A New Šulgi Text in the Royal Ontario Museum

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The tablet numbered 910x209.494 (D 1027) in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto,[1] is a rather small text, 6.2 × 9.8 × 2.3 cm, of a pink colour containing a literary text in Sumerian dealing with king Šulgi (c. 2094–2047 B.C.). The text may be dated by its script to the Old Babylonian period. It was purchased by the museum sometime before 1910, and nothing of its provenance is known.

The composition recorded on the tablet consists of thirty-six lines, which we may divide, although they were not so marked by the ancient scribe, into nine four-line stanzas. The introductory stanza of four lines is not well preserved so that a coherent translation of it is not possible. However, it is clear that it differed in pattern from the succeeding eight stanzas and served to introduce the composition as a whole. The beginning of the composition seems to read: šà-ta kù-ga x[. . .] 'pure from birth . . . ,' undoubtedly an epithet of king Šulgi. This recalls the beginning of another Šulgi hymn, A,[2] which reads: lugal-me-en šà-ta ur-sag-me-en 'I am king, from birth a hero.'

The following eight stanzas all exhibit the same basic structure, which may be summarized and translated as follows:

My king brought[3] (offerings?) to city X,
O god Y, rejoice!
Šulgi brought to city X,
O god Y, rejoice!

Each succeeding stanza substitutes a different god and city name for X and Y. The god in each case is the patron deity for the city. The sequence of gods and cities in the text is:

1) Enki in Eridu,
2) Enlil in Nippur,
3) Ninurta in Ešumeša,
4) Ninsunzigalanna, apparently an epithet of Ninḫursag,[4] in Keš,
5) Ašimbabbar in Ur,
6) Utu, named as the lapis-lazuli beard (su₆-za-gìn)[5] in Ebabbar, presumably in Larsa,
7) Ninerigal[6] in Kullab,
8) Inanna in Zabala.

Interestingly, the hymn ends abruptly after the section dealing with Inanna of Zabala with no concluding stanza to match the introductory one.

Regarding the genre of the ROM composition, it is to be noted that this text is unique in the Šulgi hymnic repertory. There is no lengthy hymnic prologue or epilogue characteristic of the other Šulgi hymns. The text contains no identifying subscript, nor are any liturgical notations found in the composition. The closest parallel to the new Šulgi text is the hymn Šulgi H published in copy by Langdon in BE 31 no. 4.[7] Unfortunately only about one-half of the tablet on which this composition is found is preserved.

A study of the tablet published by Langdon reveals that it originally contained two compositions: a short hymn to Ninlil of about twenty-five lines and a longer adab hymn of eighty-two lines[8] to Šulgi.[9] We shall restrict our comments to the second composition, here labelled Šulgi H.

As we find in the ROM composition, Šulgi H consists of a series of relatively short sections dealing with a trip Šulgi made to various cities of his realm. Unfortunately, since only about half the tablet is preserved, a com-

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1 I am thankful to Professor L. Levine, curator of the Royal Ontario Museum tablet collection, for kind permission to publish this tablet and to Dr G. McEwan for pointing it out to me.

2 For Šulgi A, see Falkenstein, ZA 50 (1952), pp. 61ff.

3 Since the subject of the verb na-DU appears with the agentive -e (ᵈšul-gi-re) we would expect it to be transitive. For that reason I have understood the verb as na-túm 'he brought.' If we ignore the agentive -e here we could read the verb na-gin 'he went,' which would make equally good, if not better, sense.

4 This may be compared with the epithet of Ninḫursag, NIN-zi-gal-an-na, found in line 96 of the Sumerian Temple Hymn Collection (see Sjöberg, Temple Hymns p. 73) and the epithet igi-zi-gal-an-na in Enlil and Ninḫursag, Barton, MBI no. 1 XI 4.

