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## Three administrative texts from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur in an anonymous collection in Poland

### Trzy teksty administracyjne z czasów III dynastii z Ur z anonimowej kolekcji w Polsce

**Streszczenie:** Artykuł jest pełną edycją (fotografia, autografia, transliteracja, przekład, komentarz) trzech dotychczas niepublikowanych nowosumeryjskich dokumentów administracyjnych, znajdujących się w jednej z anonimowych kolekcji w Polsce. Tabliczki pochodzą z dwóch archiwów prowincjonalnych królestwa III dynastii z Ur – Puzriš-Dagan oraz Girsu-Lagaš, a ich treść jest typowa dla tej grupy tekstów klinowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Ur III, nowosumeryjskie dokumenty administracyjne, teksty klinowe, Girsu-Lagaš, Puzriš-Dagan, racje żywnościowe, tkaniny, żołnierze

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**Abstract:** The article is a full edition (photography, autography, transliteration, translation and commentary) of three previously unpublished Neo-Sumerian administrative documents, held in one of the anonymous collections in Poland. The tablets come from two provincial archives of the kingdom of the Third Dynasty of Ur, Puzriš-Dagan and Girsu-Lagaš, and their content is typical of this group of cuneiform texts.

**Keywords:** Ur III, Neo-Sumerian administrative documents, cuneiform texts, Girsu-Lagaš, Puzriš-Dagan, rations of food, garments, soldiers

The three Neo-Sumerian texts published here come from an anonymous collection in Poland. Their antiquarian origin is unclear, but they could have been part of a larger collection considering the reference numbers (216, 219), written in a very similar way, appearing on two of them. The condition of the tablets today varies in terms of their completeness and the legibility of the inscriptions.

### Text 1

Content: Daily rations of food, surely bread (**ninda**)<sup>1</sup> for different workers.

Date: Ur III<sup>2</sup>

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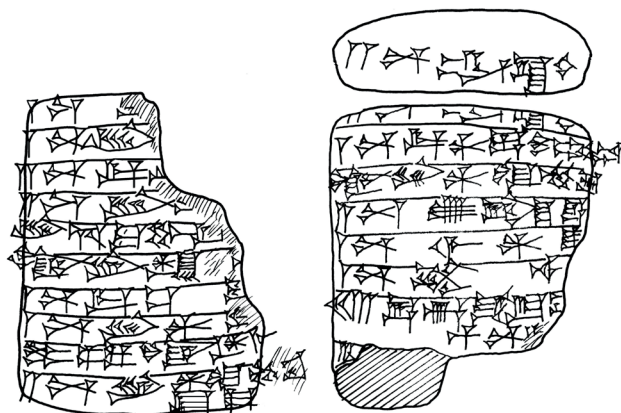
<sup>1</sup> The name of the distributed product, written most probably in the first line, must have been lost when the beginning of the text was damaged. In theory, a product that used to be distributed in measured amounts of 1–2 litres could have been a daily ration of bread (**ninda**) or, less frequently, an alternative product, such as barley grain (**še**) or flour (**zi**). Amounts of 1–2 **sila** may also sporadically appear with other food products, such as, for instance, beer (**kaš**), fats (**i**), or even dates (**zú-lum**), but in such cases the context is completely different and the texts are administrative documents of a different type. The structure of this text and its content show that it belonged to a group of about a dozen similar documents from Girsu-Lagaš recording daily rations of bread (**ninda**) dispensed to various groups of workers; see P. Mander, *An Archive of Kennelmen and Other Workers in Ur III Lagash*, “Supplemento n. 80 agli Annali”, vol. 54, fasc. 3, Napoli 1994. See also below, note 8.

<sup>2</sup> The date was probably inscribed on the missing upper part of the tablet (beginning of the text on the obverse and its end on the reverse). However, the content and the character of the inscription identify it as an administrative document from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur.

Provenience: Girsu-Lagaš<sup>3</sup>

Dimensions: 4.0 × 3.3 × 1.8 cm

Remarks: The tablet is heavily damaged; about 1/3 of the upper part is missing. The text is written in very clear and fine signs. A reference number, “216”, in black ink appears on the bottom edge of the tablet.



Obverse

[...]⁴

1'. 1 sìla [...]

2'. 1 sìla lú-[...] [...]⁵

3'. 2 sìla ur-A[N]²-[...] [...]²

4'. 2 sìla lú-[...] [...]²

5'. lú hu-bu<sub>bu</sub> ḡ[á²-nun²]⁶ [...]²

<sup>3</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Unknown number of damaged lines.

<sup>5</sup> The endings of lines from 2' to 8' are damaged therefore, the text may have ended with a personal name (PN), which is the most likely case, but it cannot be ruled out that it was some other annotation followed by a personal name to identify a particular worker. Hence, the additional [...]² in the transliteration of each line.

<sup>6</sup> The well-preserved beginning of the first sign suggests that it is certainly not the *pluralis* sign **ME** we would most expect to appear in this place. The more probable reading of this sign is **ĜÁ**, and the damaged fragment of the text should thus be completed with

- 6'. ĝir lú-<sup>d</sup>EN.[ZU]<sup>7</sup> [...]?<sup>2</sup>  
 7'. 1 sìla ur-<sup>ĝi</sup>gi[gi] [...]?<sup>2</sup>  
 8'. 1 sìla lú-dingir-r[a]<sup>2</sup> [...]?  
 9'. dumu sipa <sup>an<sup>se</sup></sup>kúnga(BAR.AN)-me  
 10'. 2 sìla lú-<sup>d</sup>nin-ĝir-<sup>[su]</sup> / é udu

Reverse

- 11'. 2 sìla al-la érin  
 12'. 1 sìla ur-<sup>d</sup>lamma dumu gu<sub>4</sub>-lah<sub>6</sub>(DU)  
 13'. ĝir lú-<sup>d</sup>nin-MU X  
 14'. 2 sìla ú-šim-e  
 15'. 1 sìla IGI.AN.TÚG<sup>2</sup> [...]?  
 16'. 2 sìla hé-ti [...]?  
 17'. 23 UN-íl-ĝ[á]<sup>2</sup> / ½ sìla-<sup>[t]</sup>[a]  
 18'. nin[da<sup>8</sup>-bi] [...]  
 [...] <sup>9</sup>

## Translation

[...]

