A New Wife for Šu-Sin*

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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-Sin. 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-Sin, 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. udu-ni-ĝa 4-kam-ūs 4-utu
2. udu-ni-ĝa gud-eš-ū-saš
3. nim-fé-ša gal
4. udu-ni-ĝa māš-gār-ni-ĝa 4-kam-ūs
5. n]anna
6. udu-ni-ĝa gud-e-ūs-saš
7. na-na-a
8. ENU-EN.I-a-bu-šu sågi maskim
9. šiskur ša fē-ša gal-[il]
10. udu-ni-ĝa gud-e-ūs-saš
11. māš-gal-ni-ĝa gud-eš-ūs-saš
12. e-muqaldim mu-kaš-e-neša
13. šarad-muš, mask[i]jim
14. ša nibr[
15. udu-ni-ĝa ki-a-nag ša-ku-ma-tum lukurugal
16. ša tā-ku-ma-tum ša-ku-ma-tum lukurugal
17. a-mur-DINGIR rā-gaba maskim
18. ša PIZUR-[E[N.I] ra-ša-ša]
19. a-gi, ba-a
20. udu 24-kam

1. One fattened, fourth-grade sheep (for) the god Utu;
2. one fattened, gud-e-ūs-sa-grade sheep (for) the goddess Ninegal;
3. two fattened sheep (and) one fattened fourth-grade female kid (for) the goddess Inanna;
4. one fattened, gud-e-ūs-sa-grade sheep (and) one fattened, gud-e-ūs-sa-grade he-goats (for) the kitchen, on behalf of the runners;
the basic arrangement of the text is standard, resembling that of numerous other Ur III documents. The persons mentioned are all known from other Drehem texts, with the exception of the wife of Su-Sin who appears in lines 16 and 17. The name Amur-ili occurs in various Ur III documents, but never, as far as I am aware, with the profession of mounted messenger (ra-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 ti-ku-matum and is presumably to be read Takum-matum (takûn-mûtu) 'The-Country-Is-Loyal'. She becomes the fourth wife attested for Su-Sin, the others being Kubatum, A.AB.BA-basti 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'.

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. The only royal women of this period besides Takum-matum for whom libation places are known are an unnamed queen of Ur-Namru, Šulgi-simti (a queen of Sulgi), Gme-Ninlila (possibly a wife, lukur, of Šulgi), and Abi-simti (a queen of Sulgi or Amar-Sin). Thus, although we know nothing about Takum-matum beyond the fact that at one time she had been one of Su-Sin's wives, she must have been highly esteemed during her lifetime since offerings were made to her after her death.