5 For this common epithet of Utu see Sjöberg Temple Hymns p. 87, note to line 173.

6 For the reading of ᵈNin-AB-gal as ᵈNin-eri₁₂-gal see ibid., p. 90, note to line 198.

7 For collations to this text see Kramer, JAOS 60 (1940), pp. 237ff.

8 Note the number 60 + 20 + 2 (= 82) at the bottom of reverse column two of Langdon, BE 31, no. 4.

9 The tablet published by Langdon, BE 31 no. 4 ends with a three-line uru section. This means that the tablet ended with an adab hymn, since the concluding uru section is characteristic of this type of hymn. The uru section virtually always contains a three-line pattern: 1) divine epithet, 2) divine name + divine epithet of line one, 3) royal name + some wish for the king. Šulgi H is unusual in that line one of the uru section contains an epithet of Šulgi and line two the king's name and epithet. This means that here Šulgi takes the place of a divinity in a normal adab hymn. The adab hymn usually begins with an address to the divinity who

plete list of the cities is not available. The extant text mentions a trip to Enki in Eridu[10] followed by a long gap, Nanna in Ur[11] followed by a short gap, and finally trips to Utu in Larsa,[12] Ninunug in Kullab,[13] and Inanna in Zabala.[14] It is noteworthy that the sequence of cities preserved in Šulgi H matches exactly that found in the ROM text. Šulgi H has preserved accounts of cities 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the ROM text. These parallels suggest that the long gap between obverse column two and reverse column one in Šulgi H may have contained an account of trips to cities 2–4 of the ROM text, that is to Nippur, Ešumeša, and Keš.

The description of the trip to the last three cities of Šulgi H is found in stereotypic four-line stanzas strongly reminiscent of those found in the ROM text. The pattern is, however, different:

šul-gi . . . x^{ki}-šè sag-íl-la mu-gin
é-i$_7$ é-engur ^{d}Y giš ki-ba ì-tag
gu-sag še-sag mumun-šè mu-gar ^{d}ašnan mu-ḫúl
^{d}Y . . .

Šulgi went proudly to city X,
At the river house and the *apsû*-house of god Y he made an offering[15]
He placed first quality flax and barley as seed, Ašnan rejoiced,
The god Y . . . (varies in each account)

Although the ROM text closely parallels Šulgi H in the concluding stereotypic section, the text differs in the longer treatment in Šulgi H, in the earlier trips to Eridu and Ur, as well as in the inclusion in Šulgi H of various liturgical notations such as the sa-gar-ra, giš-ki-gál-sa-gar-ra, and the concluding ^{uru}uru$_{16}$(EN) section.

Not only is there a correlation between the sequence of cities in Šulgi H and the ROM text; it occurs also between the ROM text and the compilation of the Sumerian Temple Hymns redacted by Enḫeduanna.[16] The ROM text has merely treated a selection of the more important cities and shrines in the order they appear in the hymnic cycle, namely hymns 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 13, 16, and 26. The minor cities such as Kiabrig, Gišbanda, and Gaeš are simply omitted.

While it may be demonstrated that the majority of Šulgi hymns allude to specific historical events of the king's reign, both Šulgi H and the ROM text seem to be devoid of such allusions. This fact, coupled with the dependence of both compositions on the great Enḫeduanna cycle of temple hymns, suggests that the authors of these two compositions strove not to immortalize a moment in the king's reign but rather to model a kind of

cycle of 'Temple Hymns of Šulgi.' This was done by merely putting the name of Šulgi in conjunction with brief passages dealing with the major cult centres found in the Enḫeduanna cycle of temple hymns.

While Šulgi H gives a fuller account of each royal visit, the terse account in the better preserved ROM text gives a better overview of the 'Šulgi Temple Cycle' as a whole.

In conclusion, the new Šulgi text in the ROM may give us a better idea of what may have originally been contained in the Sumerian hymn Šulgi H.

ROM 910x209.494 (D 1027)