<sup>1</sup>1 litre (of bread for) [PN], <sup>2</sup>1 litre (for) Lu- [...], <sup>3</sup>2 litres (for) Ur- [...],  
<sup>4</sup>2 litres (for) Lu- [...]; <sup>5</sup>the **hubu**-workers (of the storehouse), <sup>6</sup>under the  
 responsibility of Lu-Suen. <sup>7</sup>1 litre (for) Ur-Gigir, <sup>8</sup>1 litre (for) Lu-dingir;  
<sup>9</sup>the sons of the herdsman of the mules. <sup>10</sup>2 litres (for) Lu-Ningirsu of

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the phrase **ĝ[á-nun]**<sup>2</sup>, with possible extension to **ĝá-nun-da**, **ĝá-nun-ka** or **ĝá-nun gub-ba**,  
 (the last being the least likely because of the length of the gap in the record), and **ĝá-nun  
 ĝeš-ka gub-ba**, compare similar records in identical contexts from this group of texts, for  
 instance, CBT 2, BM 18529; MVN 17 133: 4; SAT 1, 449, and P. Mander, op. cit. (many  
 examples).

<sup>7</sup> A reconstruction of this hypothetical theophoric name is based on several similar  
 documents from the above-mentioned group (HSS 4, 53; MVN 2, 232; PPAC 5, 76;  
 SAT 1, 449), in which Lu-Suen also played the role of an agent responsible for part of the  
 supplies (**ĝir**).

<sup>8</sup> The most probable sign in this position is **NÍĜ**, which should be interpreted as  
**ninda** – “bread”, the expected extension being **ninda-bi**, which would make this a list of  
 distributed **ninda** rations.

<sup>9</sup> Several lines at the end completely obliterated.

the sheepfold, <sup>R.11'</sup>2 litres (for) Alla, the conscript-worker, <sup>12'</sup>1 litre (for) Ur-Lamma, the son of the ox driver; <sup>13'</sup>under the responsibility of Lu-Ningirsu. <sup>10</sup> <sup>14'</sup>2 litres (for) Ušime, <sup>15'</sup>1 litre (for) IGI.AN.TÚG?, <sup>16'</sup>2 litres (for) Heti, <sup>17'</sup>23 workers as porters at ½ litre each, <sup>18'</sup>bre[ad for them] [...]  
[...]

### Commentary

**L. 5'.** The combination of the phrase **hu-bu<sub>7</sub><sup>bu</sup>**, recorded as **HU.KU.BU** and transliterated earlier as **mušen-dab<sub>5</sub>-bu/mušen-díb-bu/hu-dab<sub>5</sub>-bu**, and the word **lú**, which it stands after, describes one of the categories of workers, **lú hu-bu<sub>7</sub><sup>bu</sup>**. This phrase is found very often and, as a matter of fact almost exclusively in Girsu-Lagaš texts.<sup>11</sup> The meaning of **lú hu-bu<sub>7</sub><sup>bu</sup>** is not entirely clear. Even if the previously accepted geographical meaning of the term is rejected,<sup>12</sup> any determination going beyond a professional designation of a special group of labourers<sup>13</sup> is purely hypothetical. Bird-catchers have been suggested<sup>14</sup> as a group similar to fowlers called (**lú**) **usanda**, (**lú**) **MUŠEN(usan<sub>5</sub>)-dù**, Akkadian *ušandû*, *usaddû*, who were bird-catchers and presumably also bird-breeders, and are mentioned with much greater frequency in archives from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> It is also possible that the text referred to two workers, both called Lu-Ningirsu (a popular name in Girsu-Lagaš), one of whom received a food ration and the other was responsible for this part of the delivery. The annotation “from the sheepfold” (**é udu**) was added to one of these individuals in an apparent effort to distinguish between them.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. P. Mander, op. cit., pp. 70–73. Of the 170 known occurrences of the phrase **lú hu-bu<sub>7</sub><sup>bu</sup>**, in Neo-Sumerian texts, only one is from Umma and the rest come from Girsu-Lagaš.

<sup>12</sup> D. O. Edzard, G. Farber, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur, Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes*, Bd. 2, Wiesbaden 1974, p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. B. Lafont, *Documents administratifs sumériens provenant du site de Tello et conservés au Musée du Louvre*, “Mémoire”, vol. 61: *Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations*, Paris 1985 (DAS), p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. P. Mander, op. cit., pp. 70–71.

<sup>15</sup> On this term in the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur, see e.g. M. Sigrist, *Drehem*, Bethesda 1992, pp. 216, 370; H. Waetzoldt, *Peitsche* § 2, in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Bd. 10, Berlin 2003–2005, p. 383; W. Sallaberger, *Leipzig-Münchner Sumerischen Zettelkasten*, [s.l.] 2006, pp. 460–461; and for later periods, see e.g. B. Jankowič, *Vogelzucht, -fang*, in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen*

**L. 9’.** The term <sup>ansē</sup>kúnga (**BAR.AN**), also transliterated as **ansē-kúnga** (**BAR.AN**), with alternant graphic versions **ansē ŠÚ.AN**, **ansē ŠÚ.MUL** – that is, **Akkadian** *parû*, is variously interpreted. This is undoubtedly a kind of equid, probably a crossbreed between an ass and a wild ass (onager), or even a horse, hence the proposed term “mule”.<sup>16</sup>

**L. 10’.** The phrase **UN-íl/íla** is transliterated also as **ùĝ-ÍL**, **UN-ga<sub>6</sub>** or **ùĝ-ga<sub>6</sub>**, **ùĝ-ĝaĝ<sub>x</sub>**. The extension of the core **ÍL = ga<sub>6</sub>(ĝ)** to the form **ÍL-ĝá** is found in the phrases, e.g., **gi ÍL-ĝá** or **zì ÍL-ĝá**.<sup>17</sup> The full phrase **ùĝ-ÍL-ĝá** is attested in, e.g., AnOr 1, 85: II 32.

