ON THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR
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CONTENTS

Marcel Sigrist, an Appreciation (Piotr Michalowski) .............................................................. vii
List of Publications by Marcel Sigrist (Ulla Kasten) .............................................................. ix
  1  Franco D’Agostino and Elena Santagati, BM 106145: Un nuovo testo da Umma che menziona
      personale del cantiere navale (mar-sa) ........................................................................... 1
  2  Lance Allred, Labor Assignments from the City of Girsu ................................................... 11
  3  Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, An Ur III Incantation in the British Museum .............................. 21
  4  Nicole Brisch, Messenger Texts in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of
      Michigan .......................................................................................................................... 25
  5  Miguel Civil, An Agricultural Account from Umma .......................................................... 35
  6  Remco de Maaijer, Šulgi’s Jubilee: Where’s The Party? .................................................. 45
  8  Steven Garfinkle, Silver and Gold: Merchants and the Economy of the Ur III State .......... 63
  9  Wolfgang Heimpel and Kent Hillard, Fact and Fiction in YBC 9819 and SET 188 as Sources
      for the Reality behind the Name of Year 9 of King Shu-Sin of Ur ................................ 71
 10  Jacob Klein, The Brockmon Collection Duplicate of the Sumerian Kinglist (BT 14) .......... 77
 11  Bertrand Lafont, À propos des repas collectifs et banquets (naptanum) à l’époque d’Ur III 93
 12  Pietro Mander, Nuovi “Shepherd-Texts” da Lagash .......................................................... 99
 13  Piotr Michalowski, Observations on “Elamites” and “Elam” in Ur III Times .................... 109
 14  Manuel Molina, New Ur III Court Records Concerning Slavery ..................................... 125
 15  Francesco Pomponio, Ancora un bilancio neo-sumerico di orzo .................................... 145
 16  Seth Richardson, Ningirsu Returns to His Plow: Lagaš and Girsu Take Leave of Ur .......... 153
 17  Walther Sallaberger, Der Eid im Gerichtsverfahren im neusumerischen Umma ............ 159
 18  T. M. Scharlach, Priestesses, Concubines, and the Daughters of Men: Disentangling the
      Meaning of the Word lukuš in Ur III Times ................................................................. 177
 19  Piotr Steinkeller, Joys of Cooking in Ur III Babylonia .................................................... 185
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Benjamin Studevent-Hickman</td>
<td>Quantitative Aspects of Land Tenure in Ur III Babylonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>M. Such-Gutiérrez</td>
<td>Gesiegelte Urkunden der königlichen Viehverwaltung von Drehem und die Frage der Linienunterteilung und Siegelung dieser Tafeln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ozaki Tohru</td>
<td>Divine Statues in the Ur III Kingdom and Their “Ka Du₈-Ha” Ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Niek Veldhuis</td>
<td>Orthography and Politics: adda, “carcass” and kur₂ₙ, “to enter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Lorenzo Verderame</td>
<td>Rassam’s Activities at Tello (1879) and the Earliest Acquisition of Neo-Sumerian Tablets in the British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Hartmut Waetzoldt</td>
<td>Die Haltung der Schreiber von Umma zu König Šusuen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Joan Goodnick Westenholz</td>
<td>The Memory of Sargonic Kings under the Third Dynasty of Ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Richard L. Zettler</td>
<td>Context and Text: Nippur Area TB IV and the “Archive” of Lama-Palil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ORTHOGRAPHY AND POLITICS: ADDA, "CARCASS" AND KUR₉, "TO ENTER"

Niek Veldhuis (University of California, Berkeley)

The calendrical and cultic reforms that took place in the year Šu-Suen 3 coincided with a number of terminological and orthographic changes, in particular at Drehem. In this contribution, I will argue that the orthographic changes are diagnostic for changes in personnel, motivated by broader political circumstances. The signs/words to be discussed are adda “carcass” (§1) and kур₉ “to enter” (§2). I will argue that the change in orthography for adda may be attributed to one individual, while the distribution of the different orthographies for kур₉ (first discussed by Watson 1986: 79–85) points at the royal chancellery as the origin of these changes.

