ANABASIS 14–15 (2023–2024)
STUDIA CLASSICA ET ORIENTALIA

Marek Stępień
(University of Warsaw, Poland)

THE NEW "PISAN-DUB-BA" TABLET FROM THE TIME OF THE UR III DYNASTY, IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN WROCŁAW (POLAND)[1]

Keywords: Sumer, Ur III Dynasty, Neo-Sumerian administration, cuneiform archives, *pisan-dub-ba*, settlement accounts, Mesopotamian economy

The cuneiform text, written in Sumerian and published below, belongs to the group of relatively seldom confirmed documents of the **pisan-dub-ba** type, which are present in the otherwise abundant source material from Neo-Sumerian times (ca. 2110-2005 BC). These small-sized tablets were used as tags attached to baskets containing administrative and business documents. They were widely used in the archives or chancelleries of various business entities, state or temple stores, and offices across the entire kingdom of the Ur III Dynasty.[2] The role of these tags was to itemize tablets kept in the particular basket. They carried information about the content of the stored documents (indicating to which goods, actions, and works they referred) and about their administrative type, which was usually indicated by a keyword of the document form and, sometimes, also information about persons to whom those documents referred or,

[1] At this point I want to give my greatest thanks to Mr. Jakub Maciej Łubocki from the Department of Publishing Art, National Museum in Wrocław, for his assistance in studying this historical object and for his priceless explanation of how it was acquired by the Museum.

[2] The baskets, usually stored on large wooden shelves or brick platforms were, in ancient Sumer and Babylonia, the main equipment used for keeping documents in archives, as well as in temple and state chancelleries. Large crocks or leather bags were less frequently used for this purpose. The former were usually found in private and family archives where the number of stored documents would obviously be smaller, while leather bags were typically used in transporting documents.

more precisely, persons whose business activity was represented by these documents. Apart from that, the tags usually carried the date or period of time when the documents were made. The meaning of the Sumerian term **pisan-dub-ba,** written in the first line of the text and standing for the name of the whole document, is ”a basket of tablets, a basket with tablets.”[3]

1. Basic information about ”tags” (labels, markers) pisan-dub-ba[4]

As mentioned above, the tablets of the **pisan-dub-ba** type comprise only a small portion of a vast documentation of over 100,000 published administrative and business texts from the Ur III Dynasty era.[5] This may seem pretty obvious since each single tag was being attached to mark a basket full of dozens or even hundreds of tablets. It is like comparing the number of thematic sections in an archive, museum, or chancellery versus the total number of files in the whole resource stored. Therefore, each newly-found text of this type, whatever information it carries, is a source of great value.

Little over 800 **pisan-dub-ba** tablets are known today and most of them have been published.[6] They represent a little more than 0.8% of all Neo-Sumerian texts and often less than 0.5% of the individual archives. The only exception is a collection of texts from Ĝirsu, where this rate is more than three times higher, that is, over 1.8%.[7]

---

[3] Sum. **pisan-dub-ba**, other readings Sum. **ĜA₂-dub-ba**, **pisaĝ-dub-ba**, **bešeĝ-dub-ba**, **gašam-dub-ba** (Akkad. *pisandubbu*, *pisanduppu*) – see Attinger 2021, 206-207 n. 399 (**bešeĝ-dub-ba**); Sallaberger 2006, 555, 605 (**pisan-dub-ba**); CAD P, 420 (*pisandubbu*), 422 (*pisannu* Ab).

[4] Literature uses the following names for those documents in the languages of the key works: (Eng.): ”basket tags,” ”archive labels,” ”**pisan-dub-ba**-labels,” ”tablet box/tablet basket” (meaning of the term), or simply ”etiquettes,” or ”tags,” and even ”filing tags;” (Germ.): ”Etiketten,” ”Tafelkorbetiketten,” but also ”Urkundenbehälter;” (French): most frequently ”etiquettes de panier.”

