

Messengers from Šuruppak

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§1. *Introduction*¹

§1.1. Intrinsic to the earliest urbanization of southern Mesopotamia were the many trade, diplomatic journeys and military movements of persons and goods to and from cities within as well as beyond the alluvial plain. From the Uruk expansion onwards, archaeology has furnished evidence of trading settlements related to but in locations beyond Sumer, while history, from its very beginning, has suggested expeditions to Elam, to Dilmun, Meluhha, Mari, Ebla and elsewhere. History does not recognise the city state without an underpinning of an inter-city network of communications.

§1.2. Some of these communications were dysfunctional, arising from conflict, but others reinforced the urbanization process through trade and diplomatic missions. The earliest texts we understand from the first part of Early Dynastic III are not at all explicit about these. The Fara texts, however, while mainly dealing with the provision of rations, land and animals to various categories in the citizenry, do show via attestations of their occupations that in addition to a military network, a substantial trading activity existed and further, that it was probably supplemented by other kinds of missions from Šuruppak to cities in Elam and elsewhere.

§1.3. This paper reviews the evidence for inter city and regional communications in the Fara texts, from the various occupations involved in these trade and military ventures, and also offers a new interpretation of a ‘Sammel-tafel’ as a possible summary of ‘messenger’ texts amongst the Fara documents.

¹ I would like to acknowledge the extensive use made in producing this paper of both the database of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI <<http://cdli.ucla.edu>>) and of the Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts (BDTNS <<http://bdts.filol.csic.es>>).

§2. *Trade*

§2.1. Trade, especially long distance trade, has been argued to be an essential and prime driver of state formation, which, during the fourth millennium, intensified social complexity and furthered the growth of urbanism (Algaze 2008). From this viewpoint, trade or exchange is the cause of social complexity rather than its consequence. The opposing view is that a complex social organization and the production of a surplus are an essential antecedent to provide trading capital and, also as a priority, an internal (to the city) enabling redistribution system. “Foreign trade logically needs to follow this” (Postgate 2003). Irrespective of whether it is a chicken or an egg, commerce, both local and long distance trade, generated trafficking of people and commodities between cities and regions.

§2.2. The presence of copper, silver and gold implements in the Archaic and ED lexical lists testifies to the early import of metals from outside Sumer. Neither these metals, nor stone and timber used in building, occurred naturally in southern Mesopotamia.

§2.3. By the Fara period both copper and silver were mediums of exchange. In texts from Šuruppak, which record the inter vivos transfers of real property, each of the elements of the tripartite prices (sa_{10} , nig_2 -diri and nig_2 -ba) for which land and houses were traded, for the most part were measured in quantities of copper. A small number of properties were priced in silver and very few in barley.

§2.4. Copper and tin were traded into ED Girsu from Dilmun and this particular commerce can be attested from the second half of the third millennium through the Old Babylonian period (Foster 1997: 59). In the earlier period Lagash probably specialised in the Dilmun copper trade and also during the third millennium, trade

with Elam may also have been a speciality of Lagash and Umma (Postgate 2003: 10 and n. 5). “These single routes would have served the cities of South Mesopotamia, as a whole, even when they remained mutually independent,” and may indicate the collective organization of the southern cities discernible in the late 4th and 3rd millennia.

§2.5. However, a collective organization of the southern cities in the Fara period may primarily have been a military alliance centered on Šuruppak taking the form of a “hexapolis” or an amphictyony of the Sumerian cities Adab, Lagash, Nippur, Umma and Uruk as well as Šuruppak, perhaps subject to the hegemony of the northern power, Kish (Pomponio 1994: 16).

§3. Workers

§3.1. Soldiers and workers from each of these cities were stationed in or close to Šuruppak and environs and were victualled from there. Kish may have been the political head of this league of cities but Šuruppak was its “seat of accountability” (Foster 2005: 85). In the Fara texts both soldiers and workers are termed *guruš*. Both are conscripted to the *corvée*². The conscription for battle was comprised of *guruš-me*₃, while workers conscripted other than for battle were builders, other artisans and sometimes females, all perhaps providing some kind of logistical support (Visicato 1995: 69)³.

§3.2. Yet another class of workers is constituted by the *iri-kas*₄/DU⁴. Like those conscripted for battle, the *iri-kas*₄/DU emanate from each of the cities of the hexapolis and are denoted *guruš* “workers,” appearing to be seasonally employed in Šuruppak and its environs where they reside

² See *WF* 92 rev. i 1-2: *šu-nigin*₂ 670 *guruš*, *lu*₂ *dab*₃-*dab*₅-*ba* “670 workers, these are the seized/conscripted men” and *WF* 94 rev ii 1-2: *an-še*₃-*gu*₂ 650 *guruš*, *ki-en-gi* *lu*₂ *dab*₅.

³ See *WF* 95 in which 680 *guruš* are allocated by groups of officials for battle *me*₃ (rev. iv 1-3). They are assigned to eleven squads of sixty and one of 20. Also *WF* 92 records the conscription of 670 *guruš* for military service from the cities of the hexapolis. That they are assigned to battle is confirmed by *WF* 101 obv. i 1-2, where the same 670 are *guruš-me*₃ DU “*guruš* who go to battle” are provided with foodstuffs (*nig*₂-*gu*₇). *WF* 101 also registers the provision of foodstuffs and cedar oil to 1612 *guruš*, who in *WF* 93 are made up of 1532 *guruš*, 39 dependent building workers and 41 *geme*₂ “female workers.”

⁴ In the Fara texts, the term *iri-kas*₄ is also written *iri-DU*, i.e., with either DU^{šesig} (*TSS* 292, *WF* 67, and *WF* 68) or DU (*NTSS* 211, *TSS* 86, *WF* 69, *WF* 70). Visicato (1994: 53) translates the term “having come into the city” and I assume with Visicato that these messengers have come to

temporarily.⁵ These workers receive rations at the rate of 2 *barig* and 4 *ban*₂ of barley each, the normal monthly remuneration of the non-supervising artisans of Šuruppak (Visicato 1994: 33). These *guruš* probably were attached to a Fara household *e*₂ *iri-DU* (ibid.), which when included in Visicato’s reconstruction of the Šuruppak bureaucracy was administered by the office of the *gal-nimgir* through his subordinate *nimgir*. The supervision of the *iri-kas*₄/DU by officials called *nimgir*, frequently translated “heralds,” suggests a role in the communication system of the hexapolis of the kind proposed by Visicato.⁶

§4. Boatmen

§4.1. These communications—possibly some military movements, but certainly trade and other interactional relations between the cities of the “hexapolis” as well as cities even further afield—were likely to have enjoyed considerable advantages from water transport on the canals and rivers of the southern alluvium. The colophon at *WF* 67 rev. vii⁷ classifies the text as *dub lu*₂ *ma*₂ “account/document of the boatmen” and records the distribution of 657 1/2 *gur-mah* of barley rations to boatmen and others. In the Fara texts the boatmen were variously *lu*₂ *ma*₂-*gal-gal* “bargee,” *lu*₂ *ma*₂ *dub-sag* “lead boatman,” *lu*₂ *ma*₂ *sagi* “boatman of the cup-bearer,” *lu*₂ *ma*₂-*gur*₈ “sailor on cargo boat,” *lu*₂ *ma*₂-*ge*₆⁸ and *lu*₂ *ma*₂ *iri-kas*₄. *ma*₂-*lah*₄(/5) “boat/barge captain/sailor” with a similar meaning are also attested.⁹ The *lu*₂ *ma*₂ *iri-kas*₄ are probable evidence of the systems of communications and transport between the cities of the “hexapolis.” *WF* 67 rev. iv 15-rev. v 15

Šuruppak where they are paid with rations during their stay rather than have gone from Šuruppak.

⁵ Cf. *WF* 70, where six months worth of barley rations are distributed to a total of 94 *guruš* (rev. vii 5-9), comprising both *iri-DU* and female *nu-su*, in a *dub iri-DU* “account/document” of *iri-DU* and a *dub nimgir*, “document of (their) herald/official” supervisors.

⁶ Visicato (2001: 121) proposed that the *iri-DU* personnel travelled on behalf of the Šuruppak administration, guaranteed a communications system, and provided the “connective tissue of the Hexapolis.”

⁷ See also *WF* 68 and *WF* 69.

⁸ I don’t know what *ma*₂-*ge*₆ means. It might be a cognate of *ma*₂-*gi*₄-*lum magillu*, “a type of boat/barge,” perhaps a sailing boat. *lu*₂ *ma*₂-*ge*₆ might then be a sailor. On the other hand, *ge*₆ may be an abbreviated form of *gi-muš* “boat pole,” when *ma*₂-*ge*₆ might then refer to a punt and instead of a sailor we have a boatman who manoeuvres his boat with a pole.

⁹ In each of these attestations, the *lu*₂ preceding each lexeme is omitted. However, *TSS* 424 rev. ii 8-9, *TSS* 627 obv. v 5-6 and *TSS* 828 obv. ii 1-2 all read *utu-šita*, *ma*₂-*lah*₅.

list seven recipients of barley from three of the cities of the hexapolis, Uruk/Kullab, Umma and Adab, and these are collectively described as $lu_2 ma_2 iri-kas_4$ “boatmen of couriers/messengers (to) the city”.¹⁰ That one of the $lu_2 ma_2$ assigned rations is a boatman of the *sagi* “cupbearer” (*WF* 67 obv. iii 10-11) may also imply the transportation of an emissary.

§5. Merchants

§5.1. Explicit accounts of trade between Šuruppak and other cities in the “hexapolis,” or with cities elsewhere, hardly exist in the Fara administrative texts. Aside from texts registering the provision of barley or fields for their sustenance, or plough donkeys to work the fields, to *dam-gar₃* and their putative superiors, *gal dam-gar₃*, there are few descriptions of the activities of the city’s “merchant” class. In Visicato’s (1995: 91ff.) reconstruction of the bureaucracy of Šuruppak, the *dam-gar₃* and their subordinates were officials belonging to the office of the *gal dam-gar₃*. Visicato argues that this department was part of the central administrative organization of the *e₂-gal*. This may follow from the fact that the *e₂-gal* accounted for the provisioning of the merchants, but as in other times and places in Sumer, may not suggest that the merchants served only the palace administration.¹¹

A possible interpretation of *TSS* 627 obv. v 4-6, $21 ma_2 kab_2-di, utu-šita, ma_2-lah_3$ is that “21 boats are measured/allocated to Utu-šita, the boat captain.” See Civil (1994: 153-160) for the possibility and meaning of non-finite forms of the verb kab_2-du_{11}/di and see the discussion of kab_2 in the commentary to *TSS* 881 below. The allocation to Utu-šita in *TSS* 627 may be repeated in *TSS* 828 which records as follows: obv. 29 $ma_2, dumu-dumu, 21 ma_2, utu-šita, ma_2-lah_3$, blank, rev. $šu-nigin_2 40 ma_2, ma_2-lah_3 <ša_3> iri$. Clearly the total number of boats summarized on the reverse is the sum of the two allocations on the obverse of the tablet. I have emended the third line of the reverse to read $ša_3 iri$. For the meaning of $ša_3 iri$ cf. Cripps (2007: 122 n. 174).

