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Homo Ludens in Early Mesopotamia

In my past work on the sources and classes of dependent labor in early Mesopotamian times, I have never had a chance even to allude to the happier, playful side of homo faber. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I am offering this modest contribution on homo ludens to the celebrant.

1. Introductory Remarks

Among the Sumerian texts of the Third Dynasty of Ur which I read and transliterated in the British Museum in the summer of 1965 there is one which sheds important light not only on the various classes of singers and musicians in ancient times, but also on the number and relative size of the temple households in the seven main cities and towns of the province of Lagaš.

The tablet in question, bearing number BM 14618, is listed and briefly described as a "list of temple officials" in H. H. Figula, Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum I (London, 1961) p. 214. Permission to publish the tablet was granted, on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum, by Dr. Richard D. Barnett and Dr. Edmond Sollberger.

The two-column tablet, reproduced here on Pls. I and II in its original size, is generally well preserved; only the upper and lower left corners of the obverse and

reverse are either damaged or chipped away. However, all the missing portions can be easily reconstructed from the context, with the single exception of the first five lines in column i of the obverse. See below p. 50.

While the text bears no year-date, its general assignation to the Ur III period is obvious from paleography. A more exact date of the text is furnished by several occurrences of é^dSul-gi "household of Šulgi." See p. 52 below. This would date the text to either Šulgi, the second king of the Ur III Dynasty or to any Ur III king following Šulgi. Without going into the involved question of the "deification" of the Ur III kings, an investigation of the occurrences cited in Schneider, Die Götternamen von Ur III (=Analecta Orientalia XIX; Roma, 1939) p. 81a bottom to p. 82a top (under 13. é^dSul-gi) and p. 83a bottom to p. 83b top (under 4. é^dSul-gi-ra) shows that é^dSul-gi occurs in texts dated to the last years of Šulgi and to the reigns of Bûr-Sin and Šu-Sin. The cited occurrence (p. 81b top) of é^dSul-gi in a text dated to Šulgi 8 (Barton, HLC II 93, 103) must be deleted because the sign copied as E is actually a SANGA sign (collated by R. M. Whiting).

The localities mentioned in the text leave no doubt that the tablet must have originated somewhere within the Lagaš province, probably at Giršu.

2. Transliteration of BM 14618

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| i. 1) [x] guruš | ii. 1) 2 UŠ.KU ^d Nanše |
| 2) [nar] [^d]Nin-gír-su | 2) 1 UŠ.KU Ki-sá1-[1a] |
| [ù] ^d Ba-ú-me | |
| 3) [...n]ar-sa-me | 3) 2 UŠ.KU SAL-gil-sa |
| 4) [x mu]š-lab ₄ | 4) 1 UŠ.KU ^d Gá-tùm-dùg |
| 5) [x UD.D]A.KU | 5) 40+[1] |
| 6) '31' guruš | 6) UŠ.KU-me |

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 7) nar ^{GIŠ} gīgir-me | 7) 176 |
| 8) 1 nar ^d Ig-alim | 8) ša Gīr-su ^{KI} |
| 9) 2 nar ^d Sul-ša-ga-na | 9) 3 nar |
| 10) 16 nar ^d Nanše | 10) 1 muš-lab ₄ |
| 11) 3 nar SAL-gil-sa | 11) 2 UŠ.KU |
| 12) 3 nar ^d Pa-GIŠ.BIL-sag | 12) é Ba-gár |
| 13) 2 nar ^d Gá-tùm-dùg | 13) 1 nar |
| 14) 2 nar ^d Innin | 14) 2 UŠ.KU |
| 15) 2 nar E-bar ₆ -bar ₆ | 15) é ^d Gá-tùm-dùg |
| 16) 15 nar lugal | 16) 4 nar |
| 17) 1 muš-lab ₄ | 17) é ^d Sul-gi |
| 18) 2 UD.DA.KU | 18) 9 nar 2 (should be 4)
UŠ.KU |
| 19) 135 | 19) ša ŠIR.BUR.LA ^{KI} |
| 20) nar-me | 20) 5 nar |
| 21) 30 lá 1 UŠ.KU | 21) 2 UŠ.KU |
| 22) UŠ.KU ^d Nin-gīr-su
ù ^d Ba-ú me | 22) 5 nar 2 UŠ.KU |
| 23) [6] UŠ.KU ^d Innin | 23) ša URU-KAR ^{KI} |
| | 24) 13 nar |
| | 25) 4 UŠ.KU |
| | 26) é ^d Nanše |

Rev.i.

- 1) 1 nar
- 2) é^d Sul-gi
- 3) 14 nar 4 UŠ.KU
- 4) ša NINA^{KI}
- 5) 5 nar
- 6) 1 muš-lab₄
- 7) 1 UŠ.KU
- 8) é^d Nin-dar-a
- 9) 2 nar

Rev.ii.

- 1) [é^d Sul]-gi
- 2) [12 nar 9 U]Š.KU
- 3) [ša Gú-a]b-ba^{KI}
- 4) ŠU.NIGIN 180 nar
- 5) ŠU.NIGIN 62 UŠ.KU
- 6) nar UŠ.KU gīr-sè-ga
- 7) [Gīr-su]^{KI}.ta
- 8) [Gú-ab-ba^{KI}]₁-šè

- 10) é^dŠul-gi
 11) 8 nar i UŠ.KU
 12) šà Ki-èš-sá^{KI}
 13) 4 nar
 14) 4 UD.DA.KU
 15) 1 UŠ.KU
 16) é^dDumu-zi
 17) 1 nar
 18) é^dŠul-gi
 19) 9 nar i UŠ.KU
 20) šà Ki-nu-nir^{KI}
 21) 10 lá 1 nar
 22) 1 muš-lab₄
 23) 10 lá 1 UŠ.KU
 24) é^dNin-mar^{KI}
 25) 1 nar
 26) é^dEn-ki-a-a-UR.KU
 27) 1 nar

3. Structure of the text.

To provide an easier view of the numbers and totals referring to singers/musicians and cantors in different households and localities, the text BM 14618 is presented in the form of a chart.

Column + line	nar singers/musicians	gala (US.KU) cantors	Temple household	Falkenstein AnOr XXXpp.	Locality
	nar muš-la ₄ UD.DA.KU Total singers/ snake bear wards musicians charmers (proper)	gala Total			
i 1-2	[53]?		dNin-gir-su	90-101	
i 3-7	[1? [1? 1]?		[ú] dBa-ú GIS gigir	63-67 126f.	
i 8	1		dIg-alim	76f.	
i 9	2		dSul-ša-ga-na	111 f.	
i 10	16		dNanše	84-87	
i 11	3		SAL-gil-sa	29, 153f.	
i 12	3		dPa-GIS.BIL-sag	----	
i 13	2		dGa-tum-dùg	72f.	
i 14	2		dInnin	78f.	
i 15	2		E-bar ₆ -bar ₆	(166)	
i 16	15		lugal	----	
i 17-18	1 2 135		< >		

Rev. i. 9-10 Rev. i. 11-12	2	8	1	é ^d Sul-gi	----	Ki-és ^{KI}
Rev. i. 13-16	4	4	1	é ^d Dumu-zi	67f.	KI
Rev. i. 17-18	1			é ^d Sul-gi	----	Ki-nu-nir
Rev. i. 19-20		9	1			
Rev. i. 21-24	9		9	é ^d Nin-mar ^{KI}	(106f.)	
Rev. i. 25-26	1			é ^d En-ki-a-a- UR.KU	----	
Rev. i. 27-ii 1 Rev. ii 2-3	1 1	[12]	[9]	[é ^d Sul]-gi	----	[Gú-a] ^{KI} b- ba

Rev. ii 4-3 Grand Total 180 nar
62 gala

The text can be divided into two parts: The listing of the individual entries, covering the major part of the tablet, and the colophon at the end of the text.