[5] The CDLI digital platform contains more than 100,000 Neo-Sumerian documents (their exact number cannot be determined because the platform’s sorting system cannot handle more than 100,000 objects) while the BDTSN platform which focuses only on sources from the Ur III Dynasty contains 104,570 objects.

[6] The CDLI digital platform contains at least 810 such texts, while the BDTSN platform – at least 665. The quoted numbers represent minimum values because both data bases contain some small number of **pisan-dub-ba** tablets which have been recorded but not yet published, or their content has not been fed into the translitaration data base.

[7] M. Molina in 2008 counted up – based on data from BDTNS data base he was editing himself, which contained over 87,200 Neo-Sumerian texts at the time – the following frequency of **pisan-dub-ba** documents appearing in the following archives: Ĝirsu = 1.87%, Ur = 0.61%, Umma = 0.59%, Drehem = 0.45%, Nippur = 0.13% – see Molina 2008, 44. These rates do not seem to have changed very much so far.

A great majority of the ”tags” (labels) **pisan-dub-ba** are very short texts carrying fairly standardised, yet diversified contents. The tags focus either on defining the type of texts present in the baskets they marked, on the kind of documented activities, or they name the persons whose activities were represented on the tablets. This is, among other things, the reason why efforts to reconstruct the damaged parts of some ”tags” are somewhat risky because who knows what kind of information had been written and lost from such tablets.[8] In physical terms, these tablets are consistently small, measuring several centimeters or having an almost square shape (usually a bit longer than wide) with slightly rounded corners.[9]

A very characteristic feature of each ”tag” is two small openings on its left side, through which a string was pushed to tie it up to the basket it ”marked.”[10] As M. Fitzgerald was right to observe, this fact may also be an essential argument in the decades-long debate over the orientation of the cuneiform signs and the direction of writing at those times.[11] For if we attach our **pisan-dub-ba** tablet with a string running through its left edge, its orientation will automatically turn the same 90 ° clockwise and, in that case, we would have to read the text as if it were made in the ”vertical orientation,” that is, from top downwards, and we would go column by column from right to left. Otherwise, we would have to accept that Sumerian scribes deliberately made their lives more complicated by tying up the **pisan-dub-ba** ”tags” to the baskets in a way forcing people to keep their heads tilted to the right while reading the text. In that case, would it not be a more practical solution for them to put the string through the upper edge of the tablet, which, when fastened to the basket, could be comfortably read in the ”horizontal orientation,” that is, in horizontal lines read from left to right?

The structure of **pisan-dub-ba** documents roughly resembles phrase 1, which reads, schematically: ”*A basket with tablets*,... (followed by a thematic description of those tablets, which is usually only initiated or was confined to a definition of their archival type by a keyword)…, (such tablets) *are to be found* (in it).” The entire text also includes an indication of the time period when the documents were produced, and that period is often identical to the date of the tag. As can be seen, two terms are the key phrases of these schematic texts: one which begins the text of the document, our key phrase: **pisan-dub-ba** (”a basket

[8] Unfortunately, this comment in a painful way applies to the hereby published tablet from the National Museum in Wrocław; I will come back to it below.

[9] As has already been observed by R.C. Nelson, the average size of **pisan-dub-ba** tablets was: ca. 40 mm long and 35-37 mm wide, where the smallest ones measured, respectively: 22 mm by 21 mm, and the largest: 58 mm by 55 mm – see Nelson 1979, 45.

[10] See, e.g., Fitzgerald 2003, 1.

