. Moreover it gives a number of new variants and additional entries. To the best of my knowledge, this is only the second fragment of Babylonian origin and the first to derive from Nippur.

This paper is meant solely to make the text known to the field. Commentary is therefore restricted to the bare minimum of philological remarks.

The tablet parallels the following passages in the text as reconstructed in MSL 4:

Obv. Tablet I, 30-34
Rev. Col. I Tablet II, 89-92
Col. II Tablet II, 152-168

* I wish to thank Prof. Dr. Åke Sjöberg, curator of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum for his kind permission to publish this text. My thanks are further due to Prof. Dr. Erle Leichty and Dr. Hermann Behrens for a number of helpful remarks. Dr. Steve Tinney collated the copy against the original, which yielded a number of improvements.

1. See M.K. Schretter, Emesal-Studien (Innsbruck 1990), p.13. The piece from Babylon (Tablet II; MSL 4, p.11: text B) is now published as VAS 24, 4 (most probably this is a Falkenstein copy, identical to the one used by Landsberger for MSL). Note that the excavation number is indicated as BE 33795 in MSL 4, but BE 37795 = VAT 17103 in VAS 24. According to Schretter only one additional piece of the Emesal Vocabulary had been identified since the publication of MSL 4 (CT 19, 35: K 13690).

2. I have little doubt that with the new piece in hand the reading of some lines in Landsberger's text could be improved. Since I have not collated the other tablets, I will not attempt to do so.
The text does not use the determinative for deities.

3' As far as I can see the writing dim-bi-er for dimmer is unattested so far.

r12' Text A in the MSL edition has e-zé-ém-guy-a. Ėm-guy-a or ēm-gā are renderings of niga (SE). No other example of a spelling with ē is cited in Schretter Emesal-Studien (p.148).

r14' Too little remains to identify the BAL positively. MSL: [āb-μni]m-μu-μš-bal. The traces in text C3 as copied in LTBA I, 92 seem to allow for [AJ]B as well as for [NI]M.

r112' BU in giš-BU has a value gazimbu gazimbi (Akkadian gaššu; see Hh VI, 84, MSL 6, p.58 with references to Diri passages). Emesal gaššimi was not attested before.

r114–5' The text differs here from the version edited in MSL, based upon a Kuyunjik tablet (text A). This text (copied in Meissner's Supplement Text 27) has mu-uš-š for both entries in the Emesal column, where the new text has mu-uš-u and mu-uš-l respectively.

The preserved signs in the Akkadian column cannot be reconciled with any known rendering of the Sumerian. In line 4' siitu is expected. The MA here is not completely certain. It seems to match reasonably well the MA signs in line r112' (Emesal and Akkadian columns). A SU is excluded. The proposed restoration yields words in some way connected with measuring: maltaktum ('true measure') and namaddu ('measuring vessel'). They are associated with each other, and with siitu, in lexical contexts. See Erimhuš V, 111–113:

NINDA u-u' ~[~] par-sik-ši
giš-ši-aš-ši-DIŠ ma-aš-ši-ti
giš-ba-ri-ga pa-an na-man-da

Both words are explained as siitu in Hg (MSL 6, p.111: 104 and 109–111).


r118' The restoration of the Akkadian is virtually certain, but differs from the MSL text which has nimm-su-[u]. Nimšu (or namšu) is well attested as a rendering of nīg-su-luh. Maššitu appears for nīg-su-luh in giš-nīg-su-luh-ša-nimbar (Hh 3, 407). For nīg-su-luh and nīg-ki-luh see further Civil OrnS 56 (1987) p.236ff.

r112' The sign read [u-] by Landsberger in Emesal II, 163 may turn out to be...
an Ė[Š- (see Landsberger's copy in the notes to this line).
The equivalence zé-ib for BU is well attested (see Schretter Emesal-Stu-
dien, p.271). At least in this context the reading for BU is clearly gid. The
Sumerian — Akkadian equivalence is known from Hh 22, section 11: 17'.

rII13' Almost certainly nothing is missing before the ḠM. The line cannot be
reconciled with text B (VAS 24, 4: r5'), which has clearly eb-lum for the
Akkadian. The entry parallels Nabnitu VII (= E), 125 : ṣg = epēšu
EME.SAL. See also, in the same list, nīg = epīštum (VII 139) and nīg =
ipēšu ša ari (VII 149).

rII14' This equivalence is otherwise unknown to me. Qappatum is a kind of
basket, Sumerian gi-gam-ma.

rII16' The traces preserved confirm the reading in MSL 4.

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P. Steinkeller has presented in *BiOr* 52 5/6 (1995) his review of *ZATU*. This deep analysis, especially concerning the procedure of identifying signs, undoubtedly offers very valuable and extensive material over which to ponder, and to make suitable corrections of several *ZATU* entries.

I agree to Steinkeller’s opinion that M.W. Green analysed the signs too mechanically, and often ignored the pictorial content of the signs. Using lexical evidence as the basis of signs identification, Green insufficiently analysed the contexts of archaic economic texts. Moreover, she omitted completely the iconographic presentations in glyptic and plastic arts, which often contain the pictures of particular archaic signs in specific scenes - their analysis sometimes can facilitate a better understanding of those signs.

One can observe in *ZATU* an inconsistent mode of sign treatment. Sometimes for secondary graphic elements of a sign, the sign is distinguished as a separate logogram from the group of similar ones. In other cases evidently different signs are treated as only graphic variants of the same, one pictograph.

My general remarks given above will be illustrated with examples offered below, which can perhaps complete Steinkeller’s review in *BiOr* 52 5/6 (1995).

I stress that my remarks concern only signs pertaining my special evaluation in my studies concerning some chosen problems of archaic texts interpretation, the whole material included in *ZATU* is not analysed by me.

I inform also that I analyse the shapes and the sequence of individual signs on the tablets in their primary (“not rotated”) position.

I. Reed symbols

Among the archaic pictographs one can distinguish the group of seven signs representing high poles tapering upwards, and topped with various elements in the shape of a ring, semi-ring, volute, triangle or horizontal cross-bars. Several monuments show that in reality poles were made of high reed stalks bound together - we can see traces of the bundles and the bonds in the most archaic pictographs. The poles are
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