The first part of the colophon (rev. ii 4-5) lists the grand totals: ŠU.NIGĪN 180 nar ŠU.NIGĪN 62 UŠ.KU "total of 180 singers/musicians, total of 62 cantors." The second part of the colophon (rev. ii 6-8) reads: nar UŠ.KU gir-sè-ga [Gír-su]^{KI}-ta [Gú-ab-ba^{KI}]-šè "singers/musicians (and) cantors, personnel, from Giršu to Guabba!"

The grand total of 62 gala in the colophon results from adding:

i 21-ii and ii 5	4[1]	
ii 18	4 (written 2 but must be corrected to 4 by simply adding 2 <u>gala</u> of ii to 2 <u>gala</u> of ii 14)	
ii 21 and 22	2	
ii 25 and rev. i 3	4	
Rev. i 7 and 11	1	
Rev. i 15 and 19	1	
Rev. l 21 and ii 2	<u>9</u>	
Rev. ii 5	62 <u>gala</u>	

The grand total of 180 nar of the colophon cannot be adjusted with either of the two solutions:

i 1-18 and 19	135?	or	125?
ii 8-17 and 18	9		9
ii 20 and 22	5		5
ii 24-rev. i 2 and 3	14		14
Rev. i 5-10 and 11	8		8
Rev. i 12-18 and 19	9		9
Rev. i 21-ii 1 and 2	<u>12</u>		<u>12</u>

192 nar or 182 nar

By reading the number in i 19 as 135 (nar) and adding to it the 4[1] (gala) of ii 5, we obtain the number 176 (nar

and gala) which agrees with the number 176 of ii 7. However, this number cannot be confirmed by adding the individual entries pertaining to nar because of the destroyed portions of the text in i 1-5. Moreover, the reading of 135 in i 19 is not quite assured, as the traces of the wedge between 120 and 5 may be covered by an erasure, yielding the number 125, not 135. But even the number 125 must be reduced to 123 if it is to be added to the total of 57 sure entries for nar in the rest of the text in order to obtain the 180 nar of the colophon (rev. ii 4).

There is a difference in listing the individual entries between those pertaining to Giršu and those for other localities. While the nar and gala of Giršu are listed separately, the nar and gala of other localities are listed together; and while the total of 176 nar and gala is given for the entries for Giršu, this total is not given for other localities.

4. Localities and Households

The main part of the text lists the 242 singers/musicians and cantors by households and locality. Seven places are named in the following order: Gír-su^{KI}, ŠIR.BUR.LA^{KI}, URU+KAR^{KI}, NINA^{KI}, Ki-èš^{KI} (written Ki-èš-sá^{KI} in genitive), Ki-nu-nir^{KI}, and [Gú-a]b-ba^{KI}, that is Giršu, Lagaš, URU+KAR^{KI} (exact reading unknown), Siraran, Kièš, Kinunir, and Guabba. These are exactly the places which form "das Kerngebiet des Stadstaates von Lagaš" according to Falkenstein, AnOr XXX p. 17. As listed by him they are: Lagaš selbst, Girsu, Niná (or Niná-Sirara on p. 21), Uruku "die heilige Stadt" (which is Lagaš-Uruku of p.21), Kinunira, Guabba, Kesa, and URU X ganatenû.

Almost all the households which are named under each locality in our tablet are known from other contemporary sources, as listed and discussed by Falkenstein, AnOr

XXX on the pages indicated in the chart in section 3 above. Note the following additions:

i 12) Pabilsag in Giršu. -- This divinity is apparently nowhere discussed by Falkenstein. One nar "singer/musician" of this divinity occurs in Barton, HLC II Pl. 52 ii 4 (colated), together with one muš-laḥ₄ ^dNanše "snake charmer of Nanše" and one UŠ.KU-maḥ É-bar₆-bar₆ "chief cantor of Ebarbar" as being part of é SAL-gil-sa "the household of SALgilsa." All these households are located in Giršu. For other occurrences of Pabilsag of Giršu, see Schneider, AnOr XIX p. 70 No. 522.

i 15) Ebarbar in Giršu. -- According to Falkenstein, AnOr XXX p. 166, Ebarbar is located in the "Kultstätten ausserhalb der grossen Siedlungen," which to Falkenstein, AnOr XXX p. 17 and elsewhere include Giršu, Lagaš and Ni-nā-Sirara. Our text locates it definitely in Giršu.

i 16) Lugal in Giršu. -- This simple reference to lugal must refer to é lugal "royal household".

ii 2) Kišalla in Giršu. -- Correcting slightly the statement of Falkenstein, AnOr XXX p. 34 that Kišalla "hat anscheinend in der Nähe von Girsu gelegen," our text locates it definitely in Giršu.

ii 17, rev. i 2, 10, 18, and ii 1) É^dŠulgi. -- This household is not discussed in Falkenstein, AnOr XXX. The household of Šulgi is named in our text at five out of seven localities, namely at Lagaš, Siraran, Ki-èš, Kinunir, and Guabba, but not under Giršu, where we find the royal household instead, nor at URU+KÁR^{KI}, which lists no households. The household of Šulgi was already discussed above p. 44, in connection with the date of our text. Time does not permit checking all the references to the household of Šulgi in Ur III sources in search of corroborating evidence for the existence of this household in the five localities

of the Lagaš area. One text, however, should be discussed here because of its relevance to the problem of changing of names borne by singers/musicians. The text in question, dated to Šulgi 48 and published in CT VII 13, was discussed in Grégoire, La province méridionale de l'état de Lagash pp. 80f. and 146f. It deals with rations of barley and wool (or cloth) for various individuals of the household of Šulgi in Guabba. Among the named individuals with their occupations we find one baker, one cupbearer, one gatekeeper, and several others, including one muš-lah₄ "snake charmer" and fifteen nar-me "singers/musicians." All of the fifteen singers/musicians bear Sumerian names with the element ^dŠul-gi. For this and similar texts, cf. the discussion in N. Schneider, AOr XVII/3-4 (1949) pp. 351-8, esp. p. 356, where names with the elements Būr-Sin and Šu-Sin are cited from texts dated to the first few years of these rulers, leading to the conclusion that certain classes of personnel changed their names shortly after the accession of the ruler to the throne.