[11] See, e.g., Fitzgerald 2003, 1-2; see, also, Picchioni 1980, 225-251; Picchioni 1984, 48-54; Picchioni 1984-1985, 11-26.

of tablets, a basket with tablets") and the one which usually ends the text and, in a way, plays the role of a predicate in the whole record: **i$_3$-ĝal$_2$** – "(here) are," meaning "(in it) they are." However, it often happened, and it did in our text too, that the predicate (**i$_3$-ĝal$_2$**), which should close the main part of the **pisan-dub-ba**-type document, was often skipped by scribes as an obvious, implied phrase. The absence of the final formula **i$_3$-ĝal$_2$** can be determined in approximately 20% of all known tags, **pisan-dub-ba**.[12]

The most elaborate findings concering the **pisan-dub-ba** documents so far are those published by R.C. Nelson in the 1970s and almost all of them are valid today, despite the fact that the number of "tags" published afterwards has tripled.[13] Before that, these sources were studied by such outstanding investigators as: F. Thureau-Dangin,[14] L. Legrain,[15] C.E. Keiser,[16] and T. Fish.[17] However, the first author who ventured to make a more fundamental and systematic description of **pisan-dub-ba** tablets was N. Schneider.[18] He proposed the first division of all "tags" known to him into 18 different thematic categories and this division was later adopted and developed by R.C. Nelson.[19] As a rule, this division relied on distinguishing the types of documents sitting in the baskets marked by the "tags" according to a classification based on the "key words" which defined the chancellery type of the document." It is worth stressing that the "tags" or, in fact, "markers" which were intended to organise the whole administrative and business documentation kept in the archives reflect the organisation system of all that documentation being an original system introduced by Sumerian scribes and archivists.[20] A smaller group of documents of **pisan-dub-ba** type distinguished by Sumerian scribes and recognized also today by both authors (N. Schneider and R.C. Nelson) concerned the operations on economically most important goods which were frequently recorded in documents, such as, e.g., **še-ba** (grain allocations), **še ĝiš e$_3$-a** (threshing grains, threshing) and other operations related to animal husbandry and distribution of its products.

---

[12] According to data in the digital platform BDTNS, the final formula (**i$_3$-ĝal$_2$**) is found in 512 texts out of all the 655 documents of **pisan-dub-ba** type which makes 0.80% of the whole; meanwhile, the digital platform CDLI contains 820 **pisan-dub-ba** tablets among which 625 contain the formula **i$_3$-ĝal$_2$**, and this makes, respectively, 0.76% of the whole set.

[13] See Nelson 1976 and Nelson 1979. See also a brief presentation of **pisan-dub-ba** texts by W. Sallaberger (1999), 214-216.

[14] See Thureau-Dangin 1907, 444-446.

[15] See Legrain 1912, 22.

[16] See Keiser 1914, 10-11, 14-15.

[17] See Fish 1951, 20-26.

[18] See Schneider 1940, 1-16.

[19] See Schneider 1940, 8-15; Nelson 1979, 46-52 (Nelson distinguishes 29 different categories of **pisan-dub-ba**).

[20] See Stępień 2006, 27.

2. The pisan-dub-ba tablet from the National Museum in Wrocław (MNWr XXI-90)

The text under study is now part of the National Museum in Wrocław's resource, the Department of Publishing Art, as item code-numbered MNWr XXI-90. The Museum came into its possession in 1974 when it was donated by Mrs. Zofia Kuglin, then widow of a collector, bibliophile, and owner of the tablet, Mr. Jan Kuglin, who had received it a dozen or so years earlier from Mr. Władysław Jan Grabski as a special and "heartfelt gift" for Easter.[21]

According to the thematic classification of **pisan-dub-ba** "tags" proposed by R.C. Nelson, this tablet should be included in group 10[22] (but to group 6 according to the earlier classification of N. Schneider),[23] which refers to the "settlement balances" (**niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-ak**).[24] At the present moment, about 130[25] of such **pisan-dub-ba niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-ak** are known, and only 5 of those come from the same 9th year of the rule of king Šu-Suen (ŠS.9).[26]

3. External description and physical condition of tablet MNWr XXI-90

The tablet is in poor condition. It shows two types of damage. First, the right-hand edge of the tablet is crumbled off so that the surface and the inscription that used to be on it no longer exist. Although this damage does not significantly affect the reverse side, a large portion of the inscription on the other side of the tablet is superficially disintegrated and filled with foreign material. The loss of inscription caused by that material is even greater than that caused by crumbling off on the right side of the tablet's obverse.

