

MIGUEL CIVIL

A School Exercise from Tell Asmar

TA 579-1931 is a plano-convex lentil, $\phi = 70$ mm. When the clay was still soft, the edge of the tablet was slightly flattened by an impact on the lower left, with the result that the leftmost signs of the reverse are somewhat distorted.

According to the field register, the tablet was found in a room¹ East of K 31/3 on the Bilalama level of the Tell Asmar palace; see OIP 43 pl. iii for the location of house K 31 (the room 31/3 does not appear on the plan).

The flat side gives two entries in standard Sumerian, while the convex side gives their syllabic spelling and Akkadian translation. This type of tablet is well known in Elam: many examples can be found in MDP 18 and 27; a selection of them was presented by Scheil, RA 22 45ff., 25 44f. Disregarding some lists of personal names, this is, as far as I know, the first and only lexical exercise from the Diyala region.

Transliteration:

ga-dam in-nu	ga-da-mi-nu-da	<u>kà-[t]a²-mu-um</u>
sa-MUNŠUB šu-ha	sa-šu-bi ša-ga-dam	<u>pá-qà-tum</u>

The most interesting feature of the syllabic spellings is the addition of the final consonants and genitival endings not given by the standard orthography. The ending

-d is well attested for both in-nu, also written in-u "straw" (for instance, in-nu-da ITT 3/2 6231:4, in-u-da Atiqot 4 25:1), and šu-ḥa "fisherman". ga-dam stands for ka-tab/ka-tam "cover", see CAD K 297b katammu. For the reading šu-bi, see Civil, RA 54 71⁴ about MUNŠUB standing for su-ub; note the /š/ instead of /s/. In ša-ga = šu-ḥa, there is an unusual, but phonologically not surprising replacement of /ḥ/ by /g/, and a vowel assimilation which follows the general rules. I cannot explain the final -m: it cannot represent -ām because then one would expect *ša-ga-da-kam; it hardly can be the final -k of the genitive represented as -m, since first it is phonologically unlikely, and secondly one should have then *-nu-dam in the first line; is it a pausal form?

In the Akkadian, paqātu corresponds in the lexical list of nets to ^{giš}sa-maš-dà in Hh VI 182, with a late explanation in Hg B 32 as "net of the fowler". The translation is incomplete; the natural thing would be to have katam tibni and paqāt ba'iri.³

Footnotes

¹A slip in the tablet box reads "court" instead of "room".

²There is room on the tablet for [t]a, despite my copy which attempts to render the distortion of the tablet mentioned above.

³I want to thank Mr. Robert M. Whiting for calling this tablet to my attention.