Rev. i 24) É^d Nin-mar^{KI} in Guabba. -- Falkenstein's suggestion in AnOr XXX pp. 29f and 106f. that the household of d^{KI} Nin-mar is located either in Guabba or in Giršu is resolved in favor of the first locality by our text.

Rev. i 26) É^d En-ki-a-a-úr.KU in Guabba. -- While the signs úr.KU, written on the edge, are not quite clear, their reading is assured by the occurrence of the same divinity in a Lagaš Ur III text, unpublished but treated by Delaporte in ITT IV p. 92, 8115 and cited in Schneider, AnOr XIX p. 21 No. 107/13 and No. 108. According to Delaporte, the undated text deals with offerings of flour and bread for the divinities d^š Sul-pa-è, d^g Gù-dé-a, and d^é En-ki-a-a-úr-ku; Delaporte's transliteration úr corresponds to úr of our days. My transliteration úr.KU expresses my in-

ability to interpret these two signs as part of the divine name. A-a is of course "father"; úr is sūnum or utlum "bosom"; and KU can be either dab₅ "to take," "to seize" or durun/tuš "to dwell." Apparently related to our name ^dEn-ki-a-a-úr.KU must be é EN.KI.A.úr which (together with é EN.KI.ŠÀ.URU) occurs as the name of a sanctuary in Guabba (RTC 399 rev. ii 26f., cited in Grégoire, La province méridionale de l'état de Lagash pp. 71, 72, 77, 139, and 143). There may be some relation between the nar of RTC 399 rev. ii 26f. and the nar of EN.KI of line 29.

5. Personnel

The text lists a total of 242 individuals of the singing, music playing, and entertaining personnel of the various households in the seven main localities of the Lagaš province. The term for "personnel" used in the colophon is gir-sè-ga. This term, unknown before the Ur III period, denotes the dependent personnel of a household or a group of households. The term is applied to men, women, and children, working in the household and to a wide variety of occupations, from lowly workers, such as smiths, carpenters, weavers, millers, and shepherds to officials such as scribes and the foremen of the weavers. Any such meaning as "temple officials" (cited above p. 43), "an officer" (Legrain UET III B p. 88), or "in fonctionnaire (royal)" (M. Lambert, RA LIV p. 120 n. 5) are too narrow to encompass the total range of the meaning of the term. Note, e. g., that Lambert applied the translation "fonctionnaire (royal)" in reference to a certain Nammaḫ-Bau of HSS IV 49 iv 4, without realizing that Nammaḫ-Bau was but one of the 57 dumu "children" forming part of the gir-sè-ga lugal "personnel of the (household of the) king," who received wool rations.

The term gir-sè-ga is a collective, not a 'singulative'

noun. The exceptions are very few and uncertain. The occurrence of 30 gir-sè-ga, with a number preceding the term, was translated by Sollberger, TCS I No. 247 as "30 domestics," but it could also be interpreted as "30 (individuals representing the) personnel."

The Sumerian term gir-sè-ga is best known from temple and royal households. The following examples illustrate both the type and composition of the gir-sè-ga personnel. RTC 401 i lists sukal "secretary", SILÀ.ŠU.DU₈ "cupbearer," nar-gal "senior singer/musician," i-du₈ "gatekeeper," uku-uš "gendarme," muš-laḥ₄ "snake charmer," uḡula HAR.HAR "foreman of the millers," ga-íl "milk carrier," baḥar "potter," etc. under the gir-sè-ga Šul-gi-ra-me "personnel of (the household of) Šulgi" and similarly for the temple households in the rest of the text. Three related texts, BIN V 277, Dok. II 236, and Forde, NCT 37, list (with some variations) gir-sè-ga èš-didli "personnel of sundry sanctuaries" (= temples), including muš-laḥ₄ "snake charmer," baḥar "potter," and i-du₈ "gatekeeper." The gir-sè-ga personnel of these texts, as of our BM 14618, discussed in this article, formed no more part of the priestly or official class than the carpenters, smiths, shepherds and men of innumerable other occupations who received rations or land on prebend from the household and participated in all the facets of the social and economic life of the household to which they belonged.

Most of the later meanings of the word symbolized as girseqû (girsega'u) or gerseqqû in our Akkadian dictionaries are not applicable to the Sumerian term gir-sè-ga. I am referring to such meanings as "a social class," "domestics," "attendants," or "menials" (CAD G pp. 94ff.) or "ein Bediensteter des Königs u v Tempeln" (AHWB pp. 285 f.). There is no trace in early periods of the meaning "eunuch,"

suggested by Landsberger, MSL VIII/1 p. 74, Kraus, Vom mesopotamischen Menschen der altbabylonischer Zeit und seiner Welt (Amsterdam, 1973) p. 70, and Frankena, ABB II 27:6 on the basis of such texts as the Code of Hammurapi (see CAD G p. 94 a) and omina (pp. 95 c and 96). This last point needs stressing here because of the possibility that scholars who favor the meaning "eunuch" for later GĪR.SÈ.GA might be prone to see supporting evidence in favor of that meaning in our colophon, reading in full as ŠU.NIGÍN 180 nar ŠU.NIGÍN 62 UŠ.KU nar UŠ.KU gīr-sè-ga [Gīr-su]^{KI}-ta [Gū-ab-ba]^{KI}-šè, translated on p. 50 as "total of 180 singers/musicians, total of 62 cantors; singers/musicians (and) cantors, personnel, from Giršu to Guabba." In my translation, the word "personnel" is taken as being in apposition to "singers/musicians (and) cantors." Other scholars might wish to take gīr-sè-ga as being in apposition to gala only and interpret both as terms for "eunuch" (see below p. 70).

The references to certain households discussed above under Pabilsag of Giršu and under Šulgi of Guabba and other localities (pp. 51) show that the 242 individuals of our text do not comprise the total of the nar-gala personnel of the Lagaš province. Nevertheless, certain general conclusions about the relative size of the households and localities which can be drawn from our text conform rather well with the ideas which we have held about them on the basis of other kinds of evidence, drawn from royal inscriptions and administrative texts. This applies especially to the relative size of Lagaš and Giršu in the Ur III period.

The purpose of our text is unknown. It lists only men, not women, such as, e.g., the nar-SAL "female singers/musicians," who are known from administrative texts.

The text distinguishes two large categories of personnel: 180 nar and 62 gala. The Sumerian term nar is used in our text in two senses, broad and narrow. The broad-sense term includes 180 nar "singers/musicians" and comprises about 168 nar "singers/musicians" (proper), about 5 muš-lah₄ "sneke charmers," and about 7 UD.DA.KU "bear wards." The term gala includes here only the 62 gala "cantors."

One common characteristic of the four occupations is that they were all involved in singing or chanting and playing a musical instrument. The second characteristic is that they all required a period of apprenticeship to learn the craft, as shown by the existence of the terms *nam-nar or narūtum, *nam-muš-lah₄ or mušlahhūm, nam-UD.DA.KU or *aluzinnūtum, and nam-UŠ.KU or kalūtum, either in Sumerian texts of the 3rd millennium B.C. or in the Akkadian texts of later periods.