¹⁰ A reviewer of this paper has appropriately queried whether we should understand $lu_2 ma_2 iri-kas_4$ as “boatmen of the *iri-kas₄*” or as “*iri-kas₄* who were boatmen.” This uncertainty is perhaps heightened by *TSS* 292 obv. iii 4-5 where $lu_2 ma_2$ and *iri-kas₄* are written in sequential cases rather than in the same case as in the other attestations. My own preference remains with the former, however. Similar examples of these alternative forms are evident in *WF* 67 obv. iii 10-11 where Ur-*d*Īstaran is described as $lu_2 ma_2 sagi$ (all in one case), whereas in *WF* 91 obv. vi and vii 3-5 $lu_2 ma_2$ and *sagi* are written in separate sequential cases. It is doubtful that we would argue that the “cupbearer” was a “boatman” rather than that we have a “boatman of a cupbearer.”

¹¹ The status of the Šuruppak *dam-gar₃* was probably com-

parable with the merchants of the Ur III period as depicted by Steinkeller (2004: 97ff.). Merchants in the Ur III state were state dependents. “As such they held plots of subsistence land and were beneficiaries of other forms of alimentation by the state. Their work for the state entailed the procurement of foreign goods and, even more importantly, the distribution throughout the state economy of perishables and other commodities that could not be handled efficiently by the central redistributive mechanisms. The same individuals ... were involved in purely private commercial activities ...”

§5.2. Whether it is possible to infer a department of the *gal dam-gar₃* as Visicato has done is perhaps moot. The Fara texts witness either four or five *gal dam-gar₃* who, given the likelihood “that a large majority of the tablets from the D.O.G. Fara excavation were written during one single year,” (Pomponio 2001: xxvii), may have severally and contemporaneously held these senior and supervisory offices.¹² On the other hand, the Fara texts record some forty-two *dam-gar₃*. Of these, two have the same personal names as two of the *gal dam-gar₃*: An-nu-me and Di-Utu. There is the possibility that these are the same persons as those also attested as *gal dam-gar₃*; sometimes they are referred to as *dam-gar₃* and on other occasions as *gal dam-gar₃*,¹³ but neither appears qualified as both in any text.¹⁴ Since both names are very common in the Fara onomasticon, it would not be much of a coincidence if there were both *gal dam-gar₃* and *dam-gar₃* with

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¹² These four or five *gal dam-gar₃* are An-nu-me (*WF* 9 obv. iii 9-10, *WF* 13 obv. iii 1-2, *NTSS* 205 obv. ii 3-4, *WF* 18 obv. i 8-9, *TSS* 668 obv. iii 2-3, *WF* 4 obv. ii 1-2), Di-Utu (*WF* 124 rev. i 11-12), Amar-šuba (*WF* 9 obv. iii 13-14, *WF* 13 obv. iii 5-6, *WF* 105 obv. v 3-4). *E₂-^dAnzu* (*WF* 9 obv. viii 10-11), and *E₂-^dAnzu₃^{mušēn}* (*WF* 25 obv. i 13-14). If *E₂-^dAnzu* is a hypocorism of *E₂-^dAnzu₃^{mušēn}* there are four *gal dam-gar₃*.

¹³ Cf. *Nik* 1, 53, in which Ur-*e₂-muš₃* is *dam-gar₃ e₂-munus* in Lugalanda 1 and in the same year, perhaps at the same time, in *Nik* 1, 85, is *gal dam-gar₃ ensi₂-ka*.

¹⁴ An-nu-me is recorded as *dam-gar₃* in *WF* 22 obv. ix 14-15, *TSS* 53 obv. iii, *TSS* 260 obv. i 4-5, *NTSS* 207 obv. iii 3-4, and *NTSS* 258 obv. iii 5-rev. i 1. Perhaps a different An-nu-me, *dam-gar₃*, A-*h_u-ti^{ki}* is attested in two texts recording the distribution of si-NU×U “fishery products” (Englund 1998: 140 n. 312) or “fishing gear” (Krebernik 1998: 357). The quantities distributed and the range of occupations to which si-NU×U are distributed suggest an item of alimentation rather than fishing gear. In *TSS* 415 obv. i 1-4 and *TSS* 627 obv. i 8-ii 2, An-nu-me, *dam-gar₃*, A-*h_u-ti^{ki}* could suggest a merchant from A_huti. *TSS* 415 is a primary record with only the one entry, which reappears on the *Sammeltafel TSS* 627. Di-utu *dam-gar₃* is present in the accounts *WF* 9 obv. v 2-3, *WF* 13 obv. iv 1-2, *NTSS* 207 obv. iii 4-5, *TSS* 1 rev. 7'-8'; *WF* 7 rev. i 6-7, and *WF* 22 rev. ii 10-11.

the same names.

§5.3. Both An-nu-me and Di-utu, like the large majority of the dam-gar₃ recorded in the Fara texts, were probably domiciled in Šuruppak, worked on behalf of the palace and held land as part of their sustenance and were supplied with animals (plough donkeys) to work their land.¹⁵ It may be that dam-gar₃, alongside scribes and others such as the “overseers of heralds,” enjoyed a relatively elevated status in the social stratification of Šuruppak. In *NTSS* 258 obv. iii v-rev. i 1, An-nu-me dam-gar₃ is one in a list of 17 lu₂ [x] umun₃, lu₂ TUR₃.¹⁶

§5.4. Evidence of a Fara merchant’s participation in the copper trade may be indicated by *CT* 50, 4, in which a merchant has probably acquired 109 “lbs” (mana) of copper at a price of about two thirds of a shekel of silver per pound of copper.¹⁷

¹⁵ An-nu-me dam-gar₃ held a 7 1/2 iku parcel of land (*TSS* 53 obv. ii 1-2) probably as šuku—see Pomponio (1994: 223) and Cripps (2007: 64ff.) for arguments that such field parcels should be considered to be šuku plots. In *WF* 22 obv. ix 14-15, An-nu-me is shown to be in receipt of three anše-apin. Also in *WF* 22 rev ii 10-11, Di-utu is supplied with two anše-apin and with another four in *WF* 9 obv. v 2-3. An-nu-me gal dam-gar₃ also receives four anše-apin in *WF* 9 obv. iii 9-10.

¹⁶ In my reading of Jestin’s autograph, *NTSS* 258 rev. iii 1-3 appears to be šu-nigin₂ 17, lu₂ [...] umun₂, lu₂ LAK 78, contrary to Foxvog’s transliteration on the CDLI site (P010516). Foxvog proposes simug for umun₂ and reads the much damaged sign in rev. iii 2 as kin. However, the preceding person list comprises scribes, merchants and overseers (ugula), one of whom manages nimgir. It may be that the Akkadian *mummu*, also written LU₂ UMUN₂, (see *CAD* M2 p. 197 s.v. *mummu* A) is an appropriate guide to the meaning here, with a meaning akin to “craftsmen” or “creators.” umun₂ has the glosses of “knowledge” and “cleverness.” “Workers with/for a smith” doesn’t fit. GAL UMUN₂ is also a profession in ED Lu₂ A (no. 29). The graph for TUR₂ (LAK 78), here written DIŠ+TUR₃, presents even further difficulty of interpretation. GAL TUR₂ is also included in the lexical text Lu₂ A (no. 28) and so it is quite likely that LU₂ TUR₃ is also a profession. However, Veldhuis (2002: 73-74) shows TUR₃ to be immal “cow” which in Fara times probably meant a domesticated animal rather than a wild cow as in later periods. “Cowmen” seems even less likely as describing the personnel in *NTSS* 258 than “smiths” or “smithy workers,” unless those not further qualified with an occupation are men who work with cows. In which case, *NTSS* 258 is a list of both high status professionals and some cowmen.

¹⁷ *CT* 50, 4 i-ii reads 2 gin₂ 2 ku₃ ma-na, 196 uruda ma-na, šu ba₄-ti, 109 PN, dam-gar₃ (rest blank), “2 mana 2 shekels of silver for 196 mana of copper was accepted. (For

§5.5. In addition, two texts suggest that the merchants, An-nu-me and Di-utu, traded copper and possibly silver to the citizens of Fara. *TSS* 260 records a distribution of a total of 40 “lbs” of copper among some seven or more people. About half of the copper is explicitly “delivered” (ba-de₆) to two people by An-nu-me dam-gar₃. It seems reasonable to infer that the remaining half of the copper may also have been delivered by An-nu-me to the individuals recorded, although this is not made explicit; nor can An-nu-me, dam-gar₃, ba-de₆ be restored in the damaged cases of the tablet. The tablet is probably a ‘Sammeltafel,’ since it contains two separate deliveries of copper to E₂-BALAG, and probably has a companion ‘Sammeltafel’ in *NTSS* 207, which records the same deliveries of copper by An-nu-me as well as two deliveries of copper by Di-Utu.¹⁸ The reverse of *NTSS* 207 may record allocations of silver; by whom is not evident from a much broken tablet.

§6. Merchant Emissaries and Long Distance Trade

§6.1. The majority of merchants in the Fara texts are called dam-gar₃. The dam-gar₃ could have been the only professional group or organization in Šuruppak responsible for the conduct of both local and long distance trade. However, it seems likely that a long distance trader, ga-eš₈(KASKAL), either of or going to ma₂-ga^{ki} receives 80 si-NU×U in *TSS* 369 rev. iii 5-7. There may also be a reference to this profession at *TSS* 881 rev. ii 1’.

§6.2. A related functionary may have been the dam-kas₄, who enjoyed a high status. Persons of this profession occur in three Fara texts and in at least two of the attestations appear to have senior professionals as functional dependents. In *TSS* 369, a recipient of si-NU×U and NINNI₅×U₂ is an official of a chief scribe who is subordinate to the dam-kas₄. In *TSS* 423 a dam-kas₄ has a sanga-GAR as a subordinate.

§6.3. While the dam-kas₄ may not formally be a merchant, the case for suggesting he plays some like role, perhaps as a long distance emissary, is perhaps twofold. The lexeme kas₄(DU×KASKAL) has a meaning “messenger” and his putative high status suggests that the dam-kas₄ should perhaps be considered in the same context—especially that proposed by Archi—as the maškim-gi₄ dis-

that price) PN the merchant (acquired) 109 (mana of copper).”

¹⁸ *TSS* 260 obv. i 1-6 and ii 1-5 read the same as *NTSS* 207 obv. i 1-3: 5 uruda ma-na, e₂-BALAG⁷, 5 en-abzu-[ta]-mud⁷, restore i 4-6 [an-nu-me, dam-gar₃, ba-de₆]; ii 1-4 repeats *TSS* 260 ii 1-5.

cussed later. Secondly, In *TSS* 369, the subordinate official of the dam-kaš₄ receives supplies of si-NU×U and bundles of reeds along with managers/overseers of cargo boats, a sailor of a merchant's cargo boat and a long distance trader, suggesting an affinity of the dam-kaš₄ with the trading and travelling community. Another text also records the supply of a commodity to a dam-kaš₄. The fragmentary text *TSS* 430 associates this profession with persons from other cities than Šuruppak; from Adab, IL₂^{ki} and Aḫuti^{ki}.

