Ur III Period
(2112–2004 BC)

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The cover illustration is from a panel of the Ur-Nammu Stele.
The drawing was done by Loretta James.

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To
my parents
Atal-šen

E3/2.7.2

1

A copper foundation tablet bears an Akkadian inscription commemorating Atal-šen’s construction of the temple of the god Nergal.

COMMENTARY

The foundation tablet, which measures 15×16.7 cm, was found, according to the evidence of its seller, at modern Samarra on the Tigris. It now bears the museum number AO 5678. All text lines are found on the obverse of the tablet. Lines 1–13 are found in the central column, lines 14–17 on the left transverse column, and lines 18–20 on the right transverse column. A colophon is found on the right edge of the tablet. The inscription was collated from the published photo.

The author, in a review article of Gelb and Kienast, Königsschriften (JAOS 112 [1992] pp. 620–21), has proposed that the shift of ś to š in the orthography of royal inscriptions took place sometime during the reign of Šulgi. Thus the shift of ś to š in šāninšum (line 13), ša‘dī (line 15), and zéršu (line 19), would argue for a date of composition of this text to Ur III times.

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TEXT

1) 4KIŠ.UNU.GAL
2) LUGAL
3) ḫa-WI-li-im.KI
4) a-tal-SI-en
5) 1re-um 1 ep-šum
6) 1LUGAL 1
7) 1ur-kiš.KI
8) 1ına-wa-ar.KI
9) DUMU sā 1 dar-ma-ar 1
10) LUGAL
11) 1DIM 1 Ė

1–3) O god Nergal, lord of ḪaWiLum:

4–13) Atal-šen, the capable shepherd, king of Urkiš and Nawar, son of Šadar-mat, the king, (is) the builder of the temple of the god Nergal, (the god) who vanquishes opposition.
Tiš-atal

E3/2.7.3

Three Ur III sources mention an important personage (or personages) named Tiš-atal. R. Whiting, JCS 28 (1976) pp. 174-77, notes they were:


While it is unlikely that the king of Karshar named in item 2 is to be considered as the same person(s) mentioned in items 1 and 3, there is a distinct possibility, as was first suggested by Whiting (JCS 28 [1976] p. 177), that Tiš-atal of Uruk was the same man as Tiš-atal of Nineveh. It may be, as Whiting suggests, that before the conquest of Nineveh by Su-Sin, the city lay within the orbit of Tiš-atal of Uruk and Nawar. If so, the Hurrian ruler would have controlled a rather extensive kingdom stretching from Uruk (= Muzan) and Nargā (cf Tell Brak) in the west to Nineveh in the east. Such a hypothesis may be supported by the fact that Atal-šen, one of Tiš-atal’s predecessors as king of Uruk and Nawar, has as an inscription (E3/2.7.2.1) that is supposed to have come from the city of modern Samarra. If the provenance is true, it would attest to building activity of a king of Uruk and Nawar on the middle Tigris. The limits of Tiš-atal’s territory may have been roughly comparable to those known for Šamaš-kur of Asyra. One of his building inscriptions (see Frame and Donbaz, AARM 1 [1983] pp. 1-5) attests to temple constructions (among others) in the cities of Kalbat (the Ubbid) and Nineveh.

The text given is that provided by the foundation tablet. Lines 1-12 are found on the obverse of the tablet, lines 13-25 on the reverse.

Both the Paris and New York lion pegs bear a shorter version (it contains only 12 lines) of the tablet inscription. It is arranged on the pegs in two columns, the first column containing ten lines, and the second two lines. Unfortunately, the peg inscriptions are virtually illegible (a transliteration is not given here), and with the exception of a few isolated lines, a match cannot be made between tablet and peg inscriptions. Though they are, strictly speaking, different inscriptions, data on the exemplars of the peg inscription have been included under the rubric E3/2.7.3.1. The text given, however, is only that of the tablet inscription.

Concerning the deity of lines 9 and 13, we may note the comments of Wilhelm (Hurrians p. 53):

The god Nupatik, who is well-attested in Ugarit and Hattusa but whose nature and genealogy are still unclear, may also have been a member of the most ancient Hurrian pantheon, for he is invoked under the name Labudaga in Tiš-atal’s foundation tablet.

The translation of the deity of line 15 as “(weather)-god(?)” follows that given in Wilhelm, Hurrians p. 11. M. Guichard (in Charpin and Durand, Florestigum marium 2 p. 270) notes:

A. Archi a propose que l’association Déesse de Négar/Déesse-soléil/Adad dans l’inscription hittite fût la même trinité. Le Déesse-soléil serait donc le fils divin.

Ex. 1 was kindly collated by B. André-Salvini and ex. 2 by L. Spur and D. Fleming. For a detailed bibliography for the Metropolitan piece (which is not repeated here), see Muscarella, Bronze and Iron, p. 377.

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Tiš-atal, *endan* of Urkiš, built the temple of the god PIRIG.GAL.

7–10) May the god Lubadaga (Nupatik) protect this temple.

11–14) As for the one who destroys it, may the god Lubadaga (Nupatik) destroy (him).

15–17) May the (weather)-god(?) not hear his prayer.

18–25) May the lady of Nagar, the sun-god, (and) the storm-god(?) ... him who destroys it.