

An Early Dynastic Tablet of ED Lu A from Tell Brak (Nagar)

Piotr Michalowski
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

§1. The epigraphic finds of the 2001 excavation season at Tell Brak included a fragment of a large tablet containing an Early Dynastic scribal exercise. The preserved portion of the tablet contains lines 115-122 of ED Lu A, otherwise known as the “Standard Professions List.” The complete tablet must have contained a copy of the full one hundred and twenty-nine-line composition. This piece, TB 12381 (locus TCJ-1674), is published as no. 3 in the preliminary report that will appear in the journal *Iraq*. The present study is an expanded version of that report. Since this is the earliest school text from Nagar, it warrants expanded treatment. The author wishes to thank Joan and David Oates, as well as Geoffrey Emberling and Helen McDonald for entrusting these tablets to me for publication. This edition is based on photographs provided to me by Emberling.

§2. Miguel Civil (1969: 4), in his introduction to the edition of the composition, noted that this list “has a curious history of wide diffusion, longevity and textual stability.” The text is attested already in Uruk IV (Englund and Nissen 1993), and as such is one of the earliest documents of cuneiform education. The list was still copied in Old Babylonian times; it has been found on tablets of various periods from the Mesopotamian cities of Uruk, Ur, Shuruppak, Nippur, Lagash, Adab, Abu Salabikh, Kisurra, and perhaps Sippar, in Iranian Susa, as well as in Syria at Ebla, and now at Tell Brak. A new list based on ED Lu A, consisting of selected signs and signs extracted from composite signs, and provided with Semiticized sign readings, was compiled at some northern site, but is thus far attested only on two tablets from Ebla (Arcari 1983; Archi 1987, hereafter SLE). Civil and Rubio (1999: 265) aptly refer to this text as “a sort of card index that enabled the scribes to read ED Lu A.” As a result one can be fairly certain that ED Lu A was one of the basic, and most widely distributed scholastic texts in third millennium Syro-Mesopota-

mia. It continued to be disseminated for centuries, and although it was no longer part of the standard school repertoire, one or more texts that may be student copies from Nippur document its occasional instructional use. Civil’s edition has been supplemented by the study of Elena Arcari (1982) and more recently by the still unpublished work of Jon Taylor; photographs of all the Fara sources can now be found on the CDLI web site (<<http://cdli.ucla.edu/digitlib.html>>) and photos of the Ebla sources are available in *MEE* 3/A. Additional printed photos of one of the Ebla sources and of one Fara tablet have been published in Talon and van Lerberghe (1998: 216; 221).

§3. As is to be expected, there are no surprises and the new source only duplicates well attested entries. As is the case with so many entries in this ancient list, which was already anachronistic in ED III times, very few of the words in the section preserved on the Brak text can be identified from other cuneiform sources. It is difficult to generalize from an eight-line fragment, but the variants seem to cluster with Ebla and with the Yale tablet said to be from Nippur and the Old Babylonian exemplars from Ur, suggesting that it is later than the Fara and Abu Salabikh tablets and perhaps roughly contemporary with the Ebla archives.

§4. This is the first Early Dynastic IIIa lexical text from Syria found outside of Ebla. There is an Old Akkadian period exercise with ED Lu E from Urkesh that shows clearly how the school tradition had been imported anew from Mesopotamia as it is written in a beautiful Sargonic hand.¹

¹ A photograph of this tablet, found at Tell Mozan, has been published by Buccellati and Buccellati 1997: 94; a full edition will be published in Buccellati 2003. Another Old Akkadian copy is known from Gasur (*HSS* 10



1' (=115)	[GAL]: 'SANGA':[GANA ₂]
2' (=116)	[GAL]: 'PA:DUN ₃ '
3' (=117)	[GAL]. 'TI'
4' (=118)	'GAL:PA:SA ₆ '
5' (=119)	GAL: 'LUḤŠU(LAK442)'
6' (=120)	'GAL:HUB ₂ '
7' (=121)	[GAL]: 'MUŠ/MUŠ':KAK ²
8' (=122)	[GAL.TAK ₄]'ALAN ²

Figure 1: The Brak tablet TB 12381

§5. Although this is but a fragment with less than 10% of the composition, it is instructive to compare it to other manuscripts of the list. This section only incorporates available sources and does not include

222). Unlike Lu A, which goes back to Uruk times, Lu E may have been composed in ED, perhaps in Kish, as proposed by Biggs (1981:132).