6. Nar "singer/musician"

The Sumerian term nar is generally translated as "musician" or "singer." The meaning "musician" is confirmed by the occurrences of terms for specialized nar, such as nar-sa(-me) (in our text i 3 or UET III 1424) and nar-balag (BIN III 262), also both nar-sa-me and nar-balag-me in one text (RTC 399 iii, discussed in Grégoire, La province méridionale de l'état de Lagash pp. 67, 82, and 138). Since the nar-sa-me are certainly "string musicians," that is, musicians playing string instruments, it might seem tempting to assume that the nar-balag-me should be the "drum musicians," that is, musicians playing a percussion instrument. Unfortunately, the meaning of Sumerian balag, Akkadian balaggum, balangum is controversial. While von Soden, AHWB p. 98 translates the words as "etwa Harfe od. Leier," Deimel, ŠL 352, 1-3 takes it as a "paukenartiges Musikinstrument," and CAD B p. 38f. refuses to commit itself,

calling it simply "a musical instrument." W. Stauder in RLA IV pp. 114-120 and Robert D. Biggs, "The Sumerian Harp," The American Harp Journal I (1968) pp. 6-12 interpret the words unhesitatingly as a harp.

The reconstruction of the missing portions preceding [n]ar-sa-me in our text i 3 is very difficult. There is room in the broken space for a large sign of the size of nar or two smaller signs. The reconstruction of the missing portion as a number is apparently impossible because of the occurrence of -me (in [n]ar-sa-me), which is not used for main entries in the text unless qualified in some way. Possible reconstructions are: [x guruš n]ar-sa-me, [é n]ar-sa-me, [x (guruš) é n]ar-sa-me, or simply [(space) n]ar-sa-me.

An individual with the profession a-da-ba is listed among the nar-me in the Pre-Sargonic text HSS III 15 rev. ii 10 (= Orient. XXXIV p. 54, and similarly pp. 46, 51, and 63) and thus must have been a musician playing an instrument which corresponds to the Akkadian adapu, described simply as a musical instrument in our current dictionaries. Strange as it seems, these Pre-Sargonic occurrences of a-da-ba are nowhere cited in Sumerology, not even in Deimel, ŠL 579, 316, who must have known of them.

In a broader sense, the class of "singers/musicians" includes also the gala, who also sing or chant and play musical instruments (see pp. 64).

The Sumerian term nar is equated with the Akkadian na-rûm (nuārum in Assyrian and at Nuzi), translated as "musician" in our Akkadian dictionaries. The Akkadian term related to nārum is zammerum usually translated as "singer" (e.g., CAD Z p. 40). Since there are no Sumerian words for singer in the administrative texts of the 3rd millennium B.C. which could compete in importance with the word nar

"musician," we are forced to assume that the Sumerian occupation nar comprised both functions, namely that of playing a musical instrument and of singing. It is for that reason that I have normally translated the Sumerian term nar as singer/musician or musician/ singer in my previous publications.

The singers/musicians of the Sumerians bring to mind Demokos, the blind minstrel of the Odyssey who sings his songs and strikes the chords of his lyre (Odyssey VIII 44ff., 254ff., etc.); and of course the great bard Homer himself. It is interesting to note that Ann Knudsen Khalil in her contribution "Musicians and Music" in Carl Roebuck, ed., The Muses at Work (Cambridge, Mass., 1969) pp. 226-249, esp. pp. 228f., writes interchangeably of music, musicians, minstrels, singers, and bards.

Sources from different periods indicate that singers/musicians were often blind. MAD I 253, Sargonic, lists more than 55 singers/musicians, together with (other) blind individuals. For blind singers/musicians in the Old Babylonian period, cf. MCS II p. 39 No. 4 = Szlechter, TJA p. 151, according to which a blind girl was apprenticed to learn singing; and Jean, RA XLII pp. 62f. = Finet, Annuaire de l'hist. de Phil. XV pp. 18, 22, 27, Mari, which deals, in a difficult context, with blind girls and singers/musicians (zāmirātum). For blind harpers in Egypt, cf. M. Lichtheim, JNES IV (1945) p. 188. "In ancient China musicians were commonly blind" (H.G. Creel, ed., Literary Chinese by the Inductive Method II [Chicago, 1939] p. 94; and similarly A. Wailey, The Book of Songs [Boston and New York] p. 218 No. 205 and p. 260 No. 244). It is possible that persons who were born blind or who became blind because of sickness might have earned their livelihood by singing and playing musical instruments. Or inversely some

singers and musicians were blinded entering their profession, as reported among the African Baganda, where "the bard was usually a man who had been deprived of his sight, that he might not look upon the court ladies or fall in love with them" (John Roscoe, The Baganda [2nd ed., New York, 1966] p. 35, reference cited in Lichtheim, JNES IV [1945] p. 188 n, 53).

7. Mušlah "snake charmer"

Appearing under the broad class of nar "singers/musicians" in our text are men with the occupation muš-lah₄, which corresponds to the Akkadian mušlahhum, translated as "snake charmer" or "Schlangenbeschwörer" in our dictionaries. The Sumerian term muš-lah₄ occurs quite frequently in Mesopotamian administrative texts of the Fara, Pre-Sargonic, Sargonic, and Ur III periods. Nothing about their function can be deduced from these sources.

The snake charmers of ancient as of modern times can perform several related functions. They can drive snakes away from an infested house with the help of magic and incantations or catch and kill them. They can recite magical formulae over the body of a snake-bitten person with the hope of preventing death. Or they can perform in public places with captured snakes (such as cobras) to the accompaniment of soothing music.

Though the available information relating to the muš-lahhum in the Akkadian sources identifies them generally as sorcerers utilizing incantations in their operations, other points may be brought out in favor of their function as performers. First, the meaning of lah₄ in muš-lah₄ is "to drive," "to steer" (as in gud-lah₄ "driver of oxen"), not "to drive away." Secondly, the muš-lah₄ are included under the nar in our text, suggesting that they worked with the help of a musical instrument. Thus it is not dif-

difficult to visualize snake charmers playing their trade in a public place with a snake to the accompaniment of a flute or a pipe, just as the bear wards performed with a bear to the accompaniment of a tambourine. See just below.

However, there is no need to limit the functions of snake charmers to one specific role, as is well evidenced in modern parallels from Iraq and elsewhere. See, e.g., Ramona and Desmond Morris, Men and Snakes (New York, etc., 1965) and N.L. Corkill, "Snake Specialists in Iraq," Iraq VI (1939) pp. 45-52 (I wish to thank Mr. Marten Stol providing me these two references). Cf. also M.C. Astour, "Two Ugaritic Serpent Charms," JNES XXVII (1968) pp. 13-36.