§6.4. The place Aḫuti^{ki} occurs as an epithet of An-nu-me, dam-gar₃ in *TSS* 415 and in *TSS* 627. The former text records the one allotment of 240 si-NU×U while the latter allocates a quantity of the same commodity to An-nu-me, dam-gar₃, A-ḫu-ti^{ki} in association with allocations to, among others, a variety of boatmen and sailors. This place name, epithetical to the merchant, suggests trade with the city of Aḫuti. Steinkeller (1991: 40 n. 64) has noted that the location of Aḫuti is unknown but was probably not in Babylonia.¹⁹ It was certainly accessible from Šuruppak by river since *TSS* 430 obv. iv' 3'-4' refers to a "boatman of" me^r me₃¹ a-ḫu-ti^{ki}, while obv. iv' 5' registers the allocation of 120 (gur) of flour² to the Aḫuti boat, (120 (gur) ma₂ a-ḫu-ti^{ki}). Since in ED IIIa Šuruppak was located on the main stream of the Euphrates, as was Mari, and since Aḫuti may have been near Mari (see fn. 19), it is probable that it was located on the same river.

§6.5. Long distance trade to Madga (ma₂-ga^{ki}) also on the Euphrates, perhaps some 430 kilometers towards Mari, can also be posited from the Fara tablet *TSS* 369 obv. iii 5-7, where 80 si-NU×U, ga-eš₈, ma₂-ga^{ki}, "80 si-NU×U are allocated to the long-distance trader (of?) Madga."²⁰ Madga and Hit are possibly the same place which was both a regional source of bitumen and a regional center of a river ordeal, Heimpel (2009: 25). The most prolific source of bitumen in ancient Mesopotamia accessible to a navigable river was at Hit and "it is to be expected that as long as bitumen was used, the bitumen wells of Madga/

Hit were the principal source for southern Mesopotamia" (Heimpel 2009: 59).²¹

§6.6. Given the presence of many boatmen in the Fara texts, it is clear that there must have been considerable boat building and repair activity at Šuruppak, an activity affirmed by the significant occurrence of ma₂-GIN₂, "boat builders/caulkers," among lists of boatmen and others receiving rations and other payments of barley.²² In *WF* 67, the previously discussed dub₂ lu₂ ma₂, five ma₂-GIN₂ each receive 2 gur(-mah) of barley, probably rations for six months. It is not unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that the importation of bitumen to Šuruppak from Madga via the Euphrates would have been similar in scope to that described for Umma and Girsu in the Ur III period by Heimpel.

²¹ This accepts Heimpel's identification of Madga with Hit. Heimpel shows that the LGN (Frayne 1992: 54-57) location of Madga in the Jebel Qumar, northwest of the Diyala, is improbable. Frayne's reliance on Ur III references to ma-da-ga and the Gudea inscriptions is correctly dismissed by Heimpel. However, residual difficulties with Hit as the location of Madga are, firstly, that Madga in its LGN location is, on the face of it, referred to in the royal inscription of Erridu-pizir, king of Gutium (*RIME* 2.2.1 & 2 & 3.1, ex. 1 i 22, admittedly in a restored attestation on an Old Babylonian tablet). The king's campaign to recapture his mountain kingdom after a revolt by the king and people of Simarrum, the Lullubi and others, purportedly included Madga. Since this campaign took place in the mountainous Transtigridian, a Jebel Qumar and modern Kifri location may remain plausible. Secondly, modern Hit, though contested, is identified by some scholars with a second and southern Tuttul primarily on the grounds that the Sargonic campaigns against Mari and Ebla, took routes which were via a Tuttul more likely to be located on the mid-Euphrates than at the Tuttul (Tell Bi'a) in Syria at the confluence of the Habur and Euphrates. Cf. Astour (2002: 68-69) for a full discussion and further lexical and textual justifications. However, it may be reasonable to hypothesize that in the first part of the Early Dynastic, given the course of the river before its migration further to the west, access to a major bitumen source along the Euphrates from Šuruppak may have been more direct than a journey across to the Tigris then up the Diyala then overland through the Jebel Hamrin and north through Awal to Madga. A boat trip on the Euphrates from Šuruppak was conceivably less onerous.

¹⁹ It is possible to infer from Steinkeller's note and *MVN* 15, 189 rev. 1-6, the only other text referring to Aḫuti, that it was accessible to Mari and was part of the Ur III state's "periphery." Its occurrence in the Ebla geographical list may also suggest a location to the west of Sumer.

²⁰ *TSS* 369 may well be the first administrative document to attest to Madga. Heimpel (2009: 28) thought that the first attestations of the place name in administrative documents was in Old Akkadian texts from Girsu. This text clearly precedes those. Heimpel (id.) also shows that the spellings ma₂-ga^{ki} and ma-da-ga^{ki} are each an early variant of Madga.

²² Eleven Fara texts list ma₂-GIN₂: *TSS* 130, *TSS* 424, *TSS* 627, *WF* 62, *WF* 67, *WF* 68, *WF* 69, *WF* 76, *WF* 91, *WF* 107 and *WF* 110. Some, especially *WF* 67, 68 and 69, contain identical entries relating to the same persons, as they comprise a sequence of primary, intermediate and summary accounts.

§7. 'Messenger Texts' in Šuruppak?

§7.1. Featured, and largely unexplained, among the Ur III texts from both Girsu and Umma are the considerable number of so-called 'messenger texts'; some 3500 published and unpublished from Girsu;²³ about 2670 from Umma.²⁴ Summaries of the contents and role of these texts are given by Mander and colleagues (see fnn. 23-24). Traditionally, as Mander noted, scholars have considered that these documents generally record rations allotted to *missi dominici* or messengers of the Ur III king. Potts (1999: 137), for example, described these rations as allotments to travellers, such as couriers (*sukkal* or *kas*₄) and high officials (e.g., *ensi*₂) between peripheral regions of the Ur III Empire, more distant vassal states, and the center at Ur. However, as Scharlach (2003: 867-868) has noted, we don't understand at a fundamental level what these texts are. Were the recipients of rations really messengers? Where did they live and why were they entitled to rations? We could even ask, were these expenditures actually rations? The quantities allotted would hardly sustain the recipients for very long. Perhaps they were also the beneficiaries of other rations. Many questions can be and are asked by the scholars researching this subgenre of administrative texts.

§7.2. The Ur III 'messenger texts' have a number of distinguishing features that have been enumerated by Mander (2008: 119-121) in respect to the Girsu texts and similarly for those from Umma by d'Agostino & Pomponio (2008: 126). Some of these characteristics can be used to ask whether comparable accounts were created to register similar activities in other areas of Sumer and in different periods. Here the question is being asked of the ED IIIa texts from Šuruppak.

§7.3. Only some of the idiosyncrasies of the Ur III texts are of relevance. The physical features of the tablets, for example, are not transferrable. Aspects of the subject matter of the texts may be a guide, however. These include "the typologies of the rations, the frequent presence of Elamites (NIM), the recording only of outgoing commodities, the ... composition of the rations and indications of movements to or from or staying in places" (Mander 2008). The commodities expended as rations were for the most part quite small quantities of bread (*ninda*), beer (*kaš*), vegetable oil (*i*₃(-geš)), tallow (*i*₃-*udu*), flour (*zi*₃) and barley grits (*dabin*). In the Umma texts, the commodities are usually comprised of bread, beer and oil, but also onions and the herb *naga* and some-

times fish (d'Agostino & Pomponio 2008: 126).

§7.4. Visicato (1994: 206) suggests that two brief Fara texts (*NTSS* 140 and *TSS* 135) may be considered to be 'messenger texts' based on the commonality of personal names in the two texts and the origins or destinations of the beneficiaries of the expenditures, Umma, Elam²⁵ and Kish. The goods expended are, in the first text, two *še mar* to each beneficiary and in the second, two *dug-a-nag* "vessels" to the Elamite and one each to the remaining recipients. There is no real understanding of what either of these commodities is.

§8. A Fresh Look at *TSS* 881

§8.1. Given Šuruppak's apparent role as a Sumerian hub of Early Dynastic communications and hegemonic activity, there were conceivably many more Fara texts not found but which may be considered to share some of the idiosyncrasies of the Ur III 'messenger texts,' providing accounts of the issue of rations to travellers to and from the city. A text which potentially summarizes a number of primary accounts of this genre may be *TSS* 881. Jestin's (1937) autograph of the tablet has ten columns on the obverse and ten on the reverse. A transliteration and photographs of *TSS* 881 are available on the CDLI site. Both obverse and reverse contain much destruction, though sufficient text perhaps remains to facilitate a fresh interpretation of its meaning and role.

§8.2. The tablet originates from ED IIIa Šuruppak and now resides in the Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Istanbul, via the DOG excavations at Fara at the beginning of the 20th century. Its find spot on the Fara mound is unknown, and the find numbers of the Istanbul texts are missing from the tablets (Krebernik 1998: 246). Neither Deimel, who published the Vorderasiatisches Museum's share of the tablets, nor Jestin, referred to the find spots or excavation numbers of the tablets when publishing them (Martin 2001: 4). Archaeology therefore does not greatly assist interpretation of the text.

§8.3. A further impediment to interpretation of the tablet, aside from its physical damage, is created by the nature of the Fara period writing system (Krebernik 1998: 271ff.). The cuneiform writing system of the Fara tablets represented a transitional phase between a "pure" logographic system and a mixed logographic/phonographic system with fully pronounced phonetic complements. The dividing line between rebus and syllabic spellings is

²³ See Mander (2008: 119).

²⁴ See d'Agostino & Pomponio (2008: 125).

²⁵ NIM in *TSS* 135 i 2 should probably be considered an origin, but translated "Elamite."

still very blurred. The order of signs within cases is also fluid.

§8.4. In the administrative texts from Šuruppak the existence of verbal forms is rare and cannot reliably be recognized as such. This has the consequence that in many of these records, it is difficult at the outset to discern their meaning. For example, is a particular text an account of receipts by the administration or of items of expenditure by it? This inability to readily identify the “direction” of transactions is probably significant in that it makes attempts to reconstruct the administration in Šuruppak rudimentary (Edzard 1979: 155-156).

§8.5. There has been no detailed consideration of the text since Jestin’s publication. Edzard (1976: 181) perhaps provides the most substantial information concerning the tablet. Edzard identifies it as a ‘Sammeltafel’ with at least twenty columns. A series of transactions (‘Vorgänge’) is filed in an account and each may end, but not in every instance, with an entry of the maškim who administered the process. Particular attention is drawn to the entries of maškim-gi₄. This, however, is the extent of Edzard’s discussion of the text. Pomponio and Visicato (1994: 3) consider the text to be a register of various goods. Similarly Krebernik (1998:359) catalogues the text as ‘Wirtschaftstext Verschiedenes.’ My own transliteration (following) contains a considerable number of departures from previous efforts, and is also translated. Compared with many of the Fara administrative texts, some translation is a considerable aid to understanding the text.

§8.6. A Fara ‘Sammeltafel’ collects together on a single tablet, and thus in a summary account, several, perhaps many, individual transactions or events each of which may originally have been recorded on separate tablets. Pomponio and Visicato (1994: 21-22) suggest that one of the peculiarities of the administrative documentation of Fara is that the same allocation (the same quantity of goods to the same recipient) may be repeated in several texts. At least three groups of documents can be distinguished. 1. *Primary documents* that are created at the time goods are delivered. 2. *Intermediate documents* or *partial summaries*: in addition to summaries of items from primary documents, they may repeat entries from other intermediate documents. 3. ‘*Sammeltafeln*’ that group together partial summaries recording the delivery of similar types of goods at fixed intervals of a month or six months, but sometimes incorporate primary records directly into them.

