

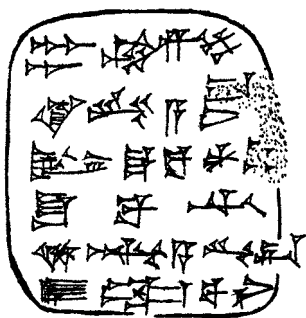
TEXTS AND FRAGMENTS

A ŠÀ BALA-A TABLET

J. Huehnergard and T. M. Sharlach

Harvard University

Cornell University



1. 5 gú gi
2. ki šeš-a-ni-ta
3. lugal-e-ba-an-s[a₆]
4. šu ba-ti
5. šà bala-a mu-ús-sa bàd ba-dù

Reverse uninscribed; sealed with a currently illegible sealing.¹

“Lugale-bansa received five talents of reeds from Šešani, within the bala.”

Date: Šulgi Year 38.

This tablet records the expenditure of five talents of reeds from šešani to Lugale-bansa, an official in Umma’s provincial administration. The

We are grateful to P. Steinkeller for his assistance and encouragement. We would also like to thank W. Sallaberger and D. Owen for their suggestions.

1. Since Lugale-bansa received the material, he probably sealed the tablet. Two of his seals are known. One, found for instance on the Umma tablet Gomi-Sato 369 (AS6), reads lugal-e-ba-an-sa₆/dub-sar/dumu ur-^dištaran. The other, found

transaction is classified as šà bala-a, “within the bala.”² Šešani, a producer of reeds, reed mats, and wooden items, appears only in early šà bala-a tablets from Umma, ranging over a five year period between Šulgi 33 and Šulgi 38.³

The man who received the reeds in this tablet, Lugale-bansa, was an administrator in Umma’s provincial government. Seal inscriptions tell us that Lugale-bansa’s father was Ur-Ištaran, and that he had at least two brothers, Ur-šulpae and En-kaš₄, both of whom were also part of the énsi’s administration. Ur-Šulpae’s seal reads: ur-^dšul-pa-è/ dumu ur-^dištaran/ lú udu niga, “Ur-šulpae son

for instance on *MVN* 14 16 (Š38), seems to have been used earlier; it was dedicated to the ruler of Umma, ur-^dli₉-si₄ énsi umma^{ki}/ lugal-e-ba-an-sa₆/dub-sar/ dumu ur-^dištaran/ árad-zu. On these seals, see R. Mayr, *The Seal Impressions of Ur III Umma* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leiden, 1997), 341–42. On the dedication of seals to provincial governors (rather than the king) in the last decades of Šulgi’s rule, see H. Waetzoldt, “Änderung von Siegellegenden als Reflex der ‘großen Politik’,” 659–64 in U. Finkbeiner (ed.), *Boehmer FS* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1995). On Lugale-bansa’s connection to the Umma foresters, see P. Steinkeller, “The Foresters of Umma,” in *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Powell, American Oriental Series 68 (New Haven: AOS, 1987), Text 2, 102.

2. For a detailed discussion of the genre of šà bala-a texts from Umma, including previous scholarship, see T. M. Sharlach, *Bala: Economic Exchange between Center and Provinces in the Ur III State* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1999), esp. pp. 62–77.

3. Šešani’s earliest appearance in a šà bala-a tablet is in Šulgi 33a viii (Umma calendar), according to T. Frederici,

of Ur-Ištaran, the man (in charge of) fattened sheep.”⁴ His brother, En-kaš₄, whose name is almost always abbreviated simply as Kaš₄ within the text of the tablet, appears in a number of texts recording šà bala-a transactions, sometimes with the title nam-šà-tam.⁵ In short, it seems clear that both the father and the three sons were agents of the provincial governor of Umma. Although detailed prosopography of the Umma archive has yet to be completed, preliminary study indicates that at Umma, most administrative positions were concentrated in the hands of a limited number of families.

Lugale-bansa himself appears from Šulgi 35 to Šu-Sin 4 in šà bala-a tablets.⁶ Lugale-bansa received reeds from Šešani in four other šà bala-a tablets known to us. These are summarized in Table 1.