8. UD.DA.KU "bear ward"

The term UD.DA.KU of our text occurs in the spellings UD.DA.TUŠ and UD.DA.TUŠ.A in lexical texts, which identify it with the Akkadian aluzinnum. Even though the spelling ŠA of UD.DA.TUŠ.ŠA, cited in CAD A p. 392a and MSL XII p. 136, should be corrected to A (according to photos of the two variant texts), the reading ud-da-tuš or UD.DA.TUŠ is plausible because it occurs in lexical texts (e.g. MSL XII p. 136) together with HAL.LA.TUŠ.A, which corresponds to the Akkadian hallatuššum (a kind of singer/musician), and is equated with the aluzinnum.

The Akkadian aluzinnum is taken in CAD A p. 392 as a profession, with the remark that "there is no cogent evidence that he was a 'jester', though his profession must have been one which created the humorous effect....". Von Soden, AHWB p. 39f. translated it as "Spasmacher," "Clown."

Leaving aside the meaning of the later Akkadian aluzinnum, who may or may not have performed the same or similar functions as the earlier Sumerian UD.DA.KU, the function of the latter is quite clearly delineated in our text,

which classifies him among the nar "singers/musicians," and by five other Ur III texts discussed below. An individual bearing the profession UD.DA.KU occurs in two Pre-Sargonic texts from Lagaš, RTC 17 v (where he serves as a witness) and 54 rev. ii (where he receives rations of barley), both irrelevant for the meaning of UD.DA.KU, and in fifteen (known to me) Ur III texts, five of which shed important light on the function of the UDA.DA.KU. All five texts are Drehem receipts.

1) Legrain, TRU 45: Šu-Eštar UD.DA.KU receives [1]? az "bear" nam-UD.DA.KU-šè from Lu-dingira. The pertinent profession was taken as "portier?" by Legrain in his Catalogue p. 56; it was connected with aluzinnum by Oppenheim, Cat. Eames pp. 102f. ad KK 3; it was connected with aluzinnum and translated as "Gaukler?" by Edzard, SRU pp. 91 f., with a further note that the "u₄-da-tuš mit az 'Bären' umging." With reference to the same text (TRU 45), Edzard, ZA LX p. 160 suggested that the word in question may stand for the German "Bärenführer," a term which corresponds to the English term "bear ward," used below. In discussing the various Sumerian terms for the Akkadian aluzinnum, Sjöberg, JCS XXV pp. 130f. and n. 12 suggested that "der u₄-da-tuš pflegte mit Bären und Schweinen zu spielen"; his reference to "Schweine" may be due to some misunderstanding, since none of the texts cited in his n. 12 (or any other texts known to me) mention swine in connection with the UD.DA.KU.

2) FLP 1161 (unpublished, courtesy of D. Owen): Šu-Eštar son of Aadda received 1 amar-az "bear cub" UD.DA.KU-šè from Lu-dingira.

3) Fish, CST p. 35 No. 248, transliteration only: [Šu-E]₄-dar UD.DA.KU received 1 "bear cub" UD.DA.KU-šè from Abbašaga.

4) Fish, CST p. 54 No. 494, transliteration only: Ur-nigingar nar received 1 bear cub UD.DA.KU-šè from Ennum-ili.

5) Kang, SETDA 23: Dada UŠ.KU received 3 bear cubs nam-UD.DA.KU-šè from Abbašaga. The pertinent profession is translated there as "jester" by Kang, and the corresponding abstract as "for the act of clowning" or "services for clowning" by D. Owen in JNES XXXIII (1974) p. 175b.

The classification of UD.DA.KU among the nar in our text and the fact that bears of bear cubs are acquired for the purpose described as nam-UD.DA.KU-šè or UD.DA.KU-šè by individuals who bear the profession UD.DA.KU (or the like) according to several Ur III texts led me some years ago to the self-evident conclusion that the UD.DA.KU profession denoted an individual who plied his trade with a bear at his side and to the accompaniment of a musical instrument, presumably a kind of tambourine. While there is no term for such an individual in modern English usage, The Oxford Dictionary B p. 737 describes BEARWARD as "the keeper of a bear, who leads it about for public exhibition of its tricks." The reason for the acquisition of the bears is stated to be nam-UD.DA.KU-šè, that is, for the purpose of training the bears in the craft practiced by the bear ward. In Akkadian such a term would be *aluzinnūtum, parallel to nārūtum "musical craft," provided of course that the aluzinnum of later times performed the same functions as the Sumerian UD.DA.KU.

The use of the term nar in Fish, CST p. 54 No. 494 confirms the conclusion based on our text, according to which nar denotes the broad class of singers/musicians, which includes the UD.DA.KU "bear wards." The Dada gala who acquired three bear cubs to be trained in the bear ward craft is doubtless the same enterprising man who is known

from his manifold activities in various cities; see below under the gala profession (p. 66).

References to single bears and bear cubs are found quite frequently in the Drehem administrative texts. By far the largest numbers of bears anywhere in cuneiform sources are documented in two Drehem accounts published and discussed by Danièle Calvot in RA LXIII (1969) pp. 101-114. The first of these texts (pp. 101-103) lists 457 bears among 384,344 domestic and feral animals received in the animal park during a period of sixty months from Šulgi 45 to Šulgi 49; while the second text (pp. 103-105) lists 164 bears among 62,263 animals during the year Bûr-Sin 5. The text with the next highest number of bears known to me is De Genouillac, Babyloniaca VIII Pl. VII Pupil 26, listing 15 bear cubs.

Three more occurrences of UD.DA.KU in the Ur III texts should be briefly mentioned. Reisner, TUT 16 v 33, according to which 2 UD.DA.KU each receive 6 iku (acres) of land on prebend from the household of Šul-gi (cf. above p. 55); and TUT 164²²:4 (= p. 135), according to which a certain Hūwawa UD.DA.KU, who comes ^{GIS} gigir-ta "from the (household of the) chariot" (cf. our text i 5 and 7), receives 50 silà of barley in the household of Gatumdug; and Pettinato and Waetzoldt, CS 127, according to which Šu-Eštar UD.DA.KU, certainly the same man as in our examples 1-3 above, offers 1 kid to the temple.

9. Gala "cantor"

Separated in our text from the broad classes of the nar, including the singers/musicians proper, the snake charmers, and the bear wards, are the gala, written UŠ.KU (= UŠ.DUR, accordings to Biggs, JCS XX p. 78 n. 37 on the basis of Fara texts), passed on to the Akkadian in the form kalûm (earlier *kala'um), translated as "lametation priest" in

CAD and as "(Tempel-)Klagepriester," "Kultsänger" in von Soden, AHWB. But for the terms "priest" and "Tempel," on the surface, nothing in the early administrative texts contradicts these meanings and they are partially confirmed in a number of instances.