## Text 2

Contents: Handing over woven and weighed garments of different types  
 Provenience: Girsu-Lagaš  
 Date: AS.7.I  
 Dimensions: 3.8 × 3.0 × 1.5 cm  
 Remarks: The text apparently records a typical delivery from a production workshop. The front surface of the tablet is severely damaged in the bottom left corner. The lines of the text on the obverse stretch onto the undamaged side edge of the tablet.

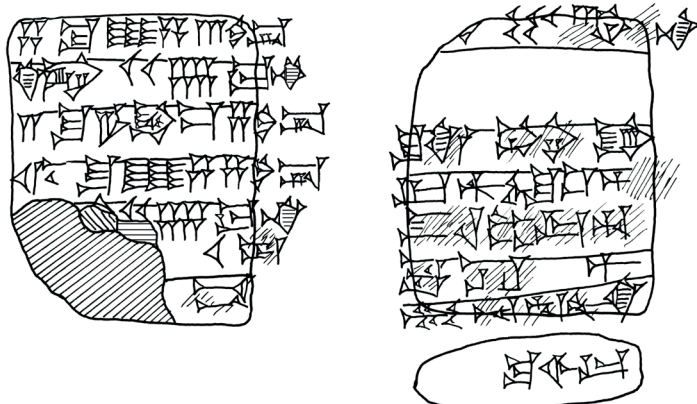
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*Archäologie*, Bd. 14, Berlin 2014–2016, pp. 587–591 (especially pp. 590–591, with references); CAD, U-W, Chicago 2010, pp. 274–275.

<sup>16</sup> On the meaning of the term <sup>ansē</sup>kúnga (**BAR.AN**) in Ur III times, see e.g. J. Zarins, *The domesticated equidae of third millennium B.C. Mesopotamia*, “Journal of Cuneiform Studies” 1978, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 11–15 (hybrid – that is, mule); K. Maekawa, *The ass and the onager in Sumer in the late third millennium B.C.*, “Acta Sumerologica” 1979, vol. 1, pp. 35–62; idem, *The agricultural texts of Ur III Lagash of the British Museum (VII)*, “Acta Sumerologica” 1991, vol. 13, pp. 206–209 (identification with the Persian onager); W. Heimpel, *Plow animal inspection records from Ur III Girsu and Umma*, “Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture” 1995, vol. 8, pp. 71–171 (identification with a mule), especially pp. 89–91 (discussion with K. Maekawa regarding the tentative identification with the Persian for onager); M. Stępień, *Animal husbandry in the ancient Near East: A prosopographic study of third-millennium Umma*, Bethesda 1996, pp. 29–31 (identification with a mule).

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. W. Sallaberger, op. cit., p. 186; D. Foxvog, *Elementary Sumerian glossary* (after M. Civil, 1967), revised June 2011, pp. 17, 28 and in texts, e.g., SAT 2, 818: 3; SAT 3, 1305: 2, r. 3; SAT 3, 1452: 4.

The left edge of the tablet bears the reference number “219” written in black ink.



Obverse<sup>18</sup>

1. 4 tóg guz-za 3-kam -[ús]
2. ki-lá<sup>219</sup>-bi 28 ma-na
3. 2 tóg níġ-lám 4-kam-ús
4. 10-lá-1 tóg guz-za 4-kam-ús
5. [ki-lá-bi] [20]+[20]+8 ma-na / 10 [gín]
6. [...] DU

Reverse

7. [ki<sup>2</sup>-lá<sup>2</sup>-bi<sup>2</sup>] 52 5/6 [ma]-[na]
- blank line*
8. tóg [ki]-lá tag-ga
  9. ur-<sup>d</sup>nin-ġiš-z[i]/-da dumu ur-<sup>d</sup>[ba]-[ba<sub>6</sub>]<sup>2</sup>
  10. [iti] [gána]-maš
  11. mu hu-hu-nu-[ri]<sup>ki</sup> / ba-hul<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In all of the lines on the obverse, records run onto the undamaged side edge of the tablet.

<sup>19</sup> The sign **LÁ** is practically invisible. The cuneiform characters making up this sign probably overlapped, merging with the beginning of the sign **BI** and with the line that separated the rows of text.

<sup>20</sup> The last word of the date (**ba-hul**) is inscribed on the bottom edge of the tablet.

## Translation

<sup>1</sup>4 garments guz-za 3. class, <sup>2</sup>their weight 28 minas; <sup>3</sup>2 garments níĝ-lám 4. class, <sup>4</sup>9 garments guz-za 4. class, <sup>5</sup>[their weight] [20+]28 minas, 10 shekels; <sup>6</sup>[...] ordinary<sup>2</sup>, <sup>R.7</sup>[their weight]<sup>2</sup> 52[+2<sup>3</sup>] <sup>5</sup>/<sub>6</sub> minas. <sup>8</sup>Woven and weighed garments, <sup>9</sup>(from) Ur-Ningišzida, son of Ur-Baba<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>12</sup>Month I.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Year: Huhunuri <sup>14</sup>was destroyed.<sup>22</sup>

## Commentary

**L. 5.** Considering the average weight of the two types of weighed garments, the only possible number to complete the missing quantity is 20. The weight of particular kinds and classes of garments is well known for the Ur III period.<sup>23</sup> The **túg níĝ-lám** garments of different classes were not much different from one another by weight. Whatever their class, they usually weighed from 1.5 to 2.2 minas, while the average for **túg níĝ-lám 4-kam-**

<sup>21</sup> **Iti gána-maš** is the first month in the local calendar of the province Girsu-Lagaš, indicating the provenance of the text.