Several pieces of data suggest that Šu-Suen worked hard to erase the memory of his predecessor Amar-Suen. Amar-Suen is skipped in the list of recipients of royal offerings, and a temple named after him in Girsu returns to its old name. No hymns to Amar-Suen have been preserved and he is hardly mentioned in other literature (see Sallaberger 1999: 167). In Šu-Suen’s third year, the month “festival of Amar-Suen,” which had been part of the Umma calendar for several years, was replaced by its old name (two shrines). At the same time, a festival for Šu-Suen was introduced in the Drehem calendar (other local calendars did not include either month/festival at any time). Maeda (1989: 93–103) has argued that during Šu-Suen 3, several aspects of the taxation system were rearranged (see also Sallaberger 1999: 170). Due to the nature of our sources, much of the motivation and the mechanics of Šu-Suen’s actions remain hidden from view. The sudden changes in a few details of the orthographic standard at Drehem may indicate that, as part of this process, Šu-Suen fired a number of officials or scribes and replaced them with loyal servants educated at the royal chancellery.

It is a pleasure to dedicate this contribution to Marcel Sigrist. Research like this is only possible because of the availability of large databases of Ur III texts. Without Marcel’s publication work, and without his generosity in sharing his material, such databases would only be a pale reflection of what they are now.

The two databases that have been used are CDLI (http://cdli.ucla.edu) and BDTSN (http://bdts.filol.csic.es/), directed by Bob Englund and Manuel Molina respectively. Only those references have been used where either a photograph or a copy was available. The words kур₉ (to enter) and adda (carcass) are relatively frequent and only a selection of the references is quoted below. This study concentrates on the three main Ur III find spots Drehem, Girsu, and Umma. Other provenances, while occasionally referenced, do not provide enough material for a proper analysis. The data collection for section 1. (adda) was done by Terri Tanaka, UC Berkeley.
1. Adda (cadaver)

1.1. General: Orthographies of *adda* (cadaver)

The principal orthographies for the word *adda* (cadaver) are:

- $ad_3$ $UDU \times BAD$
- $ad_6$ $LU_2 \times BAD$
- $ad_7$ $LU_2 - šeššīg$
- $ad_8$ $LU_2 - šeššīg \times BAD$
- $adx$ $GUD \times BAD$

The common writing in pre-Ur III texts is $ad_6$ ($LU_2 \times BAD$) or $ad_8$ ($LU_2 - šeššīg \times BAD$); for references see http://psd.museum.upenn.edu under *adda* (cadaver). Ur III texts use mostly $ad_7$ ($LU_2 - šeššīg$) and $ad_3$ ($UDU \times BAD$). For the distribution of these signs see the discussion below. The variant $ad_8$ ($LU_2 - šeššīg \times BAD$) is very rarely used in Ur III; $ad_6$ is used occasionally in Drehem.

The writing $GUD \times BAD$ appears, as far as I know, only twice. In the lexical list ED Animals B 21, it ends the initial section on bovines. The second attestation of GUDxBAD is in an Ur III text (ZA 90 265 2; probably from Umma) dated ŠŠ 8. This is a variant of UDUXBAD, apparently to emphasize that the carcass is a bovine’s.

In Old Babylonian Sumerian literature $ad_6$ ($LU_2 \times BAD$) is the most common writing. The interpretation of $LU_2 - šeššīg$-bi (in broken context) in Šulgi D 197 as $ad_7$-bi in PSD A/3 31 is likely, not only because of the violent nature of the passage, but also because this is one of the Šulgi hymns that preserves Ur III orthographic features (Klein 1981: 69–70).

Although the spelling $ad_3$ ($UDU \times BAD$) is found only in the last decades of the Ur III period, the reading is preserved in the later lexical tradition along with other spellings of the word (see PSD A/3 31).

1.2. Distribution in Ur III

In the Ur III period the regular writings for *adda*, “carcass” are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ŠŠ 3 11 diri</th>
<th>ŠŠ 4–ŠŠ 5</th>
<th>ŠŠ 8–</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drehem</td>
<td>$ad_6$ ($LU_2 \times BAD$)</td>
<td>$ad_3$ ($UDU \times BAD$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$ad_7$ ($LU_2 - šeššīg$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umma</td>
<td>$ad_7$ ($LU_2 - šeššīg$)</td>
<td>$ad_3$ ($UDU \times BAD$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girsu</td>
<td>$ad_7$ ($LU_2 - šeššīg$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drehem texts dated before ŠŠ 4 use various spellings that involve the sign $LU_2$. The variant $LU_2 \times BAD$ ($ad_6$) is found from Šulgi 44 (Princeton 1 118) to ŠŠ 3 month 11 diri (AUCT I 368). $LU_2 - šeššīg$ ($ad_7$), which is the regular spelling at other Ur III sites, is attested from Šulgi 32 (Princeton 1 76) to AS 6 (TLB 3 51).