This chart corroborates the model suggested by the examination of a large corpus of šà bala-a texts, namely, that the recipients specialized in particular types of transactions. That is to say, we can see that the same men received the same commodity over and over again. Many šà bala-a tablets note the destination or use of the commodity being transferred. In such instances, the same recipi-

TABLE 1. šà bala-a tablets in which Lugale-bansa receives reeds from Šešani.

Text	Amount	Commodity	Remarks
Touzalin 63	10	bundles of šid reeds	
Touzalin 136	40	reed bundles	má-da-lá lugal, “the royal barge”
Touzalin 67	40, 4	reed bundles/gi-ru-uš reeds	
MVN 14 16	30, 10 gú	bundles of izi reeds/gi-ru-uš reeds	

ents receive similar commodities for a particular purpose. For instance, a recipient who appears regularly in šà bala-a texts, Umani, seems to have specialized in providing beer for visitors from outside the province.⁷

Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma 8 (1961), 3. His latest appearance in šà bala-a texts is in Šulgi 38, as in the present example, as well as MVN 14 16. Šešani also appears in undated šà bala-a tablets, presumably falling within this five year range of dates.

4. An impression of this seal occurs on *UTAMI* 3 1654 (AS7), as well as on many other Umma tablets.

5. For example, *SACT* 2 93 (AS5), is a šà bala-a text sealed by the nam-šà-tam (En)-kaš₄ concerning two reed workers who are to work for thirty days on behalf of the royal guard (lugal-ra-ús-sa).

6. The earliest references are from Š35; e.g. *MVN* 14 101, and the latest from ŠS4; e.g. *Nikolski* 2 226. It is perhaps noteworthy that there are very few references to Lugale-bansa in šà bala-a tablets dated to the reign of Amar-Sin.

7. For example, Umani provided beer for the men of Mari in *AUCT* 3 223 (undated) and the men of Ebla and Uršu in *Contenau* 27 (also undated).

Lugale-bansa’s specialty in šà bala-a transactions appears to have been supplying reeds, reed mats, and wood used for boats. According to *MVN* 14 101, dated to Šulgi 35, Lugale-bansa accepted reed bundles and willow-wood, as well as date-palm ribs (zé-na) to be used for the boat of one Ur-šara. In *Amar-Sin* 6, Lugale-bansa accepted two reed mats for má sízkur unug^{ki}, “the boat (containing) the offering (for) Uruk,” according to *AUCT* 3 255. *UTAMI* 5 3370, dated to *Amar-Sin* 8, tells us that various reed mats were used for different boats, including one associated with the queen in Ur and another with offerings for Uruk. In *Šu-Sin* 1, Lugale-bansa received 45 bundles of reeds for má gún-na, “the boat of the tax-(payment),” according to *UTAMI* 4 2316. *Nik.* 2 226 tells us that in *Šu-Sin* 4 he received 10 reed mats má kaš₄-šè, “for the runners’ boat,” or “for Kaš’s (his brother’s) boat.” These examples establish a pattern of receipts of reed materials and wood for

boats of various sorts, most of which were destined to travel outside the province of Umma.

As in the case of the tablet published here, some šà bala-a tablets do not specify the use or the destination of the expended items. However, because the recipients in šà bala-a tablets were engaged in repeated deliveries for specific purposes, we may extrapolate and surmise that the reeds re-

ceived by Lugale-bansa in this tablet were likely intended for a boat.

The tablet published here is, on its own, merely one more Ur III administrative document. Only when placed within its archival context, namely, with the genre of šà bala-a tablets, can we begin to use such a text to shed light upon the administration of Ur III Umma.

TEXTS AND FRAGMENTS

AN UR III DOCUMENT AND AN OLD BABYLONIAN CONE AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Eva von Dassow
University of Minnesota

Colorado State University owns an administrative tablet of the Ur III period and a cone of Lipit-Eštar, which are kept in the university archives, in CSU's Morgan Library.¹ No record relating to the acquisition of these two objects can be located, but they are said to have been the gift of a professor early in the institution's history.² It may be surmised that they were among the many tablets and other ancient Near Eastern artifacts that were dispersed by Edgar J. Banks during the early twentieth century.