The function of the gala as wailers is confirmed by three Pre-Sargonic and one Gudea text. Seventy-two gala are listed together with 70 dam-ab-ba (meaning unknown) 10-tu (meaning unknown) and 148 gemé "women" of the temples of Ningiršu and Bau under the general classification ír-sig₇-me "wailers" who participated in the funeral of Barnamtara, according to a Pre-Sargonic text from Lagaš (De Genouillac, TSA 9 = Deimel, AnOr II 29f.). A similar text lists 92 gala together with 177 women and 48 dam-ab-ba under the ír-sig₇-me (VAS XIV 137 = AnOr II p. 30). The total of 176 gala includes 153 gala proper, 18 GAL.DI "lamentation singers," and 5 um-ma-ír "wailing (old) women" according to another Pre-Sargonic text from Lagaš (DP 159 = AnOr II pp. 33f.). The term um-ma-ír of this text corresponds to the ama-ír who participate in funerals together with the gala playing the balag instrument (see above p. 57) and reciting plaints (Thureau-Dangin, SAKI p. 68 v 1-4, Gudea). These four texts will be taken up again below, pp. 70.

According to DP 220 (= AnOr II p. 26f.) various kinds of commodities are provided for individuals with such occupations as gašam, gala, gala-mah, gal-sukal, gudu₄, etc. The encompassing term KA.KA.KA-na (si-bi-sá-a) in the colophon of this text was interpreted by Deimel, AnOr II p. 37 ad f) as corresponding to zammirum "singer," as in CAD zammeru p. 40a. The same Sumerian term occurs in the colophon of DP 50 and 338, which also deal with the distribution of commodities but mention no occupations.

The relation of the gala to the singers/musicians is indicated by the fact that the gala, while separated from the nar, are listed in our text as if representing a related type of personnel. Cf. also similar cases: nar UŠ.KU ^dŠul-gi-ke₄ "the nar (and) gala of (the household of) Šul-gi" anointed themselves with oil (HSS IV 95 rev., Ur III). A certain UŠ.KU UD.DA.KU, that is, a person by the name of Gala and with the occupation of UD.DA.KU "bear ward," appears in an official function (Oppenheim, Cat. Eames Collection Pl. VIII rev. iii end, Ur III); he reminds us of the Ur III text discussed above p. 63, according to which Dada gala received three bear cubs nam-UD.DA.KU-šè, for training in the craft practiced by the bear wards. This is the same Dada gala who is attested in dozens of texts from Ur, Drehem, and other places as a very active and prosperous individual. He had two sons playing musical instruments (Hedūt-Būr-Sin, RA VIII p. 192 No. 14; and Su-Sin-migir-Eštar, JCS X p. 30 No. 9 and BIN V 29:11) and a wife, probably by the name Allašarum (UET III 1195:4 compared with line 6, suggestion of Peter Steinkeller).

The gala occupation is well known from the Fara, Pre-Sargonic, Sargonic, and Ur III administrative sources. For some documentation, cf., e.g., M. Lambert, Sumer X pp. 165f., Oppenheim, Cat. Eames Collection p. 117, and Fish, MCS VII pp. 25ff.

The relative status of the gala occupation varies greatly, from the insignificant gala, who can be sold, to some very prosperous gala and gala-mah officials, who are in control of large amounts of property in land and movable goods.

The low estate of the gala individuals who are sold or purchased is shown by four Pre-Sargonic contracts (Dok. I 17; BIN VIII 363; RTC 17; and Orient. IX p. 172f., VAT

4454), which refer to single individuals, and one Sargonic contract (RTC 80), according to which an individual named Gala plus his wife, two daughters, and two brothers were purchased by a governor from a judge. These texts will be discussed further below, p. 70.

The very active and prosperous Dada gala was discussed just above. Another indication of the importance or prestige attached to the gala occupation results from the study of numerous Ur III texts, according to which single individuals, bearing such varying professions or descriptions as MU "baker," rá-gaba "courrier," lú GIŠ.BAN "archer," MAR. TU "Amorite," offer animals to the temple ud nam-UŠ.KU-šè ì-in-ku₄-ra (with some irrelevant variants) "on the day he entered the gala-ship (examples cited in Oppenheim, Cat. Eames Collection pp. 110f.; Fish, CST p. 25; Goetze, JCS XVII p. 25a). Apparently, the offerings were made by the individuals in payment for the privilege of learning the craft of serving the temple in the capacity of a gala. Goetze, loc. cit. (also Schneider in Orient. XII p. 191) listed an unnamed dumu-lugal "prince" from an unpublished Pinches manuscript among the individuals who entered the gala-ship. Since the case did not seem plausible to me, I asked Dr. Edmond Sollberger, who is about to publish the Pinches manuscript, to collate the copy. In answer, Dr. Sollberger sent me a Xerox of Pinches No. 13, which reads clearly: 3 udu-še 2 máš-gal-še Šu-^dŠul-gi dumu-lugal ud nam-UŠ.KU-šè in(sic)-ku₄-ra "3 grain-fed sheep and 2 grain-fed goats (brought by) Su-Šulgi, the prince, when he entered the gala-ship."

In résumé of the preceding discussion, we can note the following about the social status of the gala: The very large numbers of 72, 92, and 153 gala participating in the wailing activities at funerals in Pre-Sargonic times (p.

65) indicate a vely low status of the gala. In fact, for many years I have often thought of these gala as "professional mourners" at the funerals, a class of people derived from beggars in modern times. Even a lower status is indicated by the five Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic contracts pertaining to the sale of gala individuals (p. 66).

By contrast, texts dealing with activities of Dada gala (p. 66) and the assumption of the gala-ship by a prince (p. 67) lead to the conclusion that a certain amount of prestige must have been attached to the gala occupation.

An interesting, but difficult Ur III text published in Nies, UDT 57 and discussed by him on pp. 50f. lists 25 individuals, each with his own name and the name of his father (very rarely, brother), as gala in the different households of the Lagaš area.

While the masculine nar and nârum have feminine counterparts in nar-SAL and nârtum, the terms gala and kalûm have no corresponding feminines *gala-SAL and *kalâtum.

This brings us to the reconsideration of the meaning "eunuch" or the like for gala, held by some scholars (Alotte de la Fuye, RA XVIII [1921] p. 121; Oppenheim, Orient. n.s. XIX [1950] p. 135 and n. 1; E. Gordon, SP [1959] p. 248 ad l. 9), but rejected by others (Jacobsen in Gordon, SP [1959] pp. 482f.; Krecher, SKL [1966] p. 36; Renger, ZA LIX [1969] pp. 192f.; CAD sub kalû p. 44a; and, tacitly, von Soden AHWE pp. 427f.).