The lines of the inscription are clearly separated by continuous lines, which quite often overlap with the horizontal, exceptionally long, wedge-shaped impressions, which are part of the proper signs.

---

[21] This information comes from an original note by the donor (Władysław Jan Grabski) which is now kept together with the object. It is worth to note that the Sumerian tablet is described in the note by a sweet phrase: "the oldest little cuneiform book."

[22] Nelson 1979, 48.

[23] Schneider 1940, 10-11.

[24] Sum. **niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-ak**, **niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-d/r**, **niĝ$_2$-kas$_7$-ak**, **ni$_3$-ŠID-ak**, **ni$_3$-kas$_x$-ak** (Akkad. *nikkassum*) – "account, settlement, balance sheet, settlement balance; balance account" but also a full predicative meaning "do the settlement, make the settlement of accounts" (Akkad. *nikkassa epēšu*) – see Attinger 2021, 792-793 n. 2357 (**niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-d/r**); Sallaberger 2006, 497 (**niĝ$_2$-kas$_7$-ak**); CAD N2, 223-230 (*nikassu* A); SANTAG 5, 253; AHw, 789 (*nikkassum*).

[25] The resource of digital platforms CDLI and BDTNS contains, respectively, 130 and 123 such documents.

[26] See BPOA 1, 1069; BPOA 1, 1310; CUSAS 40, 827; ITT 5, 8215; Nisaba 15, 554.

On the left side of the tablet, we can see an irregular pit, apparently a remnant of the two holes so typical of these documents – the ”(archival) tags” **pisan-dub-ba**. As I have mentioned earlier, these two holes were made to hold the string that attached the ”tags” to the basket full of tablets to which the ”tag” belonged. It is possible that the thin lines on the left side, next to the pit, are impressions of the string.[27]

The dimensions of the tablet are: length, 40 mm; width, 33 mm; and maximum thickness, 18 mm.

4. Dating and provenance of tablet MNWr XXI-90

The text contains a yearly date given in the form of the name of the year, which reads: ”Year: the temple of god Šara / has been built” (**mu e$_2$ ^{d}Šara$_2$ / ba-du$_3$**), which means the 9th year of the rule of king Šu-Suen, the ruler of Ur III Dynasty in the period 2038-2030 BC according to middle chronology. Thus, the object was produced around the year 2030 BC.

Yet, determining the precise provenance of this object is not as easy because the text does not mention its monthly date (the name of the month). There is no doubt that the tablet comes from one of the two provincial archives of the Ur III Dynasty kingdom, from its central provinces (Sumer is southern Iraq today). These provinces could be Ĝirsu (modern Tello) and Umma (modern Jokha). The other archives from sites at Ur (modern Tell Muqajjar), Nippur (modern Nuffar), and Puzriš-Dagan (modern Drehem) should not be considered here. Preserved fragments of personal names rather indicate the origin of the tablet from the Ĝirsu archive, and such a proposal should be accepted (see discussion below in section 5).

5. Content and meaning of inscription on tablet MNWr XXI-90

Alas, the poor condition of the tablet described above prevents the reconstruction of the entire inscription, especially since I have tried to avoid any overly risky supplements or reconstructions of the missing fragments. Although the **pisan-dub-ba** texts are usually very short and made according to a simple pattern, some important elements of the text may not only be very different from one another, but they may also come in a random order.