<sup>22</sup> An abridged version of the name of the 7<sup>th</sup> year in the reign of king Amar-Suen, the full version of which was: **mu<sup>d</sup>amar-<sup>d</sup>suen lugal-e bí-tum-ra-bí-um<sup>ki</sup> ì-ab-ru<sup>ki</sup> ma-da ma-da-bi ù hu-úh-nu-ri<sup>ki</sup> mu-hul** – “Year: Amar-Suen, the king, destroyed Bitum-rabium, Jabru, their territories and Huhunuri”.

<sup>23</sup> On textile production in the times of the Third Dynasty of Ur, the fabrics and categories of garments, and the actual production process, see e.g. H. Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen zur neosumerischen Textilindustrie*, “Studi economici e tecnologici”, vol. 1, Roma 1972; idem, *Kleidung A. Philologisch*, in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Bd. 6, Berlin 1980–1983, pp. 18–31; F. Pomponio, *New texts regarding the Neo-Sumerian textiles*, in: *Textile terminologies in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean from the third to the first millennia BC*, eds. C. Michel, M.-L. Nosch, Oxford 2010, pp. 186–200; H. Waetzoldt, *The colours and variety of fabrics from Mesopotamia during Ur III period (2050 BC)*, in: ibidem, pp. 201–209; idem, *Textilien A. Philologisch*, in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Bd. 13, Berlin 2011, pp. 617–624; R. Firth, M.-L. Nosch, *Spinning and weaving wool in Ur III administrative texts*, “Journal of Cuneiform Studies” 2012, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 65–82; R. Firth, *Considering the finishing of textiles based on Neo-Sumerian inscriptions from Girsu*, in: *Textile production and consumption in the ancient Near East: Archaeology, epigraphy, iconography*, eds. M.-L. Nosh, H. Koefoed, E. Andersson Strand, Oxford 2013, pp. 140–160.



**ús** was about 1.7 mina.<sup>24</sup> Garments **túg guz-za**, which were much heavier, showed a greater weight variation. The **túg guz-za 4-kam-ús** garments referred to in our text were usually just 4.7–5.3 minas by weight, which gives an average of about 5 minas a piece.<sup>25</sup> In this way, the average weight of 2 **túg níĝ-lám** garments, class 4 (ca. 1.7 mina) and 9 **túg guz-za**, class 4 (ca. 5 minas) produces a value slightly larger than 48 minas. Any other attempt to complete the missing number by a “ten” of minas is out of the question. The numeral 40 is written in a manner presumably typical of the situation – that is, two signs meaning 10 at the top (partly damaged) and another two identical signs below them (entirely obliterated).

An identical record with the same number of 9 **túg guz-za 4-kam-ús** garments weighing 48 minas and 15 shekels is found in, e.g., AAICAB 1/2, pl. 83, 1933-389d, 3–4. There, the numeral 40 is written down in a way the typical of Sumerian bookkeeping – that is, in two rows with two signs each, each sign signifying 10.

**L. 6–7.** The interpretation and transliteration of the almost completely destroyed line 6 is related to the interpretation of the next one, which is the first line on the reverse. Above all, the amount of wool recorded in line 7 (52% minas) cannot represent the total weight of all the garments mentioned in the text (because that is at least 56 minas and 10 shekels and more likely

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<sup>24</sup> On the weight of **túg níĝ-lám** textiles, see e.g. H. Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen...*, p. 159, notes 50–51; idem, *The colours...*, pp. 205–206; R. Firth, M.-L. Nosch, op. cit., pp. 74–76 (especially table 5 on p. 76). Waetzoldt (*Untersuchungen...*) assumed an average weight of 2.2 minas for **túg níĝ-lám** (first and second class), in 2010 revising these data respectively to the range of 1.3–2.6 minas (an average of 1.95 mina) based on a considerably larger number of examples. According to the research by Firth and Nosh, op. cit., the weight of **túg níĝ-lám 4-kam-ús** was in the range of 1.3–2.3 minas (an average of 1.7 minas).

<sup>25</sup> On the weight of **túg guz-za** textiles (including **túg guz-za 4-kam-ús**), see e.g. H. Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen...*, pp. 144–148; idem, *The colours...*, pp. 204–205; R. Firth, M.-L. Nosch, op. cit., pp. 70–74 (especially table 3 on p. 73). Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen...*, established the weight of **túg guz-za 4-kam-ús**, depending on their specific size, in the range of 5–8 minas (an average of roughly 6 minas); in 2010, based on a definitely larger sample, he revised these data to 3.4–6.7 minas (an average of roughly 5 minas). According to Firth and Nosh, op. cit., the weight of **túg guz-za 4-kam-ús** fitted in the range of 3.3–7.4 minas (an average of 5 minas).