1) [(x)] ⌜šà⌝-ta kù-ga x [. . .] UD.D[U]
2) [. . .] x kalam-ma [. . .] ki ḫúl [. . .]
3) [. . .] x x x x x x [. . .] x ki x x
4) [. . .] x du$_{11}$-ga [. . .] x na x
5) [lugal]-mu eridu^{ki}-šè na-DU
6) n[un-gal] a-a ^{d}en-ki ḫúl-⌜la-a⌝
7) ^{d}š[ul-g]i-re eridu$^{k[i]}$-šè na-DU
8) nun-gal [a]-a [^{d}e]n-ki ⌜ḫúl-la-a⌝
9) lugal-m[u E]N.LÍL^{ki}-šè na-⌜DU⌝
10) kur-gal a-⌜a⌝ [^{d}en-l]íl ḫúl-la-a
11) ^{d}šul-gi-r[e E]N.LÍL^{ki}-šè na-DU
12) kur-gal a-a ^{d}en-líl ḫúl-la-a
13) lugal-mu é-šu-[me-š]a$_4$-šè na-DU
14) en ^{d}nin-[urta]-ke$_4$ ḫúl-la-a
15) ^{d}šul-gi-r[e] é-šu-me-⌜ša⌝-šè na-DU
16) [e]n ^{d}nin-[ur]ta-ke$_4$ ḫúl-la-⌜a?⌝
17) lugal-mu k[è]š^{ki}-š[è na-DU]
18) ^{d}nin-⌜sún⌝-[z]i-gal-an-n[a ḫúl-la-a]
19) ^{d}šu[l-gi-r]e kèš$^{k[i}$-šè na-DU]
20) ^{d}[nin-sú]n-zi-gal-an-n[a ḫúl-la-a]
21) lugal-⌜mu⌝ úri^{ki}-šè na-[DU]
22) en ^{d}[aš-i]m$_4$-babbar ḫ[úl-la-a]
23) ^{d}šul-gi-r[e úri^{ki}-šè na-DU]
24) en ^{d}aš-i[m$_4$-babbar ḫúl-la-a]
25) [lu]gal-mu é-bar$_6$-ba[r$_6$]-šè na-D[U]
26) su$_6$-[za-gîn] x x ḫúl-l[a-a]
27) ^{d}š[ul]-gi-re é-bar$_6$-bar$_6$-šè na-D[U]
28) su$_6$-za-gîn x x ḫúl-[la-a]
29) lugal-mu kul-ab$_4$$^{⌜ki⌝}$-šè ⌜na⌝DU⌝
30) ^{d}nin-eri$_{12}$(AB)-gal-k[e$_4$] ḫúl-la-a
31) ^{d}šul-gi-re [kul]-ab$_4$ki-šè na-DU
32) ^{d}nin-eri$_{12}$-gal-[ke$_4$] ḫúl-la-a
33) lugal-m[u ki-ZA.MÙŠ.U[NUG]^{ki}-šè na-DU
34) [. . .^{d}]inanna-ke$_4$ ḫúl-la-a
35) [^{d}šu]l-gi-re ki-ZA.MÙŠ. ⌜UNUG⌝^{ki}-šè na-DU
36) [. . . ^{d}inanna]-ke$_4$ ḫúl-la-a

figures in line two of the concluding uru section. Langdon, BE 31, no. 4 begins with an address to the goddess Ninlil. If BE 31 no. 4 contained one adab hymn we would expect a reference to Ninlil in line two of the concluding uru section. Since we do not find it we may conclude that this tablet was a Sammeltafel of two adab hymns, one to the goddess Ninlil in obverse column one and a second to Šulgi beginning at the bottom of obverse column one.
10 Langdon, BE 31, no. 4 obv. col. ii 1–10.