Having said that, we can be absolutely sure of the transliteration and translation of only lines 1, 2, and 6 of the text on the obverse, and lines 7 and 11 on the reverse of the tablet. Correct reading of the beginning of the text (lines 1-2)

[27] See photo No. 3.

allows us to say that our "tag" was marking a tablet basket (**pisan-dub-ba**) containing "settlement balances" *nikkassum* (**niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-ak**). Similarly, the fully preserved last line of the text (line 11) tells us the precise date – the 9th year of the rule of king Šu-Suen (ca. 2030 BC) which – considering the specific functions of **pisan-dub-ba** documents – is most probably not only the date when the tag was made but also the date of all the documents once kept in the basket marked by this tag. Other lines, which allow a reliable reading (lines 6 and 7), contain personal names, respectively: Lugal-ursaĝ (**Lugal-ur-saĝ**) and Lu-Nanna (**Lu$_2$-^{d}Nanna**). Sorry to say, but this is all that can be absolutely reliably deciphered from this tablet, although at least one of these names (**Lugal-ur-saĝ**) seems to confirm that this tablet belongs to the provincial archive of Ĝirsu.[28]

Regarding the other part of the inscription on the tablet, we can only propose several supplements, ranging from the most likely ones to those that are merely variants or hypotheses. At the well-preserved beginning of line 2, we can clearly see two signs: **UR** and **AB**, which should quite probably be interpreted as the beginning of a personal name: **Ur-ab-[…],** supposedly: Ur-abba or Ur-abzu. The former name is much more likely to have appeared on this tablet because it is seen 11 times in other texts dated to the 9th year of the rule of King Šu-Suen, and all these texts are found on documents from Ĝirsu, where they recorded food product transactions.[29]

It can therefore be assumed that the name Ur-abba opens, as early as in line 3, a list of names of people whose settlement balances *nikkassum* (**niĝ$_2$-ka$_9$-ak**) were stored in a basket marked with the "tag" under study. Consequently, we should expect that further lines of the text (exactly, in lines 4 and 5) had once carried the names of persons or names of administration units/offices.[30] This concept appears to be supported by the visible writing in verse 5, which includes the personal name Nammah-Baba (**Nam-mah-^{d}Ba-ba$_6$**), a local name typical of the province of Ĝirsu.

Somewhat less obvious is a possible interpretation of the record in line 4. There can be no doubt that it begins with the sign **KA,** followed by a visible fragment of a strongly damaged large sign that apparently consisted of many

---

[28] According to data from the digital platform BDTNS, 52 appearances of the name Lugal-ursaĝ were found in Ĝirsu texts, while in the whole Neo-Sumerian documentation it appeared 64 times (and only 12 times in all the other archives). These numbers for the digital base CDLI are, respectively: 60 (all appearances) up to 50 (Ĝirsu) and up to 10 (all the other archives).

[29] Here the numbers are almost convergent in both digital platforms (CDLI and BDTNS). This applies to the following texts: BM 29783 (missing from BDTNS); DAS 234 (missing from BDTNS); FT 2, pl. 50 AO 12933 = RA 54, 128, 35; MVN 22, 206; PPAC 5, 715; RA 58, 106, 93; RA 58, 106, 94; RA 58, 106, 95; RA 58, 106, 96; RA 62, 7, 9 (missing from CDLI); RIAA 200.

[30] The Neo-Sumerian documentation very often substitutes the names of various offices or work positions with the personal names of particular officers, whenever the scribe was sure of who was currently performing the function or office. Example: the position of "grain silo supervisor" (**ka-guru$_7$**).

separate wedge-shaped impressions. The rest of the record in line 4 is totally damaged. This complex and strongly damaged sign could be tentatively interpreted as either the sign **SA$_6$** or the sign **GUR$_7$**. This, in turn, would allow two respective readings: either a personal name **Inim-sa$_6$**-[**sa$_6$**] or the position of a "grain silo supervisor" (**ka-guru$_7$**).[31]