§8.7. Approximately three dozen transactions are registered in TSS 881. Each extant transaction registers the allocation to a person or persons of quantities of barley (še), barley grits (dabin), varieties of beer (kaš, kurun₂) or barley products (bappir, še) to make beer. There are few exceptions to these types of consumables as subjects of each allocation. Oil is given out in obv. i 1’; a shawl in obv. v 7’ and a quantity of zisig flour in rev. vi 14’. This range of goods satisfies the Pomponio/Visicato criteria for a ‘Sammeltafel,’ since there is a high degree of homogeneity in the commodities allocated in the transactions and there is less variability in the kinds of goods allocated by the different sub-accounts than we might expect from the Pomponio/Visicato and Krebernik classifications of TSS 881.

§8.8. Its identification as a ‘Sammeltafel’ is further justified, as Edzard suggested, by the evidence that each account of each allocation of commodities is terminated with the name of the administrator who authorized, made, or otherwise oversaw it. In addition, a fair proportion of the transactions summarized are clearly “actioned” by a verbal phrase and some less obviously by a logogram which may depict the stem of a verb. Rev. iv 17’, v 3’, 7’, and vi 5’ all read šu ba-ti, “he received it;” obv. vii 2’ contains mu-GAR, perhaps “loaded here”²; rev. vi 10’ reads ab-tag “is holding it back”²; rev. vii 5’ reads an-gi₄, “is returning”; all of which are finite forms. The logograms NINDA₂×ŠE, to be read sa₁₀, is written in obv. iii 8’, obv. vii 8’ and 14’: also rev. vi 8’ and KA×A, probably to be understood as kab₂, occurs in obv. v 17’, vii 13’, viii 10’, rev. i 6’, ii 2’ and 6’, iii 13’ and viii 7’. However, kab₂ is also preceded by the ventive prefix mu- in rev. ii 15’, confirming a verbal interpretation for the compound logogram KA×A.

§9. TSS 881 – Transliteration and Translation

Obverse

i

beginning of column missing

1’.	[...] i ₃ sila ₃	... liters oil,
2’.	1 [x] sila ₃	1 liter [x],
3’.	3(barig) dabin	180 liters fine barley grits,
	┌ tur ┐-tur	
4’.	ensi ₂ -GAR-gal	(to) ensi ₂ -GAR-gal,
5’.	[...]	...;
6’.	3 še lid ₂ -ga	720 liters barley,
7’.	x-ma	x-ma
8’.	┌ KA ┐ ma-KI [(...)]	KA ma-KI (...)

rest of column missing

ii

beginning of column missing

1’.	[...] a ₂ -ki-ti	... Akiti,
2’.	e ₂ -kur	E-kur,

3'. e ₂ -zi	<i>E-zi;</i>	7'. tug ₂ gu ₂ -la ₂	<i>shawl,</i>
4'. 4 kaš ba- [┐] an [┐]	<i>40 liters beer,</i>	8'. e ₂ -gi ₄ [...]	<i>E-gi ...,</i>
5'. 4 bappir kaš ba-an	<i>40 liters bappir for beer,</i>	9'. [...]	<i>...</i>
6'. [...]x ba-de ₆	<i>PN² took,</i>	10'. [...]	<i>...</i>
7'. ^d sud ₃ -da-maḥ-di	<i>Sud-da-maḥdi,</i>	11'. [e ₂]-ki	<i>[E]-ki,</i>
8'. IB	<i>IB;</i>	12'. IB	<i>IB,</i>
9'. 3 [lid ₂]-ga še	<i>720 liters barley,</i>	13'. dumu a ₂ -nu-kuš ₂	<i>subordinate of A-nu-kuš,</i>
10'. [...]giri ₃	<i>...-giri,</i>	14'. maškim	<i>the administrator;</i>
	<i>rest of column missing</i>	15'. 1 (ban ₂) še	<i>10 liters barley,</i>
iii		16'. GIRI ₃ sukkal	<i>(to) GIRI courier,</i>
	<i>beginning of column missing</i>	17'. kab ₂	<i>measured,</i>
1'. [...] še	<i>... barley,</i>	18'. lu ₂ -bara ₂ -[si ²⁶]	<i>Lu-bara-[si],</i>
2'. [┐] il [┐] -tu[-tu ²]	<i>(to) Il-tu[-tu²],</i>		<i>rest of column missing</i>
3'. a ₂ -e ₃ -x	<i>(subordinate of) A-e-x,</i>	vi	
4'. kab ₂	<i>measured,</i>		<i>beginning of column missing</i>
5'. ^d sud ₃ -da-maḥ-di	<i>Sud-da-maḥdi,</i>	1'. [...]ta	<i>[...]-ta,</i>
6'. IB	<i>IB;</i>	2'. unu ₃	<i>cattle herder,</i>
7'. 2(ban ₂) še	<i>20 liters barley,</i>	3'. AN	<i>AN,</i>
8'. e ₂ -engur sa ₁₀	<i>(to) E-engur measured out;</i>	4'. UR-UR	<i>UR-UR,</i>
9'. 1 [še lid ₂]-ga	<i>240 liters [barley],</i>	5'. maškim	<i>administrator</i>
10'. ad-[da ²]	<i>(to) Ad[da²];</i>	6'. maškim-gi ₄	<i>(of) palace agent/overseer of</i>
11'. 10 [...]	<i>10 ...,</i>		<i>messengers (kaš₄);</i>
12'. [...]	<i>...</i>	7'. 5 lid ₂ -ga 1(barig)	<i>1260 liters barley grits,</i>
13'. [...]	<i>...</i>	dabin	
14'. [...]TUR	<i>...-TUR,</i>	8'. 3 sila ₃ kurun ₂	<i>3 liters sweet beer,</i>
15'. [...] x	<i>... x</i>	9'. 1 (n) dabin [...]	<i>n (liters) barley grits,</i>
	<i>rest of column missing</i>	10'. [...]	<i>...</i>
iv		11'. [...]	<i>...</i>
	<i>beginning of column missing</i>	12'. [...n] lid ₂ -ga	<i>... n liters,</i>
1'. lunga ₃	<i>brewer,</i>	13'. AB-si-gar	<i>AB-si-gar</i>
2'. a ₂ -nu-kuš ₂	<i>A-nu-kuš,</i>	14'. zimbir _x ^{ki}	<i>(from) Sippar,</i>
3'. maškim	<i>administrator;</i>		<i>(UD.LAM.NUN.KI)</i>
4'. 1(barig) dabin	<i>60 liters barley grits,</i>	15'. lugal ²⁷	<i>(representative of the) king;</i>
5'. al ₆ -la dumu	<i>(to) Alla son of</i>	16'. 2(ban ₂) dabin	<i>20 liters barley grits,</i>
6'. e ₂ -kur	<i>E-kur,</i>	17'. lu ₂ ma ₂ -gid ₂	<i>boat tower,</i>
7'. utu	<i>(of) Utu,</i>	18'. da-ti- [...]	<i>Dati- [...],</i>
8'. ANŠE-SAR [(...)]	<i>ANŠE-SAR (...),</i>		<i>rest of column missing</i>
9'. [...]	<i>...</i>	vii	
10'. [...]	<i>...</i>		<i>beginning of column missing</i>
11'. [...]	<i>...</i>	1'. [...]e ₂	<i>[...]-e,</i>
12'. [...]	<i>...</i>	2'. dilmun mu-GAR	<i>loaded here for Dilmun²</i>
13'. 4 sila ₃ kaš	<i>4 liters beer,</i>	3'. 2-kam ₄	<i>a second (time),</i>
14'. 1/2 sila ₃ kurun ₂	<i>1/2 liter sweet beer,</i>	4'. UR-UR	<i>UR-UR,</i>
15'. [┐] en [┐] -ki	<i>Enki,</i>	5'. maškim	<i>administrator;</i>
16'. daḥ	<i>Daḥ,</i>	6'. 3(ban ₂) dabin	<i>30 liters barley grits,</i>
17'. kalam- [...]	<i>Kalam- ...,</i>	7'. 3(ban ₂) dabin tur-tur	<i>30 liters fine barley grits,</i>
	<i>rest of column missing</i>	8'. 3(ban ₂) še kaš sa ₁₀	<i>30 liters barley for beer</i>
v			<i>measured out,</i>
	<i>beginning of column missing</i>	9'. 1(barig) še anše	<i>60 liters barley for donkey</i>
1'. [...] i-[ri ₂ ²]-gi	<i>... I[ri²]gi,</i>		
2'. lu ₂ URUxA	<i>man from Arawa,</i>		
3'. UR-UR	<i>UR-UR,</i>		
4'. maškim	<i>administrator,</i>		
5'. maškim-gi ₄	<i>(of) palace agent/overseer of</i>		
	<i>messengers (kaš₄);</i>		
6'. 2(barig) 1(ban ₂) še	<i>130 liters barley,</i>		

²⁶ See Pomponio (1987: 146) who refers to a photo.

²⁷ See Pomponio (1994: 17) for the suggestion that this official of Sippar, that was not part of the "Hexapolis," was also employed by a king, probably of Kish. See also Foster's (2005: 82-83) acceptance that the king of the Fara texts was the king of Kish.

		(fodder),	
10'	sag-tuku	(to) Sag-tuku,	
11'	dumu	subordinate	
12'	e ₂ -ti-la	of E-tila,	
13'	kab ₂	measured;	
14'	4(ban ₂) še kaš sa ₁₀	40 liters barley for beer measured out,	
15'	┌ dim ₂ ┐-[...]	Dim(...),	
	rest of column missing		
viii	beginning of column missing		
1'	nig ₂ -diri	the surplus,	
2'	nin-u ₂ -ga ₂ ³ -ta	Nin-uga ³ -ta,	
3'	sagi	cupbearer,	
4'	nam-maḥ	Nam-maḥ,	
5'	dub-sar	scribe;	
6'	1(barig) la ₂ 1(ban ₂) še	50 liters barley,	
7'	giri ₃	(to) Giri,	
8'	dumu	subordinate	
9'	IB-gibil ₆	of IB-gibil,	
10'	kab ₂	measured,	
11'	iti 3	month 3,	
12'	šubur	Šubur,	
13'	maškim	administrator;	
14'	2(ban ₂) še	20 liters barley,	
15'	anše	donkey (fodder),	
	rest of column missing		
ix	beginning of column missing		
1'	┌ 4(ban ₂) ┐ dabin	40 liters barley grits,	
2'	┌ 4(ban ₂) ┐ dabin [tur-tur]	40 liters [fine] barley grits,	
3'	[...]	...,	
4'	GAN ₂ -gir ₂ -sur	GAN-gir-sur,	
5'	mu-gid ₂ -da	?	
6'	nam-maḥ	Nam-maḥ,	
7'	dub-sar	scribe,	
8'	Lugal-[...]	Lugal(...),	
	rest of column missing		
x	beginning of column missing		
1'	[...] lu ₂	[...]-lu,	
2'	il ₂	Il,	
3'	utu	Utu,	
4'	izi-huš-na-si-ga	Izi-hušna-siga,	
5'	lu ₂ -bara ₂ -si	Lu-bara-si,	
6'	šu-i	Šu-i,	
7'	maškim	administrator;	
8'	1 lid ₂ -ga 3(barig) ²⁸ še ^{??}	420 liters <barley>,	
9'	2 [...]	2 ...,	