There is no room to repeat here the evidence pro and con the meaning "eunuch" brought forth in previous discussions. The fact is that no evidence in favor of that meaning is available anywhere in the sources of the 3rd millennium B.C. Nevertheless, the past proposals to translate gala as "eunuch", while based on intuitivite feelings, rather than a clear-cut evidence, contain a certain amount of

truth. The problem before us is not only to describe the functions of the gala, but also to find the underlying meaning of the word, if at all possible. The case may be paralleled by the term igi-nu-du₈ of the Pre-Sargonic texts from Lagaš. The function of the igi-nu-du₈ working in orchards is that of a gardener; the real meaning of the word is "blind." Similarly, the function of the gala is that of a cantor, wailer, lamenter, liturgist, psalmist, or whatever else we wish to call him; the underlying meaning of the gala is yet to be found.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence against the meaning "eunuch" is the fact that a gala can have a wife and children. Such evidence exists for the Sargonic period (RTC 80, see above p. 67) and Ur III period (Dada gala, see above p. 66; also Falkenstein, NSGU Nos. 101 and 199, cited in Renger, ZA LIX p. 193). Nevertheless, even that point is open to speculation, such as the possibility that some individuals were eunuchs from their childhood, while others were forced or were willing to undergo the operation later in their life; or that the children of the gala were not his own, but adopted children; or that a gala, while pursuing his own inclinations or preferences, still was physically capable of having children.

Far-reaching conclusions may be reached by a critical analysis of the five contracts dealing with the sale of gala (p. 66), which, together with three Pre-Sargonic sales of igi-nu-du₈ "blind" individuals (Dok. I 293; VAS XIV 141 and 144) and three more sources dealing with the sale of túl-ta-pád-da "foundlings" (RTC 16, Pre-Sargonic; Falkenstein, NSGU Nos. 52:4 and 204:23, Ur III), form a unique group of sales of individuals who are not chattel slaves brought from abroad. The use of the term gala in

parallelism to the terms for "blind" and "foundling" plus the fact that terms for occupations are never given in contracts pertaining to the sale of slaves allow us to draw the conclusion that the term gala denotes here not an occupation, but a certain inherent or acquired physical characteristic.

The same conclusion can be drawn from the observation that according to two of the five Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic contracts of a sale of a gala (p. 66), once a gala was purchased from his mother (RTC 17), once from his father (BIN VIII 363; perhaps also Orient. IX p. 172f., VAT 4434). This implies that the sold gala must have been young; and since the young men bear the gala designation at the time of their sale, it means that they must have been endowed from their youth with whatever quality is assigned to that word, and did not necessarily acquire it at the time of entering the service in the temple or elsewhere, as waiters or cantors. The most plausible interpretation would seem to be to take gala as a "homosexual" or "pederast" (the latter word is a compound of two Greek words meaning "boy-love").

Different kinds of administrative texts, mainly of the Pre-Sargonic period, contain evidence for the 'femininity' of the gala. These facts have been known for some time, but have not been utilized in present discussions of scholars who favor the meaning "eunuch" for gala.

From two Pre-Sargonic texts (TSA 9 and VAS XIV 137) and a Gudea inscription we learn that large numbers of gala acted as waiters at funerals together with women (p. 65).

The fourth text in that group (DP 159) lists 5 um-ma-ir "wailing (old) women" under the 176 gala. The whole text ends in a colophon reading gemé-dumu dingir-ne-me (sic, see RA XVIII p. 107 n. 2) "women and children of the gods" (=

temples), which includes the 176 gala plus 174 gemé plus 68 ša-dùg listed in the body of the text. Since dumu "children" of the colophon correspond to the ša-dùg "sweet-hearts," "babies" of the main text, the logical conclusion is that gemé "women" of the colophon correspond to the gemé "women" plus the gala of the main text. It is interesting to note the conclusion of Deimel, AnOr II p. 38: "danach wären alle gala hier weiblich." It seems strange that Allotte de la Fuÿe, who in RA XVIII pp. 119ff. favored the meaning "eunuch" for gala, failed to utilize the evidence of DP 159 for his purpose; on p. 111 he read gemé-dumu as gim-TUR, translated it as "servantes et serviteurs," and suggested that the vague term TUR included not only the ša-dùg, but also the gala. The latter suggestion is not in line with available evidence about the relations of colophons to the main body of a text, even though occasionally a few men can and do occur in texts dealing with women. For example, the 159 gemé-dumu in the colophon of a še-ba-gemé-dumu text (that is, a text dealing with barley rations for women and children), include not only 155 women and children, but also a very few men of the supervisory personnel (De Genouillac, TSA 10 = Deimel, Orient. XLIII p. 6 and other texts of the same class in this volume pp. 1-80).

The last (very rarely next to last) gang in each of the texts just cited consists of gemé šah-níg-kú-a-me, that is, women engaged in feeding of pigs (Orient. XLIII pp. 5f., 10f., 17f. and passim throughout the volume). Each gang lists in order: 13-17 gemé receiving each 18-24 silà of barley, among them one gala individual named Nin-é-balag-i-dùg receiving 18 silà; an irrelevant number of babies (receiving each 12 silà) attached to the women; plus a male individual named Ne-sag (and variants; also single indivi-

duals with another name in other texts), who receives 24 (sic) silà (not 18 silà, as in Orient. XLIII p. 6) and clearly serves as the supervisor of the gang. The mode of writing the numbers for different classes of workers is quite illuminating. The number 1 for the man in supervisory capacity is written in a normal fashion in the form of a semicircle. The numbers for 13-17 gemé, including 1 gala individual, are written in two different ways. The numbers are written regularly in the form of a circle for 10 plus a varying number of semicircles for 3-7 in the texts transliterated in Orient. XLIII Nos. 1-12; thus 13 gemé are written regularly as ○DDD gemé in HSS III 22 rev. v 13 (= Orient. XLIII No. 12 p. 65). The numbers are written in a peculiar way in texts Nos. 13-14 of the volume; thus the same 13 gemé, including 1 gala, are written as ○DDx gemé in HSS III 23 rev. viii 1 (= Orient. XLIII No. 14 p. 80), to be read as 12 written regularly for the 12 women and 1 written irregularly for the 1 gala. While the latter way of writing clearly indicates that the gala who is listed among the women is not a woman, the fact remains that he is still listed with women. Furthermore, Nin-é-balag-ì-dùg, the name of the gala, may very well be a feminine, not a masculine name, as one can gather by scanning through the lists of names composed with the element nin-, which are in a great majority feminine. Cf. e. g., Dok. I pp. 103f. and TSA pp. 116f.