A correct reading of the heavily damaged records on the reverse of the tablet – lines 9-10 – poses even more problems. The name Lu-Nanna (**Lu$_2$-^{d}Nanna**) in the first line of text on the reverse (line 7) and in the next line (line 8) is most certainly followed by another personal name: Nabasa ((**N**[**a**]-**b**[**a**]-⌈**sa$_6$**⌋). A potentially acceptable reading of the other lines in the text, that is, lines 9 and 10, is even more hypothetical. All signs in line 9 are damaged but with some hesitation we might assume that the first sign was **UR**, and the last but one – **LAM**. Suspecting that a personal name had been written in this place too, after much hesitation, I assumed that it could have been a fairly popular Sumerian name Ur-Šugalama (record: **Ur-Šu-ga-lam-ma**), especially as similarly to the previous names, it again most frequently appears in the Ĝirsu texts.[32]

Nevertheless, we face the biggest reading and interpretation problems in the text's line 10, which was written in two rows.[33] It seems most likely that the record in the first row consists of 3 signs with the clearly visible sign **LUGAL** in the centre. While the first sign preceding **LUGAL** seems to be sign **U$_3$**, the last sign in this row is totally illegible. The second row is indented (it begins a bit further away from the tablet's edge), which indicates that it is a continuation of the record in the first row, and it probably consisted of three signs, of which we can easily read the first two as **DUMU** and **ZI**. The last sign is totally illegible, just like the sign in the row above. So, we most likely have a write sequence "**u$_3$** PN1 **dumu** PN2" (**u$_3$ Lugal-**[x], **dumu Zi-**[**zi?**]), but any attempt to complete the damaged personal names is very risky.

This is, perhaps, all related to the result of analyzing the text of the document under study. I wish to stress at this point that the prosopographic data, in most cases, are established reliably and, more or less hypothetically, seem to confirm the tablet's provenance from the Ĝirsu archives.

---

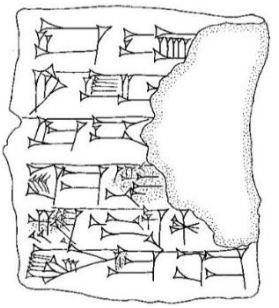
[31] Sum. **ka-guru$_7$** (akad. *kagurrûm, kugrum,kugurum*) – "grain silo supervisor" – see Attinger 2021, 588 (**ka-kuru$_{13}$k**); Sallaberger 2006, 326 (**ka-guru$_7$k**); CAD K, 35 (*kagurrû, kugurrû, kakurrû, kakurrû*); SANTAG 5, 165 (*kug*(*u*)*rum*); AHw, 500 (*kug*(*u*)*rûm*).

[32] A search for the frequency of name Ur- Šugalama (**Ur-šu-ga-lam-ma**) in both data bases (CDLI and BDTNS) produces similar result (in brackets – data from BDTNS). Among 527 (591) appearances of the name Ur-Šugalama in the whole Neo-Sumerian documentation, as many as 337 (396) were found in texts from Ĝirsu. It is worth noting that like in the case of the name Nabasa, the proportion of Ĝirsu texts grows in documents dated as the 9th year of the rule of king Šu-Suen – respectively: 34 (37) documents from all the archives with a clear majority – 24 (27) from Ĝirsu.

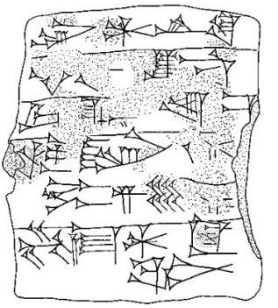
[33] The clearly impressed horizontal lines indicate that between line 9 and the date written in the last line (line 11) should be considered as one whole, hence it has been numbered as one line No. 10.