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1. For the syllabic use of this sign for *adda* see Gelb, et al. (1991: 150) with further literature.
2. *JCS* 10 (1956) 29 7:1 (unprovenanced); and *TCTI* 1 1056 (snake incantation; Girsu).
3. http://cdl.museum.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/cdlpager?prod=adhoc&input=Q000299&project=DCCLT. This composition belongs to the Northern ED lexical tradition, and is known exclusively from Abu-Salabikh and Ebla; all sources for line 21 come from Ebla.
ORTHOGRAPHY AND POLITICS: ADDA, “CARCASS” AND KUR₂, “TO ENTER” 225

The introduction of the sign UDUₓBAD in Drehem is related to the official lu₂-kal-la, who received carcasses in the period ŠS04/00/00 (MVN 15 298)–ŠS09/11/00 (SET 87) and who may be the same lu₂-kal-la who received wool from ŠS04/08/29 (AUCT 3 192) to IS01/03/28 (TAD 63). Lu₂-kal-la introduced the writing ad₃ (UDUₓBAD), as appears from a comparison of AUCT 1 368 and MVN 15 298:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUCT 1 368</th>
<th>MVN 15 298</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n heads of cattle</td>
<td>n heads of cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šu ba-ti</td>
<td>šu ba-ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki lugal-me-lam₂-ta</td>
<td>ki lugal-me-lam₂-ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba-zi</td>
<td>ba-zi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŠS03/11d/00</td>
<td>ŠS04/00/00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basic formulary and the persons involved are the same, except for the recipient and the writing of the word adda. Yearly records that list the reception of dead animals by different people use UDUₓBAD only in the entries related to lu₂-kal-la (PDT 1 515; BIN 3 243; and SET 87). AUCT 1 368 is the last known tablet in which Nuř-Suen is the recipient of carcasses. He is known in this particular role from AS01/03/00 (BIN 3 520) to ŠS03/11d/00 (text quoted above), consistently writing ad₆ (LU₂ₓBAD).

At Umma, the orthographic change occurs a little later. Before ŠS 8, Umma texts consistently use ad₇ (LU₂-šeššig). A good example is WorAM 2000.47, a yearly account of the delivery of slaughtered cattle, dated AS 5 (discussed by Englund 2003). The latest examples are UTAMI 3 2126 (ŠS5/04/00) and Ashm 1911-487 (AAJCAB 1/1 pl. 48; ŠS5/00/00). I found no instances for ŠS 6 and 7; texts dated ŠS 8 or later use ad₃ (UDUₓBAD), the earliest examples being SACT 2 240 (ŠS8/08/00) and SACT 1 122 (ŠS8/10/00).

Girsu texts use ad₇ (LU₂-šeššig) throughout the Ur III period. The only exception that came to my attention is the snake incantation TCTI 1 1036, which uses the variant sign LU₂-šeššigₓBAD (ad₉) in the snake name m u š-a₃ad₉. The writing UDUₓBAD (ad₃) is not attested in the Girsu archives.

The orthographic change in Drehem is clearly linked to an individual, lu₂-kal-la, who, when he started his job, introduced a minor novelty in the orthography. The timing of his appointment coincides with changes in calendar, cult, and taxation.

1.3. Apparent Exceptions

A quick survey of the Ur III databases turns up a number of exceptions to the distribution rules laid out above. Many of these are due to errors in the description of signs (modern confusion between ad₃, ad₆, ad₇, and ad₉) and will not be discussed here. Two apparent exceptions warrant a brief discussion.

4. Other lu₂-kal-la texts related to carcasses are BIN 3 243; BIN 3 456; PDT 1 515 (with collations in Picchioni 1975, 162). Further instances of UDUₓBAD from Drehem are AUCT 2 195 (ŠS 04/06/00); TRU 14 (ŠS 07/02/00); and NABU 2002 76 (IS 01; Drehem?). Note that BIN 3 565 rev. 2 is to be read u₃-tu-da ba-u₇ kuš [s] u-su (instead of [a]d₃ kuš). See Maeda (1989: 87) and compare PDT 1 435 (with collation Picchioni 1975: 160) and RA 9 53, SA 207.
5. http://cdli.ucla.edu/P218067
The tablet *Hirose* 340 (Umma) uses the sign UDUXBAD and has been assigned to Šulgi 25 in the publication. The year name, however, is ambiguous (*mu si-mu-ru-un bi ba-\{hul\}*]) and may as well be IS 3. There are no independent (for instance prosopographical) data to support either choice.