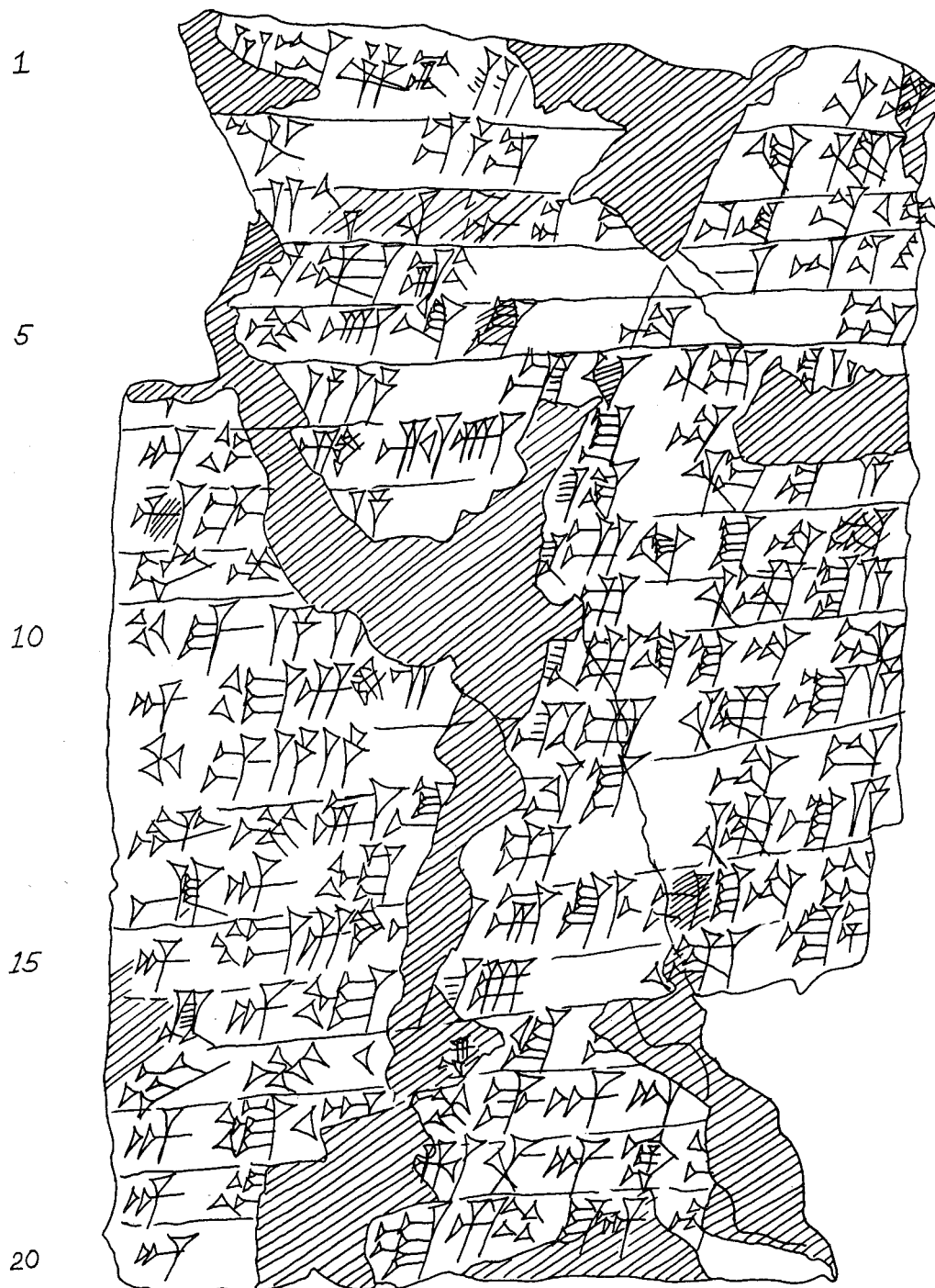11 Ibid. rev. col. i 1′–16′. Note the mention of é-kiš-nu-gál in line 10′.
12 Ibid. rev. col. ii 1′–4′.
13 Ibid. rev. col. ii 5′–8′. In line 5′ read kul-ab^{ki} following the collation of Kramer.
14 Ibid. rev. col. ii 9′–12′.
15 The reading giš . . . tag 'to make an offering' (see Bauer, Wirtschaftstexte p. 413) follows the collation of Kramer.
16 See Sjöberg, Temple Hymns.