CSU's tablet and cone are kept encased in individual mountings of clear plastic, each mounting having been custom-made to fit the object inside, as well as to stand on its own. These mountings make it possible to pick up and look at the artifacts without touching them, although their edges and corners are obscured. I had the tablet removed from its mounting in order to copy it, but because the cone bears a text that is well known from numerous exemplars, I merely examined it through its mounting.

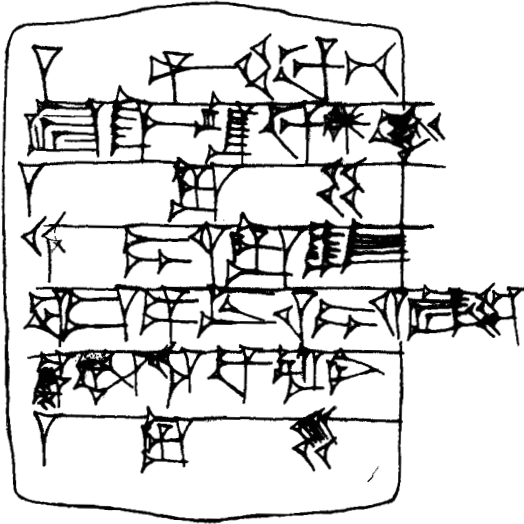
The texts of the cone records Lipit-Eštar's construction of the "House of Justice" (*é-níg-si-sá*),

and is the same as the text inscribed on at least ninety-three other cones so far known. Ninety-two exemplars of this inscription are listed by Douglas Frayne in *RIME 4 (Old Babylonian Period [2003–1595 BC])* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990], no. E4.1.5.4), and to that list one should add MMA 1971.71, published as text 114 in Ira Spar, ed., *Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. I (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988).

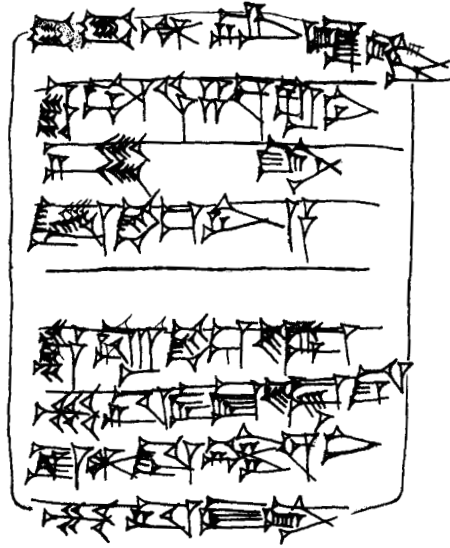
The tablet, which is in an almost perfect state of preservation (measurements: 3.7 × 2.9 × 1.4 cm), originates from Drehem and is dated to the third month of Shulgi's 41st year. It records the disbursement by Apilia of three animals for three different purposes: a goat for the palace, a fattened sheep for the *elūnum*-festival, and another fattened sheep for the regular offerings of the goddess Al-latum. Apilia is well attested as the official in charge of livestock administration for the queen, Shulgi-simtum, during the years Shulgi 39–41, and his presence allows this tablet to be recognized as belonging to the archive of Shulgi-simtum (on which see most recently W. Sallaberger, *OBO 160/3* [Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1999], 253–60). It is characteristic of this archive that disbursements for both secular and cultic purposes are recorded on the same tablet (Sallaberger, *OBO 160/3*, 258). A copy and transliteration follow:

1. I thank John Newman, archivist at Colorado State University, for graciously facilitating my examination of these artifacts and for permission to publish them.

2. Information courtesy John Newman.



(1) 1 máš ba-ug₇ (2) é-gal-la ba-an-ku₄ (3) 1 udu niga (4) è-lu-núm (5) sag-rig₇-ke₄-ne (6) iti-ta u₄ 1 ba-ra-zal (7) 1 udu niga (8) sískur ^dal-latum (9) iti-ta u₄ 4 ba-ra-zal (10) zi-ga (11) á-pi₅-



lí-a [blank line] (12) iti u₅-bí-gu₇ (13) mu ús-sa é puzur₄-iš-^dda-gan ba-dù (14) mu ús-sa-bi³

3. Since I am inexperienced in reading Ur III tablets, I gratefully acknowledge David I. Owen's assistance with the transliteration.