*SACT* 1 123 is dated SS 9 and was attributed to Drehem by its editor. This is inconsistent with its use of the sign ad₇(LU₂-šeššig). A text recently published on CDLI (KM 89039a; http://cdli.ucla.edu/P234833) proves that *SACT* 1 123 is from Girsu, where the sign ad₇ was used all along.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SACT 1 123</th>
<th>KM 89039a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 ad₇ udu ba-ug₇</td>
<td>3582 ad₇ udu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki gišir₃&gt;ni₃&gt;sag₉-ta</td>
<td>490 ad₇ si₄₇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kišib šu₄-nil₃-nil₃-subur</td>
<td>ad₇ egr zu₅-si₃-ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iti še-kin-kud</td>
<td>ki ni₃₃u₂₃-rum-ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mu e₂ šara₂ ba-du₃</td>
<td>geme₂ uš-bar gu₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>id₂ ni₃₄₃u₃₇še₃-du</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ba-ab-gu₇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kišib šu₄-nil₃-nil₃-subur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mu e₂ šara₂ ba-du₃</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two carcasses of dead sheep 3582 sheep carcasses,
From Ġirini-isag 490 lamb carcasses.
Seal of Šu-Ninšubur After being fleeced, the carcasses
Month 12 were (taken) from Ni₃gurum
SS 9 and eaten by the slave girl
Seal of Šu-Ninšubur weavers at the bank of
canal that goes to Ni₃gin.
SS 9

Since the same official Šu-Ninšubur is involved, and both tablets are from the same year, they are most probably from the same office. Therefore, it is possible that the yearly summary in KM 89039a includes the two dead sheep received in *SACT* 1 123. The location of the weaver’s workshop on the bank of the canal that goes to Ni₃gin demonstrates beyond doubt that KM 89039a and *SACT* 1 123 belong to the Girsu archives.

2. **KUr₉**

During the Ur III period, there are two orthographies for kUr₉ (to enter): KWU 147 (= LIL) and KWU 636 = ŠE₇SU. The two signs are independent developments that both go back to LAK 208, which may be described as ŠE₇SU/ŠU—where one ŠU sign is placed upside down on top of the other—as discussed by Krecher (1987: 17–21).

The distribution of the signs used for KUr₉ was first described by Watson (1986: 79–85), with corrections by Carnahan and Hillard (1993: 195; see also Sallaberger 1999: 170). Watson noted that in Drehem around SS 3 the form KWU 147 (LIL) is replaced by KWU 636 (ŠE₇SU), which in post-Ur III

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6. This same Šu-Ninšubur signs off on deliveries of carcasses in MVN 2 7 (SS 6) and Deimel, OrSP 5 49 Wengler 04; ITT 3 5417; MVN 22 157 (all SS 9).
orthography merges with TU. For other (non-Drehem) provenances Watson’s data were less consistent and he did not try to investigate the question in detail.⁷

| kur₉ “to enter”⁷ | KWU 147 = LIL | KWU 636 = ŠEŠU |

A reexamination of the material allows a further refinement. In Girsu, KWU 147 (LIL) is the regular sign, used as late as Ibbi-Su’en.² I found only three Girsu attestations of KWU 636: ITT 2 4123 (ŠS 9); NSGU 76 (ŠS 9; written ŠUŠE); and SNAT 243 (IS 2). The situation seems to be similar in Umma. The sign KWU 636 becomes more regular around ŠS 8 (the same year in which a₃ was introduced in Umma), but KWU 147 is still common in texts dated to Ibbi-Su’en.⁹ One may conclude that in Umma and Girsu, KWU 147 was the normative writing, but that late in the reign of Šu-Suen, KWU 636 became an alternative.

At Drehem, before the time of Šu-Suen, the writings KWU 147 (LIL) and KWU 636 (ŠEŠU) were used side by side, with strong preference for the former (LIL). It seems that different scribes working at Drehem used slightly different conventions—presumably acquired at different scribal schools. There is one group of texts, most likely written by the same scribe, that consistently uses KWU 636. This is a file that records animal offerings that “enter with the anzam vessel” (an-za-am-da kur₉-ra), or, in one case “enter with a gold offering” (kug-sig₂₇-da kur₉-ra), dated between ŠUŠE 44–46.¹⁰ In addition, there are several more isolated instances of KWU 636 at Drehem, dated between Sulgi 37 and AS 8.¹¹ As Hillard pointed out (ASJ 15, 195), there is a monthly tablet that has both forms—KWU 147 in the entry for day 11 and KWU 636 in the one for day 18—apparently copying exactly what was found on the daily tablets (PDT 2 970; 541 month 1). These earlier attestations of KWU 636, however, do not diminish the importance of Watson’s initial observation of a sudden change during ŠS 3. In all verifiable cases kur₉ is written LIL in ŠS 1–2 (about thirty instances) but ŠEŠU in ŠS 4 and later. Unfortunately, out of eight attestations of kur₉ dated ŠS 3 that are listed in BDTNS, only one is available in hand copy (SA 33 [pl. 1], ŠS 3/11d/26: ŠEŠU).