² It is also possible that this was MUŠ×MUŠ, as in the OB sources Ur2 (see below) and BM 58580 (unp.).

some unpublished materials that have been identified but have not yet been made public.

§6.

ED Lu A Sources for lines 115-122

- AbS1 = *OIP* 99, 1 (3 & 4) vii 13-iv 3
- Fara1 = VAT 9130 (*SF* 75) obv. v 10-18
- Fara2 = VAT 12652 (*SF* 33) rev. i 12'-15'
- Fara3 = VAT 12675 (*SF* 35) obv. v' 9'-10'
- Ebla1 = TM.75.G.1312 (*MEE* 3 1, photo *MEE* 3/A pl. i) r. v 1-8
- Ebla2 = TM.G.1398 (*MEE* 3 2 + 5, photo *MEE* 3/A pl. ii) o. vii 1-8
- Brak1 = TB 12381

Later Sources

- Nip1 = CBS 7845 (*SLT* 113) i 1'-6'
- Unkn1 = *YOS* 1 12 col. "i" 6-13
- Unkn2 = *JCS* 55 (2003) vii 1'-2'

OB Sources

- Kisurra1 = *FAOS* 2/1, pl. 92 (F20 Š 71)
- Ur1 = *UET* 7 86 ii' 6'-12'
- Ur2 = U 30497 (Civil, *OrAnt* 22 [1983] 1 n. 2) ii 1-7

The related entries from the Ebla Sign List line 48-52 are labeled as SLE.

§7. The Yale prism *YOS* 1, 12, was said to be from Nippur according to the dealer who sold it, but that is highly unlikely, even though that claim was taken for granted in *MSL* 12. It is not clear to me if this is an ED exemplar, or another example of a later archaizing copy. Benjamin Foster, who was kind enough to examine the prism for me, suggests that it is later than ED, perhaps even Ur III in date. Another prism containing Lu A that may be Ur III or OB but with older looking signs will be published shortly by Mark Cohen in *JCS* 55; only the ends of two of our lines are preserved on that exemplar. The Nippur tablet *SLT* 113 is another fragment of a prism and, according to Steve Tinney, might be OB.³ In view of the uncertainties concerning their dating, I have listed these two as "later sources." It is obvious that a full reinvestigation of the dating of the various manuscripts of Lu A and the fascinating matter of archaizing

³ Apparently the unpublished Istanbul tablets, Ni 1600 and Ni 2528, join *SLT* 113, but I do not have access to this material. Jon Taylor was kind enough to send me transliterations of two post-ED Nippur tablets, CBS 6142+ and N 5566+, that add little to this passage, as well as of a badly preserved OB source (BM 58680), possibly from Sippar, that has glosses similar to the Ur pieces.

copies, most of them on prisms, lies outside the scope of the present short note. The paleographic details of such texts are of great interest and require further study;

for a list of known OB copies of Ed Lu A and other ED lexical lists, see Veldhuis 1997/8: 123.

§8. Textual Matrix of Lines 115-122 of ED Lu A

("+"=preserved, "."=damaged, "o"=missing)

115.	GAL:	GANA ₂ :	SANGA
AbS1	+	+	+
Fara1	+	+	+
Fara2	.	o	o
Fara3	.	.	+
Unkn1	+	SANGA	GANA ₂
Ebla1	+	+	+
Ebla2	+	+	+
Brak1	o	SANGA	[GANA ₂]
Kisurra1	+	SANGA	GANA ₂
Ur1	[GAL.SANGA ...]	an-da-ga-na	GANA ₂
Ur2	[GAL.SANGA ...]	an ¹ -da ¹ -ga-na ¹	GANA ₂ ¹
SLE		GANA ₂ =	<i>ga-na-um</i>

116.	GAL:	PA:	DUN ₃
AbS1	+	+	+
Fara1	+	+	+
Fara2	.	o	o
Fara3	.	'DUN ₃ ¹ :	PA
Unkn1	+	+	o
Ebla1	+	+	+
Ebla2	+	+	+
Brak1	o	.	.
Ur1	[GAL:PA]	hu ¹ -ur-sa-ag ₂ -gal	DUN ₃
Ur2	[GAL]:	PA ¹ hu ¹ -ur-sag-gal	DUN ₃
SLE		DUN ₃ =	<i>lu-ma-'a₃-šu-um</i>