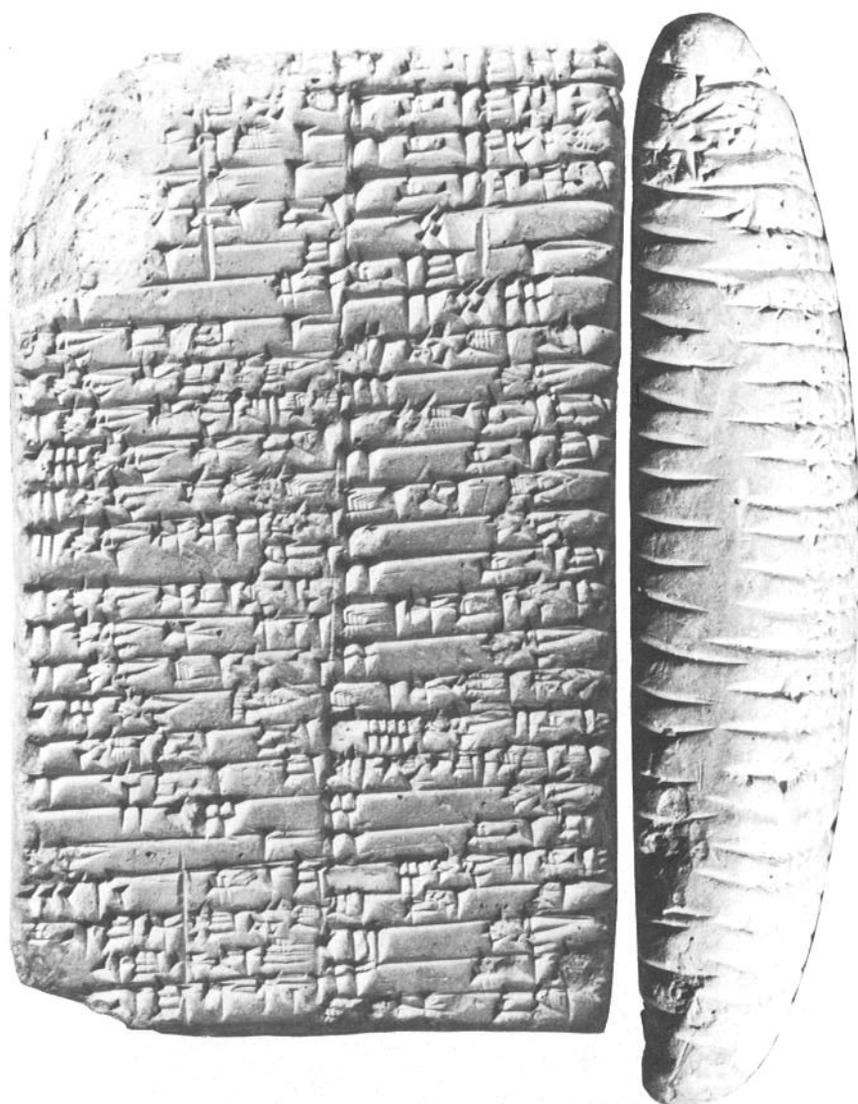
A student of mine, Peter Steinkeller, reminded me that the five Pre-Sargonic texts from Lagaš which I have dubbed in my class (not too seriously) "the malted-milk offerings" contain information which may be relevant for the connection of the gala with women. The five texts, transliterated and annotated by Deimel, AnOr II pp. 40-49 (Nos. 3-7), treat of offerings of ga-kug munu_x-kug "pure milk and pure

malt" by about 50 men to the wives of 50 other men. The men who make the offerings bear a name and a profession or occupation and are both of high and low status. The unnamed women receiving the offerings are listed as wives (dam) of men, generally unnamed, but bearing a profession of high status. What is of interest to us is that among the female personnel receiving the offerings, are found also the gala-mah "chief gala" of Lagaš, Giršu, Siraran, and ^dNin-mar^{KI}. Unfortunately, the argument is weakened because, besides the 4 gala-mah, also a few other males are listed with the female personnel (such as 2 sanga "priests," 1 IŠ É-SAL "page of the household of the Lady," etc.), as well as by the fact that while the 4 gala-mah are listed correctly, without dam, in three texts (No. 2 = VAS XIV 173; No. 5 = DP 132; No. 7 = TSA 5), they are listed with dam in one text (No. 6 = DP 133; the pertinent entries are destroyed in No. 4 = DP 226).

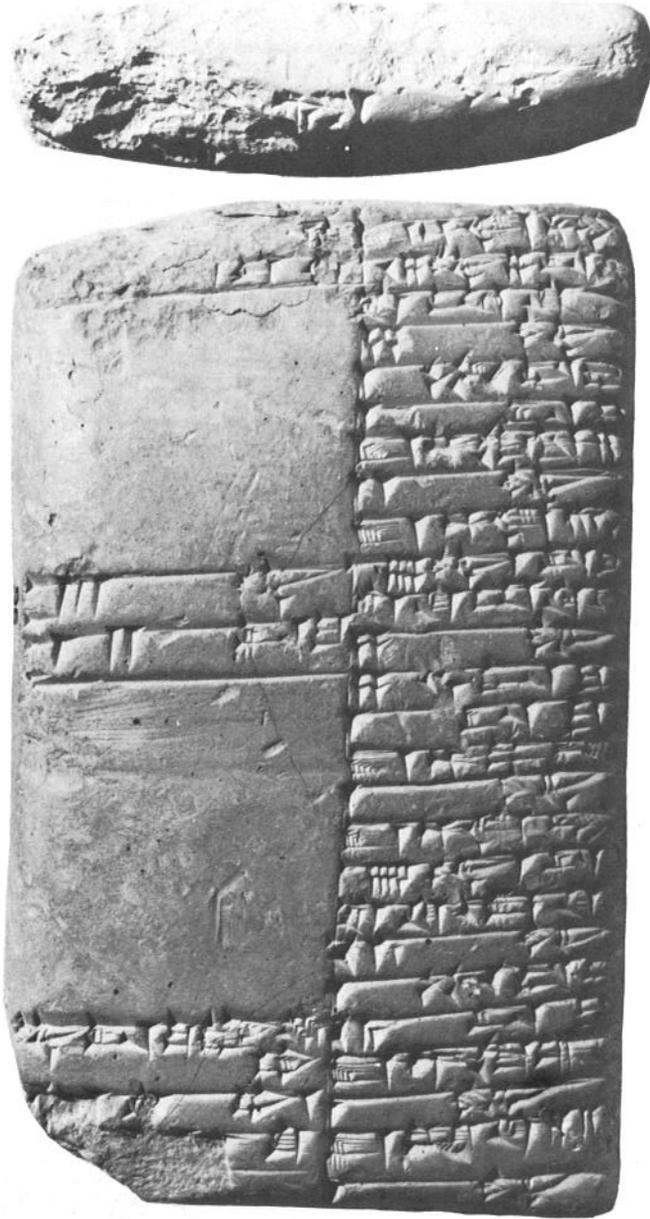
In conclusion, we can say the following. The multiple roles of the gala are those of singers, musicians, cantors, wailers, liturgists, or the like. It also seems quite clear that the gala, while men, had certain feminine characteristics which connect them with women.

Illuminating for the over-all character of the gala is the knowledge of some widespread practices in "primitive" as well as "developed" societies. They show us that men with feminine inclinations often dressed as women, worked with women, and spent their life among them; or that certain youths endowed with handsome and feminine features were educated and cultivated in an effeminate manner with the aim of serving men or gods; or that men of "intermediate" types often served in religious, magical, or entertaining capacities as emdicine men, wizards, diviners, dancers, actors, singers or musicians.

The sphere of possibilities for the meaning of gala can be narrowed down to pederast, homosexual, transvestite, eunuch, or the like. There is a clear connection of course between the first three terms. On that gay note we must leave the topic.



Pl. I. BM 14618, obverse



Pl. II. BM 14618, reverse