76 minas and 10 shekels), making it impossible to complete the beginning of line 7 with the phrase **šu-niĝin** or **šu-niĝin**. Therefore, lines 6–7 should be considered as a whole, the number and type of garments being given in line 6 and their weight in line 7. Consequently, the sign **DU** in line 6 should be interpreted as **du/gin**, which represents garments of class five (“ordinary”), e.g. **túg guz-za du**, **túg mug du**, **túg uš-bar du** or another. The damaged beginning of line 7 should include the phrase **ki-lá-bi**; the two lower wedge-shaped endings of the **BI** sign preceding the number 50 can be discerned. This interpretation is presented in the reconstructed translation as the most probable one. The other interpretation considers lines 6–7 in separation with line 6 containing the phrase [**mu**]-**DU**, transliterated as **mu-DU**, **mu-TÚM**, **mu-tù**, **mu-ku<sub>x</sub>** – that is, “delivery”, which fits the context here very well. In this case, however, line 7 would have had to be devoted to a completely separate accounting item, some kind of wool (**siki**), for example, which was not part of the **mu-DU** “delivery” and was therefore inscribed below the phrase. It would have had to be wool that had not been used for any of the garments mentioned above. Nonetheless, this form of recording would have been quite unusual, especially in view of the phrase summarising the contents at the end – that is, **túg ki-lá tag-ga**.

**L. 9.** The line, inscribed in two rows, is damaged at its end, hence the somewhat hypothetical reading of the name of the father of Ur-Ningišzida. The **UR** sign at the beginning, which is clear, and the following damaged sign **AN** both suggest a reading of the heavily damaged latter part of the name and, as a result, its hypothetical reconstruction as **Ur-<sup>d</sup>Ba-ba<sub>c</sub>**. But the **BA** sign is hardly visible and virtually no trace remains of the **Ú (ba<sub>c</sub>)** sign. The name of Ur-Ningišzida is referred to repeatedly in the Girsu-Lagaš texts on trading garments (which often mention their weight). He is described as the son of Guzani<sup>26</sup> and only sporadically as the son of Maanba,<sup>27</sup> but much more often as the son of Ur-Baba.<sup>28</sup> The texts are all virtually from

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. DAS 320: R 2 (AS.7.XII); NYPL 237: II 13' (ŠS.2.XII); PPAC 5, 1754: 3–4 (ŠS.4.VI); Fs. Hilprecht 138, 1: 12; PPAC 5, 301: R I 16; UNT 90: 1'.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Nisaba 33, 172: R 2.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. BPOA 1, 113: 3–4 (AS.7.I); MVN 22, 207: 8 (AS.8.VIII); PPAC 5, 388:

the same period, hence we are dealing with three different labourers of the same name, Ur-Ningišzida, working in the textile industry in Girsu. Two of them are even mentioned together in two documents (PRAC 5, 301 and TCTI 1, 619 = UNT 88). While the surviving remains of the beginning of the name of the father of Ur-Ningišzida cannot be reconstructed as Guzani, the notation of the other two names **Ma-an-ba** and **Ur-<sup>d</sup>Ba-ba<sub>6</sub>**, can be very similar sometimes: **MA.AN.BA** and **UR.AN.BA.[Ú]**. Since the last sign, **Ú (ba<sub>6</sub>)**, is practically invisible and the **MA** and **UR** signs are graphically very similar, distinguishing between the two is solely a matter of interpretation. Some outlines of a damaged sign (in this case **Ú**), rather than a blank space, can be discerned at the end of the line. Hence the reconstruction proposed above: Ur-Ningišzida, son of Ur-Baba, who could have been, e.g., a “supervisor of female millers” (**ugula kíkken**).<sup>29</sup> Like the “female weavers” (**géme uš-bar**), female millers (**géme kíkken**) were occupied with weaving in the Ur III period, although they usually produced textiles of secondary quality.<sup>30</sup>

### Text 3

Contents: Delivery of a dozen or so sheep and goats as a **šu-gíd** delivery to the kitchen (**é muhaldim**) in behalf of the soldiers (**mu gár-du-e-ne-šè**)

Provenience: Puzriš-Dagan (Drehem)

Date: AS.8.IV.23

Dimensions: 3.5 × 3.0 × 1.5 cm

Remarks: The text is one of a series of several documents from Drehem, dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> year and the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the

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3 (ŠS.1.VII); Nisaba 18, 22: R 1 (ŠS.3.II); Nisaba 18, 25: R 3 (ŠS.3.III); ITT 2, 619: I 8 (ŠS.4); Nisaba 18, 33: 3 (ŠS.9.II); PPAC 5, 301: R I 18; PPAC 5, 626: R 4.

<sup>29</sup> See his full official title in, e.g., City Life 2, 101–102: IV 9.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. H. Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen...*, pp. 97–98 (in Girsu-Lagaš), p. 100 (in Umma), pp. 105–106 (in Ur); M. Stępień, *Das Rechnungsberichtsweisen in den neuserischen Weberwerkstätten in Lichte der Wirtschaftsdokumente aus Umma*, “Rocznik Orientalistyczny” 1990, vol. 47, fasc. 1, p. 107; L. Milano, *Mühle A. I*, in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Bd. 8, Berlin 1993, pp. 396–397.

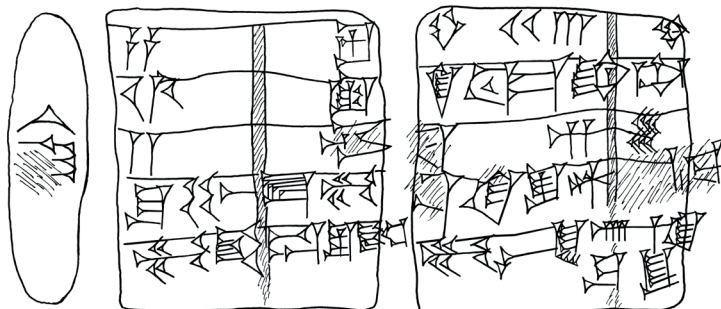
reign of Amar-Suen (AS.8.I–AS.9.III),<sup>31</sup> recording animals (usually sheep and goats) delivered as **šu-gíd é muhaldim mu gâr-du-e-ne-šè**.<sup>32</sup> These documents should in all probability be associated with a wide scale military operation in the 6<sup>th</sup> or the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Amar-Suen, directed against some hostile peoples living to the east, in the mountainous region of Elam.<sup>33</sup> The surface of the tablet is covered with fine clay dust, filling in some of the engraved signs and preventing the reading of the legend of the seal, which was impressed multiple times. Apart from the horizontal lines separating the rows of the text in the document, the tablet also bears a thick line impressed vertically across the centre of

<sup>31</sup> Only one document comes from the latter half of the year: AS.7 – MVN 15, 244 (AS.7.VIII.20).