²⁸ Jestin's copy has 1 lid₂-ga 4(barig). I read the 4 as 3 on the photograph at CDLI no. P010929; this is more likely in any event, since 4 barig = 1 lid₂-ga, which would have resulted in 2 lid₂-ga.

rest of column missing

Reverse

i

beginning of column missing

1'	1(barig) dabin	60 liters barley grits,
2'	2 sila ₃ kaš	2 liters of beer,
3'	1/2 sila ₃ kaš	1/2 liter beer,
4'	1/2 sila ₃ kurun ₂	1/2 liter sweet beer,
5'	ab-e ₃	(to) Ab-e
6'	kab ₂	measured,
7'	e ₂ -zi	E-zi;
8'	1 lid ₂ -ga 2(barig) dabin	360 liters barley grits,
9'	dur-dur ₂	Dur-dur,
10'	e ₂ -du ₃	E-du,
11'	il ₂ -eš ₅	Il-eš,
12'	šu ba-ti	received,
13'	nam-maḥ	Nam-maḥ,

rest of column missing

ii

beginning of column missing

1'	du-du ga-eš ₈	Du-du, long-distance trader,
2'	kab ₂	measured,
3'	ki UR-UR	(at) the place of UR-UR;
4'	2(ban ₂) še	20 liters barley,
5'	lugal-giri ₃	(to) Lugal-giri,
6'	kab ₂	measured,
7'	ki UR-UR	(at) the place of UR-UR,
8'	2-kam ₄	a second (time),
9'	nam-maḥ	Nam-maḥ,
10'	dub-sar	scribe;
11'	┌ 2(ban ₂) ┐ dabin	20 liters barley grits,
12'	[...]	...
13'	[x] LAK672 lunga ₃	[x] LAK672, brewer,
14'	šu-nigin ₂	altogether
15'	mu-kab ₂	were measured here
16'	nam-[maḥ]	by Nam-[maḥ],
17'	dub-[sar]	scribe;

rest of column missing

iii

beginning of column missing

1'	^d sud ₃ -da-maḥ-di	Sud-da-maḥdi,
2'	IB	IB
3'	maškim	administrator;
4'	3 lid ₂ -ga še anše	720 liters barley for donkey (fodder),
5'	šubur	Šubur,
6'	maškim	administrator;
7'	2 (barig) še	120 liters barley,
8'	ur- ^d lamma	(to) Ur-Lamma,
9'	lu ₂ il ₂	the bearer, ²⁹

²⁹ Literally "the one who carries." Visicato & Westenholz (2010: 87) in *CUSAS* 11, 315, prefer a translation "the transporter."

10'.	[...]	...
11'.	[...]	...
12'.	[...]	...
13'.	kab ₂	<i>measured,</i>
14'.	[ki UR]-UR	<i>[(at) the place of] of UR-UR,</i>
15'.	3-kam ₄	<i>a third (time),</i>

rest of column missing

iv

beginning of column missing

1'.	amar-sun ₂	<i>Amar-sun,</i>
2'.	šu-ku ₆	<i>fisherman</i>
3'.	elam	<i>(of) Elam,</i>
4'.	um- ^Γ ab ₂ [?] - ^Γ na ₂) ³⁰	<i>Um-ab²-na,</i>
5'.	maškim	<i>administrator;</i>
6'.	2(barig) dabin	<i>120 liters barley grits,</i>
7'.	1(barig) dabin tur-tur	<i>60 liters fine barley grits,</i>
8'.	1 sila ₃ kaš	<i>1 liter beer,</i>
9'.	GAN ₂ -gir ₂ -du ₃ ³¹	<i>(to) GAN-gir-du;</i>
10'.	[n] kaš ^x kur ² - ^Γ ra [?] ³²	<i>[n] liters beer (to) Kur²-ra²,</i>
11'.	baḥar ₂	<i>Baḥar,</i>
12'.	maškim	<i>administrator;</i>
13'.	2(barig) ^Γ dabin ^Γ	<i>120 liters barley grits,</i>
14'.	lu ₂ -U ₂ -TAR	<i>Lu- U-TAR</i>
15'.	kiš	<i>(of) Kish</i>
16'.	šu ba-ti	<i>received;</i>

rest of column missing

v

beginning of column missing

1'.	[n] lid ₂ -ga [še]	<i>[n×240] liters [barley],</i>
2'.	lu ₂ ma ₂ -addir _x	<i>the ferryman</i>
	(LAK590.SI)	
3'.	šu ba-ti	<i>received;</i>
4'.	2(barig) še	<i>120 liters barley,</i>
5'.	e-du-ia ₂	<i>E-du-ia,</i>
6'.	si-[x]	<i>Si-[x],</i>
7'.	šu ba-ti	<i>received;</i>
8'.	3(ban ₂) dabin	<i>30 liters barley grits,</i>
9'.	ša ₃ -utu	<i>Ša-Utu,</i>
10'.	[...]	<i>[...],</i>
11'.	e ₂ -[ki]	<i>E-[ki],</i>
12'.	dumu a ₂ -[nu]-kuš ₂	<i>subordinate of A-[nu]-kuš,</i>
13'.	maškim	<i>administrator;</i>
14'.	3(ban ₂) dabin tur-tur	<i>30 liters fine barley grits,</i>
15'.	2(barig) še anše	<i>120 liters barley donkey</i>
		<i>(fodder),</i>
16'.	UR-UR	<i>UR-UR,</i>

rest of column missing

vi

beginning of column missing

1'.	maškim	<i>administrator;</i>
2'.	[n] lid ₂ -ga še	<i>[n×240] liters barley,</i>
3'.	a-mes-[x]	<i>A-mes-[x],</i>
4'.	um-me-da	<i>Um-me-da,</i>
5'.	šu ba-ti	<i>received;</i>
6'.	1 (barig) še	<i>60 liters barley,</i>
7'.	e2-engur-a	<i>E-engur-a</i>
8'.	sa ₁₀	<i>measured out,</i>
9'.	a-ga-[(x)]	<i>A-ga-(x)</i>
10'.	ab-TAG	<i>is holding it back²,</i>
11'.	en-ša ₃ -ga-na	<i>En-ša-ga-na,</i>
12'.	ad-kup ₄	<i>the reed worker;</i>
13'.	3 sila ₃ kaš	<i>3 liters beer,</i>
14'.	3(barig) zi ₃ -sig ₁₅	<i>180 liters zisig flour,</i>

rest of column missing

vii

beginning of column missing

1'.	maškim	<i>administrator;</i>
2'.	1 1/2 sila ₃ kurun ₂	<i>1 1/2 liters sweet beer,</i>
3'.	[an]-da-tuku	<i>[An²]-da-tuku,</i>
4'.	lunga ₃	<i>brewer,</i>
5'.	an-gi ₄	<i>is returning,</i>
6'.	nam-maḥ	<i>Nam-maḥ,</i>
7'.	dub-sar	<i>scribe;</i>
8'.	[n] sila ₃ ^Γ kaš ^Γ	<i>[n] liters beer,</i>
9'.	1/2 sila ₃ kurun ₂	<i>1/2 liter sweet beer,</i>
10'.	GAN ₂ [x]-ḥal-[(x)]	<i>(to) GAN-[x]-ḥal-(x),</i>
11'.	nam-maḥ	<i>Nam-maḥ,</i>
12'.	dub-sar	<i>scribe;</i>

rest of column missing

viii

beginning of column missing

1'.	me-zu ₅ -an-da	<i>Me-zu-anda;</i>
2'.	2(ban ₂) dabin	<i>20 liters barley grits,</i>
3'.	1(ban ₂) dabin tur-tur	<i>10 liters fine barley grits,</i>
4'.	lu ₂ -u ₅	<i>(to) Lu-u,</i>
5'.	elam	<i>Elamite,</i>
6'.	e ₂ -ti-la-ni	<i>(and) E-tilani,</i>
7'.	kab ₂	<i>measured,</i>

rest of column missing

ix

beginning of column missing

rest of column blank

x

1'.	x x x ga	<i>... ga</i>
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§10. Commentary

Obv. ii 8'. IB. In addition to the scribes and maškim authorizing several of the transactions in this account, other officials entitled IB also served in this capacity, and apparently were also responsible for the verification or checking of barley allocated as a ration. Note obv. ii 8', v 12' and rev. iii 2', but see in particular obv. iii 4-6 ... kab₂, ^dsud₃-da-maḥ-di, IB. The occupation or profession IB is listed in ED Lu₂ B (*MSL* 12, 13), for which see *SF*

³⁰ Pomponio (1987: 243) proposes only one line here. In Justin's copy, the sign na₂ is copied in a separate and subsequent line. Inspection of the photograph on the CDLI site suggests Pomponio is correct.

³¹ Probably the same name as obv. ix 4'.

³² See *WF* 1 obv. iv 1 for kur-ra but more legibly *WF* 1 obv. ii 3: 4 (anše) šeš kur-ra.

70 rev. i 6. Exactly what this official did may be more obscure than the role of the *maškim*, though it is known from Fara, Presargonic and Sargonic sources (Gelb et al. 1991: 102).

Obv. iii 8'. It is certain that NINDA₂×ŠE in the Fara texts, whether a noun *sa*₁₀ or a verb *sa*₁₀, is most often to be translated as “price” (especially *nig*₂-*sa*₁₀) or “to sell” or “to buy.” By far the greatest number of these occurrences is in the so-called sale documents or contracts accounting the inter vivos transfers of real property—houses and parcels of land. These contain, where there are no lacunae due to destruction of the tablet, data for the *nig*₂-*sa*₁₀, a note of “the seller,” the *lu*₂ *sa*₁₀-*gu*₇ and “the purchaser of the field/house” the *lu*₂ *aša*₅/*e*₂-*sa*₁₀. There is much circumstantial evidence to suggest that in Šuruppak, the *nig*₂-*sa*₁₀ of fields was determined formulaically by the central administration and was fixed as proportional to the area of the field being transferred (Cripps 2007: ch. 4).

*sa*₁₀ in TSS 881, however, probably means “measured out.” Steinkeller (1989: 155-156) suggests that the meaning “measured out” for *sa*₁₀ is confirmed by the Eblaite lexical entry NINDA₂×ŠE = *mu-da-tum/madādum* in MEE 4, p. 369, line 311, where NINDA₂×ŠE replaces the expected NINDA₂×NE, read as *ag*₂. Of the 746 texts from ED IIIa Fara in the CDLI database, forty-nine attest to *sa*₁₀ (NINDA₂×ŠE). Only nine of these latter are not concerned with sales of land or houses. Typically, NINDA₂×NE/ŠE describes the action of disbursing or measuring out barley or grain. Perhaps another such text from Fara is TSS 837, which documents the allocation of 10 liters of barley and 20 liters of bran to Nin-ama-na with the verb *sa*₁₀. Only a few remaining attestations of NINDA₂×ŠE from ED Fara may mainly be characterized as *sa*₁₀ “price.” Thus TSS 515 rev. iv 3-5 reads 6 *siki ma-na*, *sa*₁₀ *ša*_h₂ *niga-kam*₄, *nig*₂ *gidlam-kam*₄, “6 “lbs” of wool, the price of a fattened pig, the possession of a spouse,” although it is possible that in TSS 44 ii 2 *sa*₁₀, should that be the reading of the damaged sign, indicates that quantities of fish and marine animals have been “exchanged” for quantities of other fish, etc. In addition to the two references to the barley measured out to *e*₂-*engur*-(a), *sa*₁₀ is also employed with a similar meaning in obv. vii at 8', 3(*ban*₂) *še kaš sa*₁₀ and 14', 4(*ban*₂) *še kaš sa*₁₀, where relatively small amounts, 30 and 40 dry liters are measured out presumably to make beer.