1) Pure from birth ... going forth,
2) ... in the land ...
3) ...
4) ... word ...
5) My king brought to Eridu,
6) O great prince, father Enki, rejoice!
7) Šulgi brought to Eridu,
8) O great prince, father Enki, rejoice!
9) My king brought to Nippur,
10) O great mountain, father Enlil, rejoice!
11) Šulgi brought to Nippur,
12) O great mountain, father Enlil, rejoice
13) My king brought to Ešumeša,
14) O lord Ninurta, rejoice!
15) Šulgi brought to Ešumeša,
16) O lord Ninurta, rejoice!
17) My king brought to Keš,
18) O Ninsunzigalanna, rejoice!
19) Šulgi brought to Keš,
20) O Ninsunzigalanna, rejoice!
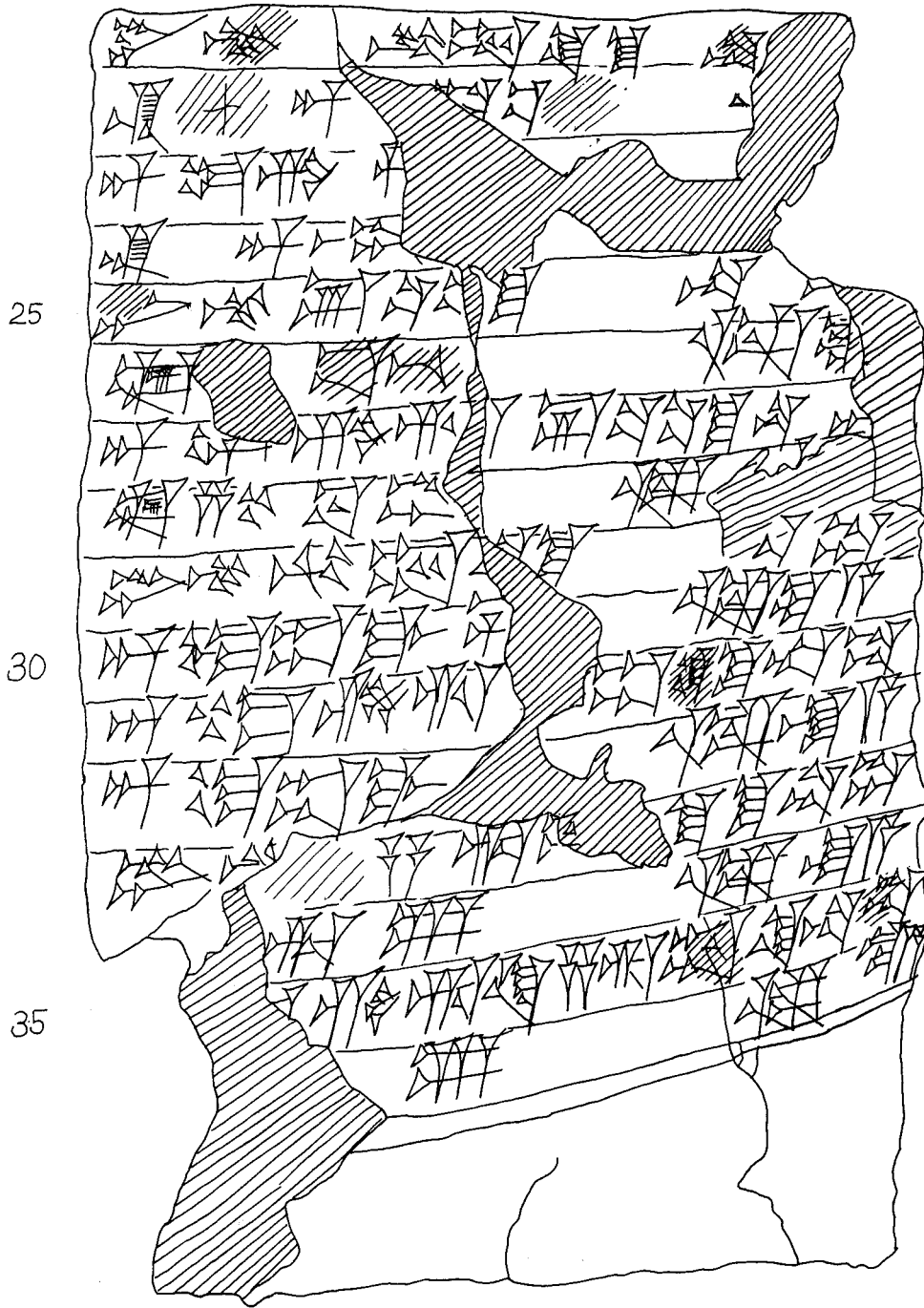
21) My king brought to Ur,
22) O lord Ašimbabbar, rejoice!
23) Šulgi brought to Ur,
24) O lord Ašimbabbar, rejoice!
25) My king brought to Ebabbar,
26) O lapsis-lazuli beard . . . , rejoice!
27) Šulgi brought to Ebabbar,
28) O lapis-lazuli beard . . . , rejoice!
29) My king brought to Kullab,
30) O Ninerigal, rejoice!

31) Šulgi brought to Kullab,
32) O Ninerigal, rejoice!
33) My king brought to Zabala,
34) O Inanna, rejoice!
35) Šulgi brought to Zabala,
36) O Inanna, rejoice!