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. CDLJ 2007/1 §3.21 (AS.8); NYPL 229 (AS.8.I.18); ASJ 4, 141 6 (AS.8.I.22); BIN 3, 403 (AS.8.II.26); TCUR 22 (AS.8.II.29); ASJ 19, 206 21 (AS.8.III.14); Hermitage 3, 341 (AS.8.III.25); AUCT 3, 349 (AS.8.III.27); Princeton 1, 68 (AS.8.III.28); OIP 121, 416 (AS.8.IV.4); OIP 121, 417 (AS.8.IV.10); PDT 2, 951 (AS.8.IV.15); PDT 2, 1145 (AS.8.IV.26); OIP 121, 418 (AS.8.V.6); SANTAG 7, 114 (AS.8.V.9); AUCT 3, 295 (AS.8.V.14); Princeton 2, 122 (AS.8.V.25); SAT 2, 1116 (AS.8.V.27) aggregated list of multiple supplies for the kitchen; MVN 15, 204 (AS.8.V.28); Princeton 2, 119 (AS.8.VI.10); Ontario 1, 81 (AS.8.VI.17); CTNMC 5 (AS.8.VI.27); YOS 18, 15 (AS.8.VII.7); Hirose 286 (AS.8.VII.12); NYPL 250 (AS.8.VII.18); BPOA 6, 631 (AS.8.VII.22); PDT 1, 489 (AS.8.VIII.7); SACT 1, 163 (AS.8.VIII.13); OIP 121, 419 (AS.8.VIII.15); OIP 121, 420 (AS.8.VIII.20); OIP 121, 421 (AS.8.VIII.22); PDT 2, 1147 (AS.8.X.13) aggregated list of multiple supplies; AAICAB 1/2, pl. 120, 1967–1495 (AS.8.XI.28); OIP 121, 557 (AS.8.XII.4); TCND 256 (AS.9.I.17); Princeton 1, 63 (AS.9.I.20); Hermitage 3, 350 (AS.9.I.24); Princeton 1, 65 (AS.9.II.18); OIP 121, 422 (AS.9.II.29); Ontario 1, 83 (AS.9.III.23); Ontario 1, 84 (AS.9.III.29).

<sup>33</sup> These events designated the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the king's reign; see above, note 22. M. Hilgert (OIP 121/2, p. 21) was the first to draw attention to the extremely limited time span of the use of the term **gâr-du** in the context of delivery of supplies of sheep for consumption to the kitchens – just two years of the reign of Amar-Suen (AS.6.XII.24–AS.9.III.29), see also L. B. Allred, “Provisioning the aga3-us2 in the Ur III Period” (unpubl. paper), 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Seattle March 17<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> 2006, p. 3. This time limit clearly indicates a connection between these deliveries and the military expedition mentioned in the designation of year AS.7.

its front side as a result of the multiple rolling of the cylinder seal. Two identical vertical lines are also found on the reverse.



Obverse

1. 4 udu
2. 10-lá-1 u<sub>8</sub>
3. 2 ud<sub>5</sub>
4. šu-gíd é muhaldim (MU)
5. mu gâr-du-e-ne-<sup>[šè]</sup>

Reverse

6. u<sub>4</sub> 23-kam
7. ki du<sub>11</sub>-ga-ta
8. <sup>[ba]</sup>-<sup>[zi]</sup>
9. <sup>[iti]</sup> ki-siki <sup>d</sup>[nin]-<sup>[a]</sup>-<sup>[zu]</sup>
10. mu en eridu<sup>ki</sup> / ba-huĝ

Left Edge

11. <sup>[15]</sup>

Seal almost totally illegible (see remarks in the commentary below).

### Translation

<sup>1</sup>4 sheeps, <sup>2</sup>9 ewes, <sup>3</sup>2 female goats, <sup>4</sup>the šu-gíd delivery (for) the kitchen,<sup>34</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>for (destined for) the soldiers, <sup>6</sup>on the 23 day, <sup>8</sup>issued <sup>7</sup>from Duga.

<sup>34</sup> M. Sigrist (op. cit., p. 68, 302) first pointed out the close relation between šu-gíd de-

<sup>9</sup>Month IV.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Year: **En**-priestess of Eridu was installed.<sup>36</sup>

## Commentary

**L. 5.** Sumerian **gàr-du** (perhaps Akkadian *gardu*, *qardu*)<sup>37</sup> “soldier”, less frequently translated as “royal bodyguard, (royal) guardsman”. The term is confirmed almost exclusively for the Ur III period and is typical of documents from the Drehem archives. On the **gàr-du** soldiers and the specific and narrow time span for the use of the term in the Ur III period in the archives from Puzriš-Dagan, see the works of, e.g., M. Hilgert,<sup>38</sup> B. Lafont,<sup>39</sup> and L. B. Allred.<sup>40</sup> D. Patterson’s dissertation was devoted

liveries in phrases like **šu-gíd é muhaldim** with animals fattened specially for consumption by soldiers, this including **gàr-du**; see also M. Hilgert, C. D. Reichel, *Cuneiform texts from the Ur III period in the Oriental Institute*, vol. 2: *Drehem administrative documents from the reign of Amar-Suena*, “Oriental Institute Publications”, vol. 121, Chicago 2003, p. 121; L. B. Allred, “Cooks and kitchens: Centralized food production in late third millennium Mesopotamia”, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore 2006, pp. 55–56.