117.	GAL.	TI	
AbS1	+	+	
Fara1	+	+	
Fara2	.	o	
Unkn1	.	+	
Ebla1	+	+	
Ebla2	+	+	
Brak1	o	.	
Nip2	.	o	
Brak1	o	.	
Ur1	[GAL...]	ti ¹ -di-im-gal	DIM
Ur2	[GAL...]	ti ¹ -ti-im-gal	DIM

118.	GAL:	PA:	SA ₆
AbS1	+	SA ₆	PA
Fara1	+	SA ₆	PA
Fara2	.	o	o
Unkn1	+	+	+
Ebla1	+	+	+
Ebla2	+	+	+
Nip 1	.	o	o
Brak1	.	.	.

Ur1	[GAL:PA]	x-ti ¹ -di-rim-gal	SA ₆
Ur2	[GAL]:	PA[x] ¹ -ti-di-im-gal	SA ₆

119.	GAL:	LUHŠU(LAK442)	
AbS1	+	+	
Fara1	+	+	
Unkn1	+	+	
Ebla1	+	+	
Ebla2	+	+	
Nip 1	+	o	
Brak1	o	.	
Ur1	[GAL...]	lu-uš ¹ -hu ¹ -um ¹ -ni-ir	LUHŠU
Ur2	[GAL]	lu ¹ -uš ¹ -hu-um-ni-ir	LUHŠU
SLE		LUHŠU =	<i>la-ḥa-šu-um</i>

120.	GAL:	HUB ₂
AbS1	+	+
Fara1	+	+
Unkn1	+	.
Ebla1	+	+
Ebla2	+	+
Brak1	.	.
Nip 1	+	o
Ur1	o	+
Ur2	o	[] ^{-x+}

121.	GAL:	MUŠ/MUŠ:	KAK
AbS1	+	MUŠ/KAK/MUŠ	
Fara1	+	MUŠ/KAK/MUŠ	
Unkn1	+	MUŠ/'KAK ¹ /MUŠ	
Unkn2	o	'MUŠ×MUŠ ¹ :'KAK ¹	
Ebla1	+	'MUŠ/MUŠ ¹ ':	KAK
Ebla2	+	MUŠ/KAK/MUŠ	
Brak1	o	MUŠ/MUŠ:	KAK
Nip 1	+	o	o
Ur2	o	x-ku	MUŠ×MUŠ

Unkn1 after 122 (reading based on collation by B. Foster); Ur1 has only the end of the final sign of 122 making it look as if it also had 122 before 121.

122.	GAL:	TAK ₄ .	ALAN
AbS1	+	+	+
Fara1	+	+	+
Unkn1	+	ALAN×GANA ₂ -	<i>tenû</i>
Unkn2	o	o	+
Ebla1	+	+	+
Ebla2	+	+	+
Brak1	o	o	.
Nip 1	+	+	o
Ur1	o	o	.
SLE		(see commentary)	

	<i>Fara</i>	<i>AbS</i>	<i>Ebla</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Brak</i>	<i>OB Ur</i>
115	-	-	-	+	+	+
116	+/-	+	+	+	+	+
117	+	+	+	+	+	-
118	-	-	+	+	+	+
119	+	+	+	+	+	+
120	+	+	+	+	+	+
121	-	-	+/-	-	+	?
122	+	+	+	-	+	+

Figure 2. Comparison of sources by provenience

Philological Notes

§9. It is difficult to generalize on the basis of this kind of distribution of variants, but the general tendency seems to be for more agreement between Brak and Ebla than between Brak and the ED Mesopotamian sources. There is also a large degree of agreement between Brak and the OB Ur pieces and the *YOS* 1 text (see figure 2).

§10. l. 117: For an OB reference, see, perhaps, gal-ti = gal-di = *ti-iz-qa₂-ru-um/ra-ab-bu-um*, *MSL* 14, 134 ii 18-19, a unique Ea type text from Sippar. The confusions that ED Lu A posed for scribes are obvious from the OB versions from Ur that have DIM instead of TI.

§11. l. 119: On the various forms of this and related signs and on the reading luhšu/a see G. Selz, *RA* 83 (1989) 7-12, with earlier literature.