Obv. iii 4'. This entry is the first of ten instances of the logogram KA×A in this text, all of which, like *sa*₁₀, are concerned with the disbursement of grain products. Each of these appears to stand for a verb. The principal alternatives for a verb are *nag* “to drink” and *kab*₂ “to test” or perhaps “check/verify.” “To drink” does not fit the

context of these accounts. However, “to check/verify” may. Civil (1994: ch. 7.4) provides the evidence to show that *kab*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga* has an interpretation based on the Akkadian *latāku* “to check,” “to verify.” Although witnessed in lexical sources, Civil (1994: 154) doubts whether KA×A/*kab*₂ can be used alone as a verbal root, meaning *latāku*. *kab*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga* is already attested in the context of checking/verifying quantities of barley and other cereals in Fara documents. In TSS 860 obv. i 1, 6 (*gur*²) barley are *kab*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga*, in obv. i 4, 90 liters of barley entered at obv. i 3 are *kab*₂-*du*₁₁ while at obv. ii 1 (*gur*²) wheat (*gig* written MI, not MI.NUNUZ) is also *kab*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga*. The measurement and quality of these amounts of grain has been checked,³³ therefore. WF 64 obv. i 4 records that 1 *lid*₂-*ga* of barley out of 4 *lid*₂-*ga* allocated in i 3 has been checked (*kab*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga*).

Despite Civil's reservations, it would seem from TSS 881 that *kab*₂ may stand alone as a verb, or certainly as the logogram KA×A representing a verb; at least so in the Fara texts. With the exception of the account summarized in rev. i 1'-7', the still readable allocations of perhaps rations, that are registered as being *kab*₂, “checked,” are all of grain products, a context suggested by Civil (1994: 155) as being the only one attested before Ur III. In his study the cereal products of bread, beer and flour are not apparently associated with the verb *kab*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga* until the texts of the Ur III period. However, in rev. i 1'-7', if the items in 1'-4' are all allocated to Ab-*e*₃, it would seem that beer as well as barley grits and sweet beer (*kurun*₂) are authorized as *kab*₂ by *E*₂-*zi*. In obv. iii 1'-6', the only preserved entry verified is of barley. In obv. v 15'-18', clearly only barley (ten liters) is *kab*₂. Obv. vii 6'-13' registers the allocation of barley grits, fine barley grits (*dabin tur-tur*), barley measured out for beer and barley for a donkey to Sag-tuku, the subordinate (*dumu*) of *E*₂-*tila*. Obv. viii 6'-13' is again concerned only with the allocation of a quantity of barley as is rev. ii 4'-10'. Rev. viii 2'-7' records that allocations of barley grits and fine barley grits were verified. The significance of these allocations is that they provide a context analogous to that identified by Civil as consistent with a meaning “checked/verified” by measurement, for KA×A/*kab*₂, which can therefore be considered as a specific interpretation of “measured.”

Obv. iv 14' *kurun*₂ (ŠE.DIN). In this entry, and in obv. vi 8',

³³ See Civil (1994: 156/7) for a reconstruction of the checking process. “The test designated by *kab*₂-*du*₁₁ refers to the act of verifying to what extent: (a) a measure agrees with its legal standard, (b) a measured amount of a commodity fulfils certain qualitative or quantitative conditions, or (c) the effective yield of a crop compares to the estimated yield. It thus differs from *ag*₂ which designates simple measurement.”

rev. i 4', and rev. vii 2' and 9', small quantities (fractions of a liter) of barley could be interpreted as allocations to various persons for the purpose of making *kurun₂*. These disbursements are often in association with other grain products of beer and grits. However, the complete ideogram ŠE.DIN is here transliterated as *kurun₂*. The small quantities distributed suggest allocations of a beer rather than barley or some other grain and are in the same order of magnitude as other expenditures of beer (*kaš*) recorded in this account.

Lexically, (see *UET* 7, 76 ll. 20-23), KAŠ.DIN = *kurun* = *kurunnu*, *sābu*, or *šikaru*, “beer,” as well as *karānu*, “wine.” The logogram DIN is *kurun₂* and is also glossed as *kurunnu* and *šikaru* beer as well as *karānu* (*MSL* 9, 124-137 ix 615-617). There is apparently no lexical evidence for ŠE.DIN, but *OSP* 1, 128, appears to contain exemplars of *kaš ŠE/ŠE* (ŠE over ŠE).DIN.

The amounts of beer (*kurun₂*) allocated are measured in *sil₃* and fractions of a *sil₃*. Although in the Girsu Presargonic system there were still distinct liquid and dry capacity measures characteristic of the archaic phase of Mesopotamian metrology (Powell 1994: 102), in the Fara system, there was probably a convergence of the dry capacity *sil₃* and the liquid measures. Any distinctions between the two measures were within very small margins. Further, there is evidence in lexical texts for some fractions of the *sil₃* (Powell 1987-90: 503). Also see Powell (1994: 104) with regard to the indivisibility of the *sil₃* in the measurement of beer capacities in brewing recipes, noting that there are several allotments in this text of *kurun₂* measured in fractions of a liter. It is unlikely therefore that these are allocations of barley to brew beer.

Obv. v 4'-5' *maškim*, *maškim-gi₄*. It would appear that UR-UR authorized this and a second allocation (obv. vi 4'-6') as *maškim*, *maškim-gi₄*. He is also called *maškim* in obv. vii 4'-5' and again in *NTSŠ* 296 obv. iii 2-3. Although it is difficult, even at the present time, as Edzard had already noted (Edzard 1979: 166 n. 46), to be precise about the meaning of the word and function of *maškim* in the Fara period, it is not inaccurate to consider a professional function/occupation of “commissioning agent.” The secular meaning of the word is usually equated with the Akkadian *rābišu*, “an official representative of and commissioned by a higher authority” (see *CAD s.v. rābišu* 1). As might be expected, the *maškim* probably had scribal training.³⁴

A more significant difficulty arises in interpreting the function or meaning of *maškim-gi₄*. In *TSS* 936 ii 3,

maškim-gi₄ is quite clearly a personal name. However, several texts from Šuruppak attest that *maškim-gi₄* is also an occupation/profession and separate from *maškim*.³⁵ W. G. Lambert argued that *gi₄* is a phonetic indicator and that there is no difference between *maškim* and *maškim-gi₄* so far as language is concerned. Its use became misleading by the second millennium and was therefore omitted, at least in non-secular references (Lambert 1989: 456). *maškim-gi₄* appears not to have been written in administrative texts since the Fara period. However, it is evident from *TSS* 881, if no other text, that the two terms are distinct. Neither *maškim* nor *maškim-gi₄* is likely to be a personal name here, and therefore both should be interpreted as an occupation or profession.

The word *maškim* is represented by the complex logogram PA.KAŠ₄, consisting of PA (ugula), “overseer,” and KAŠ₄, “runner,” or perhaps “messenger.” The Early Dynastic names and professions lists from Abu Salabikh contain both PA.KAŠ₄.E.GI₄ and E.GI.PA.KAŠ₄, as well as the variant PA.KAŠ₄ with no extension. There are similar parallels in the Ebla lexical texts and vocabularies; see Edzard and Wiggermann (1989: 450) for a discussion and references. If, as Edzard and Wiggermann suggest, the etymology of the Sumerian word *maškim* is opaque, it may be appropriate to consider a meaning more directly related to the components (“overseer messenger”), of the logogram especially when written with the extension (e)-*gi₄*.

Michalowski (1985: 299 n. 51) tentatively suggested that e-*gi₄* may be a gloss to KAŠ₄ and that the logogram should be read ugula egi_x that possibly refers to chief messengers of various cities. Archi (1999: 147) also regards the *maškim-e-gi₄* as “agents/representatives” of the king of Mari: “... it was these agents who maintained diplomatic and economic relations with Ebla. ... They were messengers and merchants (*kaš₄*, *garaš*, *lu₂* *kar*, *u₃*); the delegation was led, however, by a court official, the “steward,” “sagi.””

In his commentary on *NTSŠ* 296, Visicato (1994: 186) notes that UR-UR *maškim* in obv. iii 2-3 is the same person as UR-UR *maškim* in *TSS* 881, where he is referred to with the title *maškim maškim-gi₄*. Given that recipients of the allocations of barley in *NTSŠ* 296, who include a PN (of) *ma₂-gid₂* and a *sukkal*, are connected with journeys, he suggests that the *maškim* acts as the person responsible for personnel involved in journeys to and from Šuruppak. It is noteworthy that Pomponio (1987: 304) reads *maškim maškim-gi₄* as the title of a single person—UR-UR. We should perhaps understand

³⁴ In *TSS* x obv. vi 4-5, the scribe Lugal-e₂-si is also designated as *maškim*.

³⁵ *CT* 50, 15 obv. i 4, *TSS* 732 obv. ii 4, *WF* 9 rev. iv 8, *WF* 25 rev. iii 10, *CUSAS* 11, 349 obv. ii' 4'.

this as *maškim* of the *maškim-gi₄*, where *maškim-gi₄* could be an organization/office of *maškim* “sent as messengers (*gi₄*),” i.e. travel as agents from Šuruppak to other cities and return.

Obv. v 11'-13': [*E₂*]-*ki* is restored at 11' in comparison with rev. v 11'-13', where the converse restoration of [*E₂*]-*ki* is made, since in both examples *E₂-ki* is evidently the *dumu* “subordinate” of *A₂-nu-kuš₂*, *maškim*. At obv. v 12' he has the epithet *IB*, which suggests that in this text at least, the occupation *IB* may have been subordinate to the *maškim* who officiated in these transactions.

Obv. vii 2': *dilmun* (*NI.TUK*) *mu-GAR*. *Prima facie*, it appears implausible that this phrase refers to the place *Dilmun*. There are fourteen other attestations of the word *dilmun* in the Fara lexical and administrative texts, yet none of them refer to the place *Dilmun*. However, several people from cities other than Šuruppak are recorded as beneficiaries of allocations of grain products in this text. Persons who apparently received such allotments include a *lu₂* *URU×A*, possibly “citizen of Arawa” in Elam (obv. v 2'),³⁶ an official from Sippar (*AB-si-gar*, *zimbir_x^{ki}*; obv. vi 13'-14'), a fisherman from Elam (rev. iv 2'-3'), a citizen of Kish (rev. iv 14'-15'), and a second person from Elam (rev. viii 4'-5'). Further, we noted earlier that there is ample evidence of the copper trade between ED Girsu and *Dilmun*, with access to that trade for the cities of the south provided by a single route via Girsu. This may also have been true of the earlier Fara period, given the widespread use of copper as a currency in Šuruppak.

A transliteration and translation of *dilmun mu-GAR*, “loaded here for *Dilmun*,” is made more hazardous due to the destruction at both the head and foot of each column on this tablet. And given the strictures by Englund (2010: 99 n. 4) that “Sumerian *si(g)* as a rule qualifies the loading of cereals and flour; *gar* refers to textiles, lumber, animal carcasses, etc.; and *gub* to livestock or humans,” further doubt is added since for the most part this text is about the disbursement of grain products.