<sup>35</sup> **Iti ki-siki 4Nin-a-zu** is the fourth month in the local calendar of the Girsu-Lagaš province, confirming the provenience of this text.

<sup>36</sup> An abridged version of the name of the 8<sup>th</sup> year in the reign of king Amar-Suen, the full version of which was **mu en-nun-gal-an-na / en-nun-e-4amar-4EN.ZU-ki-aĝ en eridu<sup>ki</sup> ba-huĝ** “Year: En-nun-gal-anna / En-nune-kiaĝ-Amar-Suen as the **En**-priestess of Eridu was installed”; see the first full reconstruction of this year name and the name of the **En**-priestess (**en**) by N. Schneider, *Die Zeitbestimmungen der Wirtschaftsurlkunden von Ur III*, “Analecta Orientalia”, vol. 13, Roma 1936, p. 29, 8Ba.

<sup>37</sup> In reference to the Sumerian **gàr-du**, one can cite two arguably related Akkadian terms: *gardu* and *qardu*. The former (CAD G, 50) designated a “military class or profession” and in Late Babylonian it was derived, like *gardupatu*, from Old Persian. The latter (CAD Q, 129–131), the adjective (fem. *qarittu*, *qarattu*) “valiant, heroic”, referred to the gods, kings and soldiers. As an apposition, it also took on a nominative meaning regardless of the separate abstractum form: *qardutu* – “heroism, valor” (CAD Q, 131). For an extensive discussion of possible relations between the Sumerian **gàr-du** and different Akkadian terms derived from the QRD core, see D. Patterson, “Elements of the Neo-Sumerian military”, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 2018, pp. 345–347.

<sup>38</sup> M. Hilgert, C. D. Reichel, op. cit., pp. 21–24.

<sup>39</sup> B. Lafont, *The army of the kings of Ur: The textual evidence*, “Cuneiform Digital Library Journal” 2009, vol. 5, p. 17, note 94.

<sup>40</sup> L. B. Allred, “Provisioning...”, pp. 1–9.

to the **gàr-du** formation in the Ur III period.<sup>41</sup> The restricted time span for the term **gàr-du** used in reference to an elite unit, like a guard or military police (see above, note 33) was observed already in the past, but it was linked to the presumably not accidental erasure from records from Puzriš-Dagan from the same period of another, typical designation, **àga-ús**, referring most probably to the same elite formation. Lafont<sup>42</sup> assumed that **gàr-du** was a new term that replaced **àga-ús** for a specific period of time. While it does not necessarily mean that the royal guard was somehow reorganised, it does remain in relation to the political and military events of the year AS.7. Hilgerd considered the **gàr-du** a kind of “palace guard” of Amar-Suen, who may have been, at least in part, recruited from among the foreigners from Huhnuri.<sup>43</sup> Allred went even further, underscoring the evident ties between the **gàr-du** formation and the person of king Amar-Suen (phrases: **gàr-du** <sup>d</sup>amar-<sup>d</sup>suen) and his military activity in the year AS.7, the possibility of the **gàr-du** being a kind of “royal guard” composed of foreign soldiers originating from the Huhnurri territory.<sup>44</sup> He did not exclude the possibility that the establishment of this formation was the effect of internal strife between Amar-Suen and his brother Šu-Suen.<sup>45</sup> Special formations composed of foreigners, used in the ancient Near East, including by rulers of the Ur III period (in their case the foreigners were Amorites), to counter the devolutionary trends among the native population of Sumer and Akkad, were noted already a long time ago by I. J. Gelb.<sup>46</sup> The same trend is known also from Classical Antiquity (the Roman Empire’s Principate) and from the Ottoman Empire (janissaries), as recalled by Lafont.<sup>47</sup> Patterson summed up and expanded the debate on the **gàr-du** elite military formations, “war heroes”, as well as Amar Suen’s

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<sup>41</sup> D. Patterson, op. cit., especially pp. 345–353, 627–631.

<sup>42</sup> B. Lafont, *The army of the kings of Ur...*, p. 17, note 94.

<sup>43</sup> M. Hilgert, C. D. Reichel, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> L. B. Allred, “Provisioning...”, pp. 3–6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> I. J. Gelb, Prisoners of war in early Mesopotamia, “Journal of Near Eastern Studies” 1973, vol. 32, no. 1–2, pp. 92–94.

<sup>47</sup> B. Lafont, *The army of the kings of Ur...*, p. 17, note 94.

royal guard (champions of Amar Suen),<sup>48</sup> formed after his campaign in Huhnuri, but he remained persuaded that it was a temporary renaming of soldiers of the **àga-ús** formation connected with the king's campaign in the year AS.7 (see e.g. pp. 244, 347). Significantly, a search through the corpus of administrative texts from the Ur III period (CDLI<sup>49</sup> and BDTNS<sup>50</sup> online databases) did not reveal any texts in which the two terms would have been used together (**àga-ús** and **gàr-du**), and as noted by Allred<sup>51</sup> the two were used alternately for a period of just one month (AS.9.II–III) presumably when the term **àga-ús** was brought back in place of **gàr-du**.