§12. l. 121: The only other occurrence of this term known to me is in ED Word List E (*SF* 59, *MEE* 3, 50 + unpublished duplicates) 45 (written MUŠ/KAK/MUŠ in both ED sources).

§13. l. 122: Of all the words in this passage, TAK₄.ALAN, albeit without the fronted GAL, is the best attested outside of ED Lu A. The component sign generally transliterated TAK₄ requires further study; for the present see Veldhuis 1995: 436-437. As he notes, this is essentially a ŠU sign that has been rotated by 90°. One could argue that this anticipates, in a sense, the later technique of creating signs by slanting them at an angle, what was referred to by Mesopotamian scribes as tenû. We may have an earlier example of the philological convention for this type of practice, perhaps an ad hoc one, in one of the two copies of the ED Lu A-derived SLE text. In one manuscript line 51 repeats the Lu entry TAK₄.ALAN, while the following line provides only the first component TAK₄. A duplicate (TM.75.G.1907+12690; both from Archi 1987 95)

provides sign names with a twist:

TAK₄ *šu-wu-um*, followed by “AŠ (obliq.),”
that is by an angled wedge.
TAK₄.ALAN *la-’a₃-num₂*

It seems more than likely that the first entry is to be understood as “TAK₄ is an angled *šuwum*, i.e. ŠU-sign.” The second one simply provides a name for the ALAN sign and is not a translation of the whole entry.⁴

§14. The professional name TAK₄.ALAN is already attested in the archaic texts from Uruk, in a lexical list (W 20266,4, *ATU* 3, pl. 21), as well as in administrative accounts (W 24224, *BagM* 22 [1991] 156; W 20274,16 *ATU* 2, 22, etc.). It occurs again in ED Lu C 50 (Taylor 2003), and ED Lu E 20 (*MSL* 12, 17). It was still used in administrative texts from Fara, Ebla, ED II Girsu, and Old Akkadian Nippur; see Bauer (1972: 344 “Bildhauer”) as well as Pomponio and Visicato (1994: 474), but to my knowledge it is not known from any later documents. Outside of Girsu it may be attested in a votive inscription edited by Steible (1982: 342), which most probably originated in Adab. The text is inscribed on a broken ED period statue of a man and reads:

1. ^d[nin]-’šubur²¹
2. [...]
3. x x ...
4. ME.DUR₂.KISAL x x
5. TAK₄¹.ALAN-ni
6. nam-ti-la-ni-da
7. ḥe₂-na-da-ku_x(DU)

§15. Steible translated the text: “[Für) Ninšubu]r(?) [...] (=PN) ... seine Statue möge für sein Leben für

⁴ I leave aside here the problem of TAK₄.ALAN.ME = *la-ma-num₂* in *MEE* 4, no. 112 ii 5'-6'.

ihn/sie dastehen” and his interpretation is accepted by Pomponio and Visicato (1994: 374). I would suggest that rather than render line 5 as “his statue” we interpret this as the profession of the person represented by the sculpture, whose name is undoubtedly contained in line 4. Without collation I would not venture much further, but will only note that KISAL is probably to be interpreted as gipar_x (Steinkeller 1999: 109) and that the broken signs at the end may include si.

§16. The later history of this word in lexical texts is somewhat murky. The entries in OB Proto-Lu 675 (*MSL* 12, 57) and in a related list (*MSL* 12, 67 iii 7') may have been simply carried over from ED professional name list tradition. The same tradition is reflected in

OB Diri, which offers an Akkadian translation for the first time : TAK₄.ALAN = *gu-ur-gu-ru-um* (OB Nippur Diri VI B 164).

§17. In later times this sign combination became (URUDU).SIG₇.TAK₄.ALAN as in ze₂-er-muš-ku = URUDU.SIG₇.TAK₄.ALAN = MIN in Diri VI E 86 and [lu₂]-ṛtibira¹ = SIG₇.TAK₄.ALAN^{si-ir-MUŠ²-lam¹} = *gur-gur-ru* in “Hh XXV” B iv 8' (*MSL* 12, 229), a “late secondary compilation of rather low quality” (*MSL* 12, 230). For other late lexical and literary references see *CAD* G, pp. 138-139. The Akkadian has been interpreted as *gurgurru* (*qurqurru*), “craftsman working in wood and metal” (*CAD*).

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