A more cogent reason for doubting that a geographical location is referred to may be that, in fourteen of the fifteen attestations in the Fara texts, *dilmun* is the probable occupation of an official. *gal dilmun* is such in the Early Dynastic list of “Officials” (*SF* 59 obv. iv 1). In the list, the occupation is preceded by the official *šuš₃*, “large cattle manager,” and followed by *šidim*, “builder, architect.” This part of the list has exact parallels in the Ebla and Abu Salabikh equivalents. The term

dilmun without *gal* is attested in a number of administrative texts from Šuruppak as an epithet qualifying a personal name.³⁷ It probably describes the profession or occupation of the person so qualified and it may follow that, as with other professions in Šuruppak, *gal dilmun* indicates that the *dilmun* belonged to an organization which also had “chief” or senior members. However, the *gal dilmun* need not have directly supervised the *dilmun*.

As with many other occupations recorded in the Fara accounts, *dilmun* appear to have been supervised by *ugula*, for which cf. *WF* 75 rev. vi 5-7³⁸, a text allocating barley rations to various officials from Šuruppak and several persons from Adab, Umma and Nippur. Although *WF* 75 rev. vi and vii for the most part list allocations of rations to people from other Sumerian cities, it is highly improbable that *dilmun*, to whom allocations head this part of the account, constitutes a geographic name rather than the title or occupation of an official; see also Visicato (1994: 92).

However, it is evident that the lexical texts ED Officials, ED *Lu₂* A and ED *Lu₂* E³⁹ witness a geographic name as well as an occupation/professional title for the word *dilmun*. In ED *Lu₂* E, the word is entered at line 41 and precedes *ma₂-GIN₂* “boat-builder,” *usan₃-du₃* *mušen* “wild fowler,” *usan₃-du₃* *A-GI-ANŠE* “?,” *šu-ku₆* “fisherman,” and at line 46 *enku* (*ZAG.ĤA*). Both Green (1984: 94) and Visicato (1995: 133) conclude that *ZAG.ĤA* should be read *enku* “tax collector” in the Fara texts, equivalent to the Akkadian *mākisu*. However, if as Visicato suggests the functions of the numerous *šu-ku₆* and *usan₃-du₃* in the Fara texts are unclear when associated with *enku*, “tax collector,” Englund’s (1998: 142 n. 319) suggestion of “fish tithe collector” may be more explicit and would explain the lexical proximity of “boat-builder.” However, the entry *dilmun* at line 41 immediately follows *baḥar₂*, “potter,” and in lines 35-39 a series of “makers” (*dim₂*) of reed mats, throw sticks, bows, combs and of an unknown item (Buccellati 2003: 48). Since a boat-builder or caulker (*ma₂-GIN₂*) may also be considered a manufacturer, it is feasible that the *dilmun* are also manufacturers rather than associated with the *enku*.

In ED *Lu₂* A, *dilmun* is more clearly a geographical location. As Green (1984: 94) has shown, comparing

³⁶ Cf. Frayne (1992: 71) for the identification of Arawa (*URU×A*) as a city on the western fringes of Elam.

³⁷ *TSS* 115 obv. ii 9-10, *TSS* 433 obv. 2, *TSS* 752 obv. ii 5, *WF* 22 obv. vii 10, *WF* 75 rev. vi 3, 7, *WF* 124 obv. iv 7.

³⁸ 1/2 (*gur-mah še*) *Ur-nigar-si*, *ugula*, *dilmun* (*NB* 1/2 *gur-mah* = 1 *lid₂-ga*).

³⁹ See *SF* 59 obv. iv 1, *SLT* 24 rev. ii'; see further DCCLT: ED *LU₂* A and DCCLT: *LU₂* E.

SLT 24 rev. ii', after the entries (chief) tax collector and collector of harvest taxes (nesag) at lines 80 and 81, the entries 82-86 all associate taxation with geographical areas. NI.TUK ZAG in line 83 is enku_x dilmun,⁴⁰ "collector of taxes in Dilmun." In this text, then, Dilmun, the place, though less likely, is not impossible.

Rev. ii 7'. ki UR-UR. It is probable that UR-UR here and in rev. ii 3' and restored in rev. iii 14' is the same person as the maškim in the commentary on obv. v 4'-5'. In rev. ii 4'-7', a relatively small quantity of barley is measured to Lugal-giri₃ and checked/verified (at) "the place of UR-UR." Similarly quantities, probably of barley, were so measured ki UR-UR in rev. ii 2'-3' and rev. iii 13'-14'. It is not necessary that ki in this text has the meaning "account/fund" as it may have had in some Sargonic texts relating to land (Foster 1982: 86, Cripps 2010: 33). Rather than the barley being verified to the account of UR-UR, it may be more plausible that the quality/quantities of the barley allocated to the named individuals were checked at the place of the agent UR-UR prior to distribution.

The measuring of barley allocations at the place of UR-UR is apparently a recurring operation. The allocation to Du-du ga-eš₈ (rev. ii 1'-3') is checked on the first occasion, while that to Lugal-giri₃ (rev. ii 4'-8') occurs on a second occasion (2-kam₄). An allocation in the place of UR-UR is checked on a third occasion (3-kam₄; rev. iii 13'-15'). On the second occasion—the text could mean on the first also—the measuring was carried out by the scribe Nam-maḫ. Since the part of the text immediately after the entry 3-kam₄ is destroyed, we cannot know, but it is possible, that the same scribe did the checking on this occasion as well.

Rev. ii 14'-17' suggest that all (šu-nigin₂ "the entirety") of the allocations of (barley) measured in the place of UR-UR ("measured/checked here/in this place," mu-kab₂) were checked by Nam-maḫ, the scribe.⁴¹ The placement of this phrase in the document may refer only to the first and second occasions on which the allocations were checked, but it is not inconceivable that it also includes the third occasion, which may be written later in the text as an afterthought. On the other hand, the restoration made at rev. iii 14' may not be accurate.

⁴⁰ Green notes that the syllabic spellings of *SLT* 24 show that in the Fara period, ZAG alone could be read as enku_x.

⁴¹ In rev. ii 15', mu-kab₂, the logogram KA×A is preceded by the ventive prefix mu-, attesting a finite form of the verb kab₂ and justifying consideration of the logogram elsewhere in the document as standing for the verb.

⁴² Steinkeller (1989: 155-156 n. 436) proposed that the ZA' in rev. vi 7' of this text should possibly be read as a

Rev. vi 6'-8'. E₂-engur-a is a personal name,⁴² E₂-engur is a temple name in the later ED IIIb administrative texts from Girsu (see, for example, *DP* 159, 163 and 613). In this text, though, given the relatively small allocations of barley "measured out" to E₂-engur-a, the word is more likely a personal name, but with a different spelling from E₂-engur-ra.

Rev. vi 10'. ab-TAG. The meaning of this term in this context is very uncertain. The verbal form here perhaps has a passive interpretation akin to the Akkadian stative.⁴³ The pronominal -b- refers to the barley allotted in this transaction to E₂-engur-a denoting it is that which is being acted upon by the PN in rev. vi 9'.

Besides the use of the verb TAG in *TSS* 881, there are perhaps six other texts from the third millennium that are appropriate to consider in an attempt to suggest a translation,⁴⁴ five from the Ur III period and one possible other from ED IIIb. The Ur III texts include three similar texts concerned with brewing beer, one with the weaving of cloth and one with the tying up or tethering of animals.⁴⁵ The three brewing texts may be best illustrated by *CUSAS* 16, 151, that reads; obv. 1/2 ma-na bappir₂, 1/2 sila₃ še-li, ki a-gi₄-ta, kaš dida a-da, lunga ba-ab-TAG, rev. kišib₃ lu₂-^dnin-gir₂-su dumu ba-zi, (seal), mu gu-za maḫ ba-dim₂, "1/2 "lb" of bappir, half a liter of aromatic (juniper seeds?), from/supplied by A-gi; the brewer applied (perhaps mixed/brewed) the wort with water.⁴⁶ Sealed document of Lu-Ningirsu, the son

phonetic indicator complementing the verb, thus, sa₁₀^{sa} in rev. vi 8', i.e. both lines should possibly be read together. However, the photograph at CDLI no. P010929 shows that this sign is definitely in rev. vi 7' with e₂-engur. Moreover, the sign Steinkeller read as ZA is more likely A. Deimel in his comment to LAK 797 (=ZA) notes that the sign cannot be distinguished with any certainty from versions of the sign LAK 795 (=A), a view repeated in Krebernik's (1998: 280) discussion of the palaeographic characteristics of some signs in texts from Fara and Abu Salabikh. The A/ZA in rev. vi 7' is to be read A especially when we take note of the form of A in KA×A in numerous entries in this text, for instance obv. iii 4', obv. v 17', vii 13', viii 10', rev. i 6', ii 2' and 6', iii 13' and viii 7'.

⁴³ See Thomsen (1984:168).

⁴⁴ This number excludes the 196 attestations from the third millennium (counted in the CDLI database) of the verb geš-tag "to sacrifice."

⁴⁵ The Ur III texts may all be found on the BDTNS website <<http://bdts.filol.csic.es>>.

⁴⁶ This text may also be interpreted to mean that the bappir and the aromatic were also applied with the wort and water by the brewer. However, the mixing of the bappir and the aromatic were probably a separate part of the production process from the brewing of the wort. See Damerow

of Bazi, year: “The big throne (for Enlil) was fashioned” (Amar-Suen 3).” Two similar texts from Amar-Suen 1 and 2 are *SAT* 1, 255 and *HLC* 59. A fourth Ur III text from Ibbi-Suen 5 is *UET* 3, 1708. In this, quantities of two kinds of cloth, tug₂ guz-za du and tug₂ uš-bar, are textiles supplied to a šabra. [PN/ProfN] wove it (ba-ab-TAG). None of these four Ur III texts is particularly helpful in deciphering the entry in *TSS* 881. However, a fifth, *Nisaba* 5/1, 25, may be more suggestive. In so far as can be judged from the BDTNS record, a bull and 15 “small cattle” (sheep and goats) were tied up/tethered (ba-tag) in a part of Babylon (DIN.TIR^{ki}). In concert with this, we can also, possibly, call in aid a text from the ED IIIb period, *TCBI* 2/1, 7. Here, a goat to be inspected for offering (šu-gid₂-še₃) may have been tied up/tethered, ab-[tag]. The third and final entry in the text is a personal name, E₂-ur₂-bi-du₁₀. Unfortunately, tag is restored.

§11. Analysis of *TSS* 881

§11.1. Table 1 lists the different commodities issued in the accounts of the ‘Sammeltafel’ *TSS* 881. In all there are only ten different kinds issued in the extant three dozen expenditures registered. One of these is a “shawl” or “blanket” (tug₂ gu₂-la₂). The remainder are foodstuffs and may be considered to be rations of various types. One transaction records a distribution of a quantity of oil (i₃). The most frequent disbursements are of barley (še), sixteen in total, the second most common are of coarse barley grits (dabin), some fourteen; about seven are of fine barley grits (dabin tur-tur). A similar number of allotments of beer (kaš) are registered alongside five of a sweet, perhaps dark, beer (kurun₂). There were two of barley to make beer and three of barley as fodder for donkeys, one of bappir (bappir kaš) and one of flour (zi₃-sig₁₅). Like many of the Ur III examples, few of these “rations” were issued in large amounts. Several of the commodities were expended in quantities greater than 1 lid₂-ga (240 liters). There is one allocation of dabin of 5 lid₂-ga and 1 barig.