One may assume that, during the Ur III period, there were different scribal schools with slightly different orthographic traditions, and it is not unexpected or unusual to see these traditions spread and mix. We may take this point one step further, though, and speculate that the new scribes who were brought to Drehem during ŠS 3 were educated at the royal chancellery, and were introduced to Drehem as loyal servants of the king. While LIL was the dominant writing for kur₉ for most of the Ur III period in the main archives of Drehem, Umma, and Girsu, there are small but significant pockets of texts that used ŠEŠU. In the royal capitals of Ur¹² and Nippur,¹³ kur₉ is commonly written ŠEŠU, rather than

⁷ The signs reproduced here are those used by ePSD (http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/).
⁸ MVN 5 225 and SNAT 178 = Sollberger (1976: 448; BM 14977).
⁹ For instance BJRL 64 99 8; CST 788 (with collations in MVN 12 129).
¹⁰ MVN 2 333; OIP 115 378; OIP 115 381; OIP 115 383; PDT 2 1169; SA 21 [pl. 47]; Trouvaille 7; YOS 18 12. The file contains several other tablets (published in transliteration only) for which the form of the sign could not be established (CST 59; CST 486; Nisaba 8 141; UTT 6, 3757). For the expressions see Sallaberger (1993: 148 with n. 702).
¹¹ MVN 5 113 (ŠS 37); OIP 115 461 (Š 38); PDT 2 970 (Š 41); TRU 277 (Š 46); MVN 13 672 (Š 47); PDT 2 1093 (AS 5); Durand, DoCu EFHE 206 (AS 7); PDT 2 1264 (AS 8); and OIP 121 598 (AS). It is likely that more such examples may be found.
¹² The writing LIL is found in UET 3 286 and 1410 (both undated) and in UET 3 291 (unknown YN); other texts use ŠEŠU.
¹³ LIL is found in BE 3/1 64 (ŠS 37); BE 3/1 67 (undated); NATN 569 (undated); and MVN 3 248 (ŠS 2; Nippur?); the writing ŠEŠU is currently found in 15 texts dating from SH 36 (BE 3/1 14; year name) to IS 4 (TMH NF 1–2 69).
LIL. Royal inscriptions (Amar-Suen 16 and 17; UET 8 8 and RA 23 32) use ŠEŠU and so does the year name promulgation tablet for Šulgi 3 found at Nippur (Iraq 22 plate 20, 6N-T382).

A further piece of evidence is found in the peculiar variation—already pointed out by Watson—in the writing of kur3 in the year name Šulgi 36: mu d'anna kar-zi-da ki e2-a-na ba-an-kur3. This variation is apparently caused by the difference in orthographic tradition between the royal chancellery, which issued the year names, and the local scribes who used those same year names in their documents. The year-name promulgation tablets would naturally follow the royal chancellery style and write ŠEŠU. While most scribes adapted the year name to their own standards (writing LIL), a few copied the orthography of the royal scribes and a few got utterly confused. I found nine exemplars that use the sign ŠEŠU; in one case the tablet has ŠEŠU; while the envelope has LIL (NYPL 277, as already noted by Watson). Another exemplar has ba-LIL ŠUŠE (MVN 18 116; Drehem)—apparently hesitating about the correct writing. The ŠEŠU writing in the year name Šulgi 36 is attested in Drehem, Umma, and Nippur and does not seem to follow any detectable pattern.

4. Conclusions

It is likely that ŠEŠU vs. LIL and ad₃ vs. ad₇ are not more than individual scribal habits that may go back to different educational traditions. As such, these changes are not indicative of orthographic reforms, but rather reflect accidental changes tied to personal lives. These personal lives, however, were touched by politics. The distribution of ŠEŠU in particular indicates that this writing was the standard orthography at the royal court, and was used in year name promulgations and royal inscriptions. The sudden replacement of LIL by ŠEŠU at Drehem may have been caused by an influx of scribes educated at the court.

The reforms in the calendar and the tax system that Šu-Suen undertook during his third regnal year are an expression of the power of the central authority to impose fiscal, ritual, and chronological order. It is not unlikely that it went along with numerous other changes and measures not so easily visible in our record. Šu-Suen may have enforced his new measures by the time-honored strategy of replacing scribes and officials with people he trusted.

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