**L. 11.** Duga (**du<sub>11</sub>-ga**) or Dugga (**dug<sub>4</sub>-ga**) is a well known official from Puzriš-Dagan (Drehem). He is attested in at least a few hundred texts from the years AS.8–IS.1. His seal indicates that he was a son of Lu-Ningirsu, a shepherd of the stockyard (**du<sub>11</sub>-ga, dub-sar, dumu lú-<sup>d</sup>nin-gír-su, sipa na-gáb-tum**). It is not excluded that his father's job was designated later as **kurušda** (fattener), which is why it could also be his seal attested for the year IS.2 (seldom mentioned, presumably because the archive from Puzriš-Dagan was in slow decline): **du<sub>11</sub>-ga dub-sar, dumu lú-<sup>d</sup>nin-gír-su kurušda**.<sup>52</sup> According to Sigrist, Duga was a fattener (French engraisseur), meaning he was occupied with fattening animals just before they were processed for food or intended as a ritual offering.<sup>53</sup> Hilgert defined Duga as a key officer of the so-called Central Bureau<sup>54</sup> in the terminal phase of Puzriš-Dagan (the archive ends sometime in the early years of the rule of Ibbi-Suen). The **gàr-du** soldiers were attested in the records from Puzriš-Dagan virtually only in the time that he held this position, hence it is not surprising that in most of the texts regarding the fact they are the ones delivering animals for consumption (see above, note 32).

<sup>48</sup> See e.g. D. Patterson, op. cit., p. 54, 244, note 770, 347.

<sup>49</sup> <http://cdli.ucla.edu>

<sup>50</sup> <http://bdts.filol.csic.es/>

<sup>51</sup> L. B. Allred, "Provisioning...", p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> See e.g. Princeton 2, 51.

<sup>53</sup> M. Sigrist, op. cit., pp. 301–305, 352.

<sup>54</sup> M. Hilgert, C. D. Reichel, op. cit., pp. 53–54, 290–298.



## Seal

A cylinder seal was impressed repeatedly on the tablet surface, on both sides and the side edges. However, it is mostly illegible because of the text that was engraved on top of the seal impression and the fine clay dust that covers the tablet. Fragments of the royal titlature can be read on the front side of the tablet, proving that it is a dedicatory seal. Considering the date of the document, it must have been a seal dedicated to Amar Suen, hence the reconstruction of the beginning of the seal inscription, which would have contained the royal dedication. The most important fragments, however – that is, the name of the seal owner, and the name of his father whose name was probably present in the text as well, cannot be read. Moreover, the very layout of the legend and the way in which the seal was reproduced cause major problems with its correct identification and even with establishing whether it was a single- or a double-column seal. The visible and reconstructible fragments appear as follows:

1. [d<sup>h</sup>amar-d<sup>h</sup>suen]
2. [nita/lugal kal-ga]
3. lugal u[ri<sub>5</sub><sup>ki</sup>-ma]
4. lugal an-ub-[da] / límmu-[ba]

Below are three narrow lines of text and a fourth line which is legible again.

[...]

[...]

[...]

[lu]gal an-u[b-da] / límmu-[ba]

This layout suggests a double-column seal where the data of the seal owner should be in the parallel column at the side, while the three narrow lines preceding line 4 feature the impressions of the first three lines of the dedication, including the name and two royal titles of Amar-Suen. This interpretation is confirmed by the two-row method of engraving the text of line 4 of the seal, which is typical of double-column cylinder seals: **lugal an-ub-da / límmu-ba**. However, the small surviving fragments of the single, wedge-shaped components of the letters in these three narrow lines preceding the impressed line 4 cannot be matched with the royal titlature of Amar-Suen.

The group of about 30 texts from Drehem with similar content,<sup>55</sup> where Duga appears as the one who “dispenses” (**ba-zi**) the animals as a **šu-gíd** delivery for the kitchen (**é-muhaldim**) on behalf of the soldiers (**mu gâr-du-e-ne-šè**), includes only one legible seal impression and this is of the double-cylinder type:<sup>56</sup>

(I) <sup>d</sup>amar-<sup>d</sup>suen, nita kal-ga, lugal uri<sub>5</sub><sup>ki</sup>-ma, lugal an-ub-da lím-mu-ba

(II) da<sup>3</sup>-a-a, [dub-sar], dumu [...], arád-zu.

A few other seal impressions from this group of documents are either completely illegible or only their initial parts with the king’s name and titulature can be deciphered, like in the text under study. As opposed to the above, a much larger group of texts, in which Duga plays the same role of the one who distributes animals destined for **šu-gíd é-muhaldim**, but this time without the addition of **gâr-du-e-ne-šè**, very often features impressions of a single-column<sup>57</sup> dedicatory seal of Ur-Šulpae the scribe, the son of Ur-Haia,<sup>58</sup> dedicated to Amar-Suen<sup>59</sup> or Šu-Suen<sup>60</sup> depending on the date of the document. Bearing this in mind, one cannot reliably reconstruct a key fragment of the seal in question, leaving the identity of the seal owner unknown in this case.

<sup>55</sup> See above, note 32.

<sup>56</sup> ASJ 19, 206 21 (AS.8.III.14). In another document from this group, Princeton 2, 119 (AS.8.VI.10), the completely damaged name of the owner of seemingly the same seal has been completed as [**da-a-a-ti**].

<sup>57</sup> The only specimen of a seal with the same legend in its double-column variety is confirmed in the case of Nisaba 8, 121 (ŠŠ.2.XI).

<sup>58</sup> <sup>d</sup>amar-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU, lugal kal-ga, lugal uri<sub>5</sub><sup>ki</sup>-ma, lugal an-ub-da lím-mu-ba, ur-<sup>d</sup>šul-pa-è, dub-sar, dumu ur-<sup>d</sup>ha-ia, arád-zu.

<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., OIP 121, 430 (AS.9.X.20); BPOA 7, 1672 (AS.9.XII.16); BIN 3, 434 (AS.9.XII.18).

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., BIN 3, 550 (ŠŠ.1.I.28); RA 101, 35 1 (ŠŠ.1.VII.21–22); ASJ 12, 43 14 (ŠŠ.2.IX).

Photographs

Text 1



Text 2



Text 3