§11.2. The remaining twelve allocations of dabin varied between 2 ban₂ and 2 barig. Of the sixteen barley allocations, six were of quantities equal to or great than 1 lid₂-ga. The undamaged examples varied from 1-3 lid₂-ga. The other ten disbursement of barley varied between 1 ban₂ and 2 barig 1 ban₂. There was one allocation of 3 lid₂-ga

še anše but leaving aside beer, expenditures of all other cereal based products varied between 1 ban₂ and 3 barig.

Commodity	most transactions (in sila ₃)	few transactions (in sila ₃)
bappir kaš	40	-
dabin	20-120	1260
dabin tur-tur	10-180	-
i ₃	n	-
kaš	1/2-40	-
kurun ₂	1/2-3	-
še	10-130	240-720
še anše	20-60	720
še kaš	30-40	-
zi ₃ -sig ₁₅	180	-
tug ₂ gu ₂ -la ₂	1 only	-

Table 1: Disbursements in transactions of *TSS* 881

§11.3. The disbursements of kaš were much smaller, with quantities varying between 1/2 sila₃ and 4 ban₂. Only one of the allocations of beer exceeded 4 sila₃. The allotments of kurun₂ are in even smaller amounts of mostly 1/2 sila₃ and a maximum of 3 sila₃.

§11.4. The Ur III “messenger texts” from both Girsu and Umma attest to disbursements of barley from 3 ban₂, and perhaps less, to 5 gur.⁴⁷ Barley fodder for donkeys was also sometimes disbursed in these texts in large as well as small quantities.⁴⁸ kaš was disbursed in varying quantities from 1/2 sila₃ to 1 gur.⁴⁹ Most commonly, however, Ur III quantities of beer were 2 or 3 sila₃. These allocations of both barley and beer are comparable with those disbursed in *TSS* 881. The relatively few expenditures of kurun₂ tend to be on the low side. However, the smaller allotments of kurun₂ (1/2 sila₃) are invariably accompanied by larger quantities of kaš. Both in the typology of the commodities allocated and the range of quantities of them, the transactions summarized in *TSS* 881 display substantial similarities to the Ur III genre.

§11.5. As already noted, several distant (from Šuruppak) locations are also mentioned in this text, perhaps origins or destinations of people receiving these commodities. Another indication, common also to Ur III messenger texts, is the frequent attestations to Elamites. Two of the recipients in this text are designated Elamites (NIM),⁵⁰

(2012: 15) for his description of the Sumerian brewing process with respect to the locus of these terms in the production of beer and especially his translation there of the Hymn to Ninkasi. These brief Ur III texts may merely register the brewer’s accountability for the whole process. The pronominal -b- in ba-ab-TAG, however, being singular, suggests my translation may be more apposite.

⁴⁷ See *TCTI* 2, 3794 obv. 5 and *SAT* 2, 835 obv. 1.

⁴⁸ See *MTBM* 49 rev. 3.

⁴⁹ Cf. *RTC* 378 obv. 1 and *MVN* 5, 236 obv. 5

⁵⁰ See rev. iv 2'-3', and rev. viii 4'-5'.

while a third is a citizen of Arawa, also in Elam.⁵¹ The two other certain geographical locations are Sippar and Kish.⁵²

§11.6. Table 2 lists fourteen different professions or occupations which appear in *TSS* 881. Only ten out of these professions are in receipt of the commodities disbursed in these accounts. The epithet lugal in the list of professions, as noted earlier, is attached to the official AB-si-gar from Sippar, who is most likely an emissary of the king of Kish. He, not the king, is issued with [... n] lid₂-ga of barley. Other occupations that are possible candidates for emissaries are sukkal, “courier,” sagi, “cupbearer,” ga-eš₈, “long-distance trader,” and perhaps the ensi₂-GAR-gal. Arguably supporting these are lu₂ ma₂-gid₂, “boat tower,” lu₂ il₂, “bearer,” šu-ku₆, “fisherman,” lu₂ ma₂-addir_x, “ferryman,” and perhaps lung_{a3}, “brewer.” The non-recipient professions are those that administered the accounts or effected the disbursements. These were the IB, perhaps a subordinate of the maškim, the maškim and the dub-sar.

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Recipient of disbursement</i>
ensi ₂ -GAR-gal	*
IB	*
maškim	*
maškim-gi ₄	*
sukkal	*
lugal	*
lu ₂ ma ₂ -gid ₂	*
sagi	*
dub-sar	*
lung _{a3}	*
lu ₂ il ₂	*
šu-ku ₂	*
lu ₂ ma ₂ -addir _x	*
ga-eš ₈	*

Table 2: Professions/occupations attested in *TSS* 881

§11.7. Several of the maškim are further qualified with the epithet maškim-gi₄. As also argued already, this further qualification could mean either that the administrators were both maškim and maškim-gi₄, or they were representatives of an office of maškim-gi₄. These officers may have constituted the equivalent of the “chief messengers” or agents/emissaries of the palace as proposed by Michalowski and Archi for Mari, from the Ebla texts.

⁵¹ See obv. v 2’.

⁵² Obv. vi 13’-14’ and rev. iv 14’-15’, respectively. In obv. vi 14’, zimbir is written UD.LAM.NUN not UD.KIB.NUN. Foxvog at CDLI no. P010929 (2010-09-03 13:43:57) reads Sippar for the former. It may be that UD.KIB.NUN was not written until after the Early Dynastic period.

§11.8. Other than a single entry recording that beer and bappir was taken (ba-de₆) by a recipient and several entries registering receipt (šu ba-ti) of various quantities of barley and grits by others, the majority of disbursements in these accounts are described as sa₁₀ (NINDA₂×ŠE) or kab₂ (KA×A) to the recipient(s). sa₁₀ is used only in relation to disbursement of barley either as a barley ration or as barley for beer. There are two instances of each use in the text. Some ten incidences of kab₂ on the other hand, action the disbursement of other commodities as well; mainly barley, but also barley grits and beer. The use of these two lexemes in a similar context in this text suggests that they are semantically similar and, although phonetically different, are nevertheless cognates. Each may be glossed “measured,” but sa₁₀ is modified as “measured out,” perhaps “disbursed,” while, as Civil has proposed, kab₂ implies measurement for testing or validation. The ‘Sammeltafel’ may represent a monthly or other periodic summary of the disbursement of commodities to emissaries, given the reference to month three. There is also an indication that there was a cyclical element to these disbursements.

§11.9. The accounts represented in *TSS* 881 were most likely produced by a subdivision of the central administration, probably responsible to the e₂-gal in Šuruppak. This part of the palace organization provided barley rations, allocated sustenance fields and supplied teams of donkeys to work them. A separate component of the central administration may have housed the logistical headquarters of the army and victualled and otherwise supplied troops stationed there from there from the allied cities of the “Hexapolis.”

§12. Conclusions

§12.1. The palace organization of Early Dynastic Šuruppak and the city’s status in an amphictyony of six Sumerian city states,⁵³ subject to the domination of the northern city of Kish, formed the nexus of a system of inter-city communication. In the early third millennium, Šuruppak enjoyed a then strategic location on the ancient Euphrates (Sumerian buranun) between the northern cities and the cities of Uruk, Umma and Lagaš on the southern alluvial plain. Later on, the course of the river shifted and reduced the importance of the city.

§12.2. Although, as Foster notes, Kish was at the head of this league, Šuruppak was the main place of account; hence the substantial number of Fara administrative texts that witness the mustering and victualling of conscripted

⁵³ Uruk, Nippur, Šuruppak, Adab, Lagaš and Umma.

armies and workers from the cities of the league. These military and worker cohorts were supplied from the logistical headquarters of the “Hexapolis” within Šuruppak.⁵⁴ Other workers coming to Šuruppak from the cities of the amphictyony were sustained by rations from the e₂-gal or a department of it. These were known as the iri-kas₄/DU and may only have resided in Šuruppak for six months at a time. As their title appears to suggest, they travelled between the cities of the Hexapolis providing a medium of communications. The soldiers and workers from these other cities of Sumer probably made extensive use of the system of rivers and canals throughout southern Mesopotamia to route their transport to and from Šuruppak. And equally, they were to a considerable extent dependent on the boats and boatmen of the cities to provide the means of transport. They consequently required a substantial boat building and repair facility located in Šuruppak.

§12.3. The iri-kas₄ apparently employed boatmen dedicated to their transport, the lu₂ ma₂ iri-kas₄ who also received rations from the e₂-gal. A *sagi* similarly had a boatman of his own, the lu₂ ma₂ *sagi*, and thus may, as in the Mari case, have been an emissary of the ruler of Šuruppak who travelled to foreign parts on his behalf. In addition to these dedicated tasks, boatmen also provided boats for more general purposes of trade. They manned cargo boats (ma₂-gur₈), barges (ma₂-gal) and possibly sailing boats (ma₂-ge₆? and ma₂-lah₄₍₅₎), all of which point to boats capable of transporting large quantities of goods long distances. Evidence in the Fara texts for a lu₂ ma₂ *dub-sag*, “lead/first/front boatman,” may also suggest long distance transport in convoys of boats. Disbursements of barley rations from the central administration of Šuruppak to ma₂-GIN₂ “boat builders/caulkers” also testify to a boat building industry in the city.

§12.4. Corroboration of extensive trading activity is provided by the large number of merchants (dam-gar₃)

furnished with barley rations by the e₂-gal. The dam-gar₃ probably traded both locally and with “foreign” parts. The latter long distance trade is witnessed by the presence a dam-gar₃ either travelling to or from Aḫuti. Long distance trade from Šuruppak is specifically referenced with evidence of a long distance trader (ga-eš₈) of Madga, a place located in excess of four hundred kilometers upstream from Šuruppak on the Euphrates. Aḫuti may have been even further away up river. The presence of a trader from Madga perhaps signifies the import from there of bitumen for boat building.

§12.5. It is evident that Šuruppak traded throughout Sumer and beyond; and that its missions extended beyond the cities of the amphictyony. Its emissaries were also engaged in other matters than trade. Several texts refer to the office of the dam-kas₄ who may have been involved with diplomatic missions. Another such office may have been the maškim-gi₄, officials of which made and authorized disbursements of barley products, beer and oil to travellers from Šuruppak to other cities beyond Sumer such as Kish, Sippar and the cities of Elam. Several of the recipients of these disbursements were Elamites, which taken together with the typology and quantities of the rations given may posit that the Fara accounts contained ‘messenger texts’ akin to those of the Ur III state.

§12.5. The main focus of this paper has been the exploration of the ‘Sammeltafel’ TSS 881 that summarizes a considerable number of accounts and may exemplify the presence of such documents. Specified as a component in the gamut of Fara texts, they enhance the identity of Early Dynastic Šuruppak as a fulcrum of a trading and diplomatic communication system throughout Sumer and its periphery. Doubtless this position was enabled and sustained by the hegemonic network allied to Kish.

⁵⁴ See Visicato (1995: 88).

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