

A New Wife for Šu-Sîn*

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In the collection of the Université Laval (Quebec City) is an economic tablet dating to the Third Dynasty of Ur. Although many such texts are known, this one deserves particular attention because it contains a reference to a previously unknown wife of the king Šu-Sîn. The matter of the royal women of the Ur III period is a topic which has been much discussed of late and this document is published here to add some new data to the discussion.

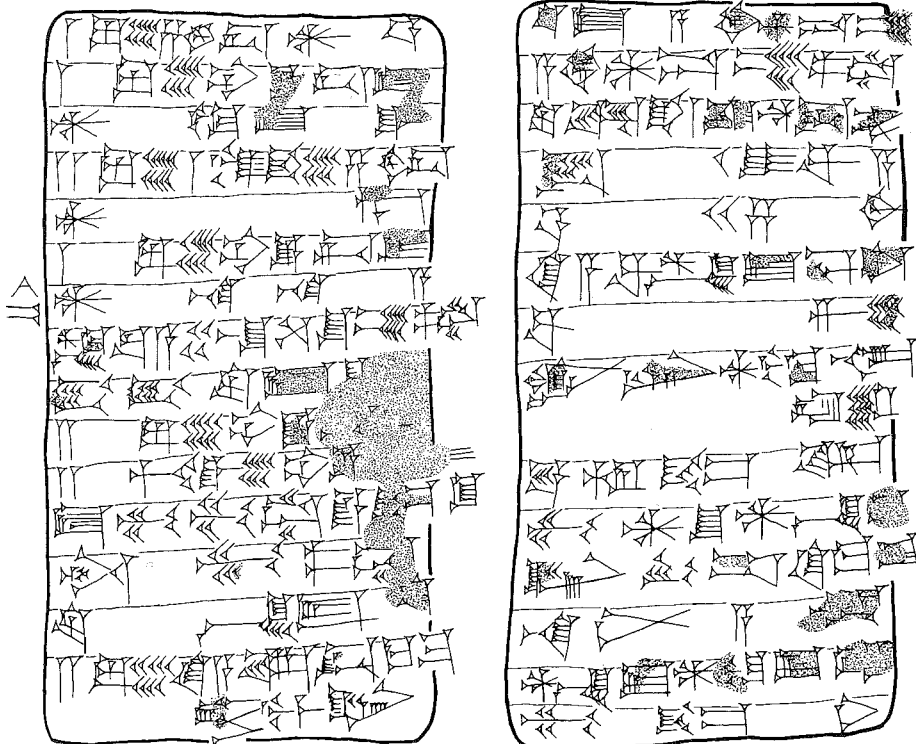
The text, the sole cuneiform tablet in the collection of the Université Laval, bears the museum number L. 544 and was recently acquired from an antiquities dealer. Thus, there is no information on its actual provenance although the contents of the text suggest that it came from Drehem (ancient Puzriš-Dagan). It measures 10.2 × 5.7 cm and is in a good state of preservation. The document is dated to the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of the sixth year of Šu-Sîn, king of Ur (i.e., 2032 BC according to the generally used chronology), and records the dispersal of twelve sheep and goats for various purposes.

L.544

1. 1 udu-niga 4-kam-ús^dutu
2. 1 udu-niga gud-^{re}l-ús-^{re}sa^l
3. ^dnin-^{re}l-gal
4. 2 udu-niga 1^máš-gàr-niga 4-kam-ús
5. ^di[n]anna
6. 1 udu-niga gud-e-ús-^{re}sa^l
7. ^dna-na-a
8. ^dEN.ZU-a-bu-šu sagi maškim
9. sískur šà ^{re}l-ga[l]
10. 2 udu-niga gud-^{re}e-ús-sa^l
11. 2 máš-gal-niga gud-^{re}l-[ús-s]a
12. é-muḫaldim mu-kaš₄-e-^{re}ne^l-šè
13. árad-mu maš_{ki}[i]m
14. šà nibru_{ki}
15. 2 udu-niga ki-a-nag tá-ku-ma-tum lukur lugal
16. ^{re}šà^l é a-^{re}mur-DINGIR^l rá-gaba
17. a-^{re}mur^l-DINGIR^l rá-gaba maškim
18. šà PUZUR₄-^{re}iš^l-^dda-gan^l
19. á-gi₆-ba-a
20. ud 24-kam

21. ki a-ba-^den-^{re}líl-gin₇-ta^l
 22. ba-zi
 23. gir lú-^dnin^l-šubur dub-sar
 24. iti u₅-bí-kú
 25. mu ^dšu-^dEN.^{re}ZU^l lugal uri_{ki}-ma-^{re}ke₄^l
 26. na-rú-a ^{re}maḫ^l
 27. ^den-líl ^dnin-líl-ra^l
 28. mu-ne-dù
- L.e. 12

1) One fattened, fourth-grade sheep (for) the god Utu; 2) one, fattened, gud-e-ús-sa-grade sheep 3) (for) the goddess Ninegal; 4) two fattened sheep (and) one, fattened fourth-grade female kid 5) (for) the goddess Inanna; 6) one fattened, gud-e-ús-sa-grade sheep 7) (for) the goddess Nanaya; 8) Šin-abušu, the cupbearer, (was) the requisitioner. 9) The sískur-ceremony in the palace. 10) Two fattened, gud-e-ús-sa-grade sheep (and) 11) two fattened, gud-e-ús-sa-grade he-goats 12) (for) the kitchen, on behalf of the runners;



13) Aradmu (was) the requisitioner. 14) In Nippur.
 15) Two fattened sheep (for) the libation place of Takum-matum, the wife of the king, 16) in the house of Amur-ili, the mounted messenger; 17) Amur-ili, the mounted messenger, (was) the requisitioner.
 18) In Puzriš-Dagan. 19) The nocturnal offering.
 20) On the 24th day. 21) From Aba-Enlilgin 22) disbursed.
 23) Responsibility of Lu-Ninšubur, the scribe. 24) Month Ubiku; 25) the year Šu-Sîn, the king of Ur, 26) built the great stele 27) for the gods Enlil and Ninlil. 1.e.) Twelve (sheep and goats).

