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Ur III Period
(2112–2004 BC)

DOUGLAS FRAYNE

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To
my parents



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

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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, *Königsinschriften* (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 *šāninūtīm* (line 13), *šu'āti* (line 15), and *zēršu* (line 19), would argue for a date of composition of this text to Ur III times.

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TEXT

- 1) 𒀭KIŠ.UNU.GAL
- 2) LUGAL
- 3) ḫa-WI-li-im.KI
- 4) a-tal-SI-en
- 5) [re-um] ep-šum
- 6) [LUGAL]
- 7) [ur-kiš.KI]
- 8) 𒀭[na-wa-ar.KI]
- 9) DUMU sá-[dar-ma-a]
- 10) LUGAL
- 11) [DÍM] É

1–3) O god Nergal, lord of ḫaWIlum:

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

- 12) 𒀭KIŠ.UNU.GAL
- 13) 𒀭nir_x(GAZ×NIR)¹ 𒀭ša-nin-ú-tim
- 14) 𒀭ŠU₄ DUB
- 15) 𒀭ša-ī a¹-ti
- 16) 𒀭ú-ša-sà-ku
- 17) 𒀭UTU
- 18) 𒀭ù 𒀭INANNA
- 19) 𒀭NUMUN-ša¹
- 20) 𒀭li-il¹-qù-ta

14–20) As for the one who removes this inscription, may the gods Šamaš and Eštar destroy his progeny.

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:

- 1) *Ti-iš-a-tal en-da-an Ur-kēš*.KI in an undated foundation inscription written in Hurrian (RA 42 [1948] pp. 1–20) here edited as inscription E3/2.7.3.1.
- 2) 𒀭Ti₄(!)-sa-a-tal LUGAL Kár(a)-ḫar.ki in an Ur III or early Isin-Larsa style seal (de Clercq, Collection 1 no. 121) here edited as inscription E3/2.5.1.2001.
- 3) *Ti-iš-a-tal lú Ni-nu-a.ki* in an Ur III administrative text from Eshnunna dated to Šū-Sîn 3 (Tell Asmar 1931-T615).

While it is unlikely that the king of Karahar 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 Urkiš was the same man as Tiš-atal of Nineveh. It may be, as Whiting suggests, that before the conquest of Nineveh by Šū-Sîn, the city lay within the orbit of Tiš-atal of Urkiš and Nawar. If so, the Hurrian ruler would have controlled a rather extensive kingdom stretching from Urkiš (= Mozan) and Nagar (= Tell Brāk) 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 Urkiš and Nawar, has given us an inscription (E3/2.7.2.1) that is supposed to have come from the site of modern Samarra. If the provenance is true, it would attest to building activity of a king of Urkiš and Nawar on the middle Tigris. The limits of Tiš-atal's realm may have been roughly comparable to those known for Šalmaneser I of Assyria. One of his building inscriptions (see Frame and Donbaz, ARRIM 1 [1983] pp. 1–5) attests to temple constructions (among others) in the cities of Kaḫat (on the Ḫabūr) and Nineveh.

1

Two copper lion pegs and a limestone tablet of unsure provenance — they may have come from the modern site of Amouda or vicinity — mention a certain Tiš-atal as *endan* of Urkiš. The pieces clearly came from an ancient foundation deposit. They are now housed in museums in New York and Paris.

CATALOGUE

Ex.	Museum number	Dimensions (cm)	Lines preserved	cpn
1	Copper lion pegs AO 19937	Lion: 12.2×8.5 Copper plate: 8.5×5.6	1–5	c
2	MMA 48.180 Grey limestone foundation tablet	Lion: 11.7×7.9	Traces only	c
3	AO 19938	10×9×3	1–25	p

COMMENTARY

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 Hattuša 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 Lubadaga 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, Florilegium marianum 2 p. 270) notes:

A. Archi a proposé que l'association Déesse de Nagar/Dieu-soleil/Addu dans l'inscription hurrite forme une triade. Le-Dieu-soleil serait donc le fils divin.

Ex. 1 was kindly collated by B. André-Salvini and ex. 2 by I. Sparr 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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TEXT

- 1) *ti-iš-a-tal*
- 2) *en-da-an*
- 3) *ur-kiš.KI*
- 4) *pu-ur-li*
- 5) ^dPIRIG.GAL
- 6) *pá- 'à-áš-tum*
- 7) *pu-ru-li*
- 8) *a-di- 'à-al-li*
- 9) ^dlu-ba-da-ga-áš
- 10) *ša-ak-ru-in*
- 11) *e-me-ni*
- 12) *tá-áš-pí- 'à-al-li*
- 13) ^dlu-ba-da-ga-áš
- 14) *tá-áš-pu-in*
- 15) AN
- 16) *ha-wa- 'à-a*
- 17) *ha-su-e-in*
- 18) ^dNIN *na-gâr.KI*
- 19) ^dUTU-ga-an
- 20) ^dIŠKUR
- 21) *e-me-ni*
- 22) *tá-áš-bi- 'à-al-li*
- 23) *in-u-be*
- 24) *i-na-u-be*
- 25) *SI(?)-ti-in*

1–6) 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.