6. Autography

Obverse



Reverse



7. Transliteration and translation

Transliteration

Obverse

1. pisan-dub-[ba]
2. niĝ$_2$-[ka$_9$]-a[k]
3. Ur-ab-[ba]
4. ka-[gu][ru$_7$]$^{?}$
5. [Nam]-mah- ^{d}[Ba-ba$_6$]
6. Lugal-ur-saĝ

Revers

7. Lu$_2$-^{d}Nanna (AN.ŠEŠ.KI)
8. [Na]-[ba]-[sa$_6$]
9. U[r]-[š]u-[ga]$^{?}$-[lam]-[ma]
10. [u$_3$] Lugal-[x] / dumu Zi-[zi]$^{?}$
11. mu e$_2$ ^{d}Šara$_2$ / ba-du$_3$

Translation

[1](Tag) for a basket with tablets, [2](containing) settlement balances [3](of officers): Ur-ab[ba], [4]"the silo supervisor,"$^{(?)}$ [5]Nammah-[Baba], [6]Lugal-ursaĝ, [R.7]Lu-Nanna, [8]Nabasa, [9]Ur-Šugalama [10]and$^{(?)}$ Lugal-[x] / dumu Zi-[zi].$^{?}$
[11]Year: temple of god Šara / was built (= 9th year of the rule of king Šu-Suen)

8. Photographs

Object in the resource of the National Museum in Wrocław (museum number MNWr XXI-90).

Source of illustrations: Photo Lab, National Museum in Wrocław. Photo by Arkadiusz Podstawka.

Photo 1. Front of the tablet

Photo 2. Back of the tablet

Photo 3. Left side of the tablet

Abbreviations

AHw	Von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden 1959-1981).
AOAT	*Alter Orient und Altes Testament* (Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969 ff.).
AOAT 203	see Powell / Sack (eds.) 1979.
ArOr	"Archiv Orientální" (Prague)
ArOr 17	see Fish 1949.
BDTSN	Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts – digital platform, Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales – Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, led by Manuela Molina (http://bdtns.filol.csic.es/index.php?p=home#).
BM	British Museum, London (museum number).
BPOA	*Biblioteca del Proximo Oriente Antiguo* (Madrid 2006 ff.).
BPOA 1	see Ozaki / Sigrist 2006, *Ur III Administrative Tablets*.
BPOA 5	see Garfinkle / Johnson (eds.) 2008, *The Growth of an Early State in Mesopotamia*.
BRM	*Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan* (New Haven 1917 ff.).
BRM 3	see Keiser 1914.
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago*, M.T. Roth et al. (eds.), vol. 1-21 (A-Z), Chicago 1956-2010.

CBCY	*Catalogue of the Babylonian Collections at Yale* (Bethesda 1994 ff.).
CBCY 3	see Sigrist 2001, *Neo-Sumerian Archival Texts*.
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative – international digital platform coordinated by the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de).
CST	see Fish 1932, *Catalogue of the Sumerian Tablets*.
CUSAS	*Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology* (Bethesda 2007 ff.).
CUSAS 40	see Sigrist / Ozaki 2019, *Tablets from Iri-Saĝrig Archive*.
DAS	see Lafont 1985, *Documents administratifs sumériens*.
FT 2	see de Genouillac 1936, *Fouilles de Telloh*, vol. II.
ITT	*Inventaire des tablettes de Tello conservées au Musée Imperial Ottoman* (Paris 1910 ff.).
ITT 4	see Delaporte 1912, *Inventaire des tablettes de Tello*.
ITT 5	see de Genouillac 1921, *Inventaire des tablettes de Tello*.
JMEOS	"Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society" (Manchester 1912-1933/1934).
JMEOS 12	see Fish 1926.
MCS	Manchester Cuneiform Studies (Manchester 1951 ff.).
MCS 1	see Fish 1951.
MVN	*Materiali per il vocabulario neosumerico* (Rom 1974 ff.).
MVN 7	see Pettinato / Picchioni 1978, *Testi economici di Lagaš*.
MVN 16	see Waetzoldt / Yildiz 1994, *Die Umma-Texte*.
MVN 22	see Molina 2003, *Testi amministrativi neosumerici*.
NBC	Nies Babylonian Collection (museum number. Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven).
Nisaba	*Studi Assiriologici Messinesi* (Messina 2002 ff.).
Nisaba 15	see