The basic arrangement of the text is standard, resembling that of numerous other Ur III documents.² The persons mentioned are all known from other Drehem texts,³ with the exception of the wife of Šu-Sîn mentioned in line 15 and possibly Amur-ili who appears in lines 16 and 17. The name Amur-ili occurs in various Ur III documents,⁴ but never, as far as I am aware, with the profession of mounted messenger (*rá-gaba*).

The most interesting section of the document is the reference to sheep being disbursed for the libation place of a previously unknown wife of the king. The name of the woman in question is written *tá-ku-matum* and is presumably to be read Takum-matum (*(takūn-mātum* 'The-Country-Is-Loyal').⁵ She becomes the fourth wife attested for Šu-Sîn, the others being Kubatum, A.AB.BA-bašti and Išdu-kin. Kubatum was the main wife of the king and is known to have borne the title *nin* 'queen' on occasion. The others were given the title *lukur*, which apparently could be applied to any of the king's wives; scholars have variously translated this title as 'priestly wife,' 'junior wife' and 'concubine'.⁶ Details

of the cult of deceased kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur are not completely clear; however, involved with the worship of these rulers was the delivery of livestock to the *ki-a-nag*, 'libation place', of each.⁷ The only royal women of this period besides Takum-matum for whom libation places are known are an unnamed queen of Ur-Nammu,⁸ Šulgi-simti (a queen of Šulgi), Geme-Ninlila (possibly a wife, *lukur*, of Šulgi),⁹ and Abi-simti (a queen of Šulgi or Amar-Sîn).¹⁰ Thus, although we know nothing about Takum-matum beyond the fact that at one time she had been one of Šu-Sîn's wives, she must have been highly esteemed during her lifetime since offerings were made to her after her death.

*Thanks must be expressed to Professor J. des Gagniers of the Université Laval for permission to publish this text.

¹As shown by Gomi (BiOr 34 [1977] pp.275-81) and Whiting (ZA 69 [1979] pp.6-33), beginning with the fourth year of Šu-Sîn this was the fourth, not the third, month of the year.

²Kang, SACT 1 no.176, which is dated in the seventh year of Šu-Sîn, is particularly similar.

³For text references, see Limet, *Anthroponymie* pp.363, 440 and 485-6, and Schneider, Or. 23 (1927) no.990. For Lu-Ninšubur and Sîn-abušu, see particularly the seal published with Jones/Snyder, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Third Ur Dynasty* no.115 and UET 3 no.1134:3' respectively.

⁴See, for example, Schneider, Or. 23 (1927) no.172 for text references.

⁵See Stamm, *Die Akkadische Namengebung* p.187; Gelb, MAD 3 p.138; and CAD K 162a.

⁶Text references for the mention of these ladies are given in Steinkeller, ASJ 3 (1981) pp.80 and 84 n.44; Steinkeller discussed the meaning and usage of the various titles given to the royal women of the Ur III period *ibid.* pp.81-2.

In a private communication, Steinkeller has suggested that another wife of Šu-Sîn may be mentioned on the seal impression found on a tablet from Nippur (David I. Owen, *Neo-Sumerian Archival Texts Primarily from Nippur* [Winoona Lake 1982] no.768). He tentatively reads: 1. šag-ta(?)-[kug(?)]-zu(?) 2. dumu-SAL l[ugal] 3. lukur-gal dšu-

[dEN.ZU] 4. kur-ra-á-ḫ1-[x] 5. rá-gaba árad-zu 'Šagta [kug-zu(?)], the princess, the retired (?) *lukur* of Šu-Sîn; Kur-ra.[.], the mounted messenger, is your servant.' Steinkeller points out that the text 'adds some new interesting twists to the *lukur* problem, since, firstly, the woman in question was a 'princess,' and secondly, she used the title *lukur-gal*, which is not so far attested in connection with royal *lukurs*. Whether *lukur-gal* should be translated as 'former/retired *lukur* (of Šu-Sîn)' depends on the date of the text; unfortunately, the date-formula is not preserved.'

⁷The most recent discussion of the *ki-a-nag*, with references to previous discussions, is found in Michalowski, Or.n.s 46 (1977) pp.220-5.

⁸UET 3 no.21 rev.3-4.

⁹See Michalowski, Or.n.s 46 (1977) pp.221f. Šulgi-simti bore the title *nin* in MVN 8 no.97:10; for a discussion of the position of Geme-Ninlila, see Michalowski, JCS 31 (1979) pp.171-6.

¹⁰Steinkeller, ASJ 3 (1981) p.92 A 5503:5; a discussion of Abi-simti's husband is given *ibid.* pp.79-80. It is not inconceivable that Šulgi-simti and Abi-simti could both be called *nin* during the reign of Šulgi (see, for example, Michalowski, ASJ 4 [1982] p.136 for a similar case).

Since a sheep was issued for the 'new statue of Kubatum' in Šulgi's eighth year (BiOr 9 [1952] p.173 lines 15-16), she too may have been the subject of a cult after her death (see Steinkeller, ASJ 3 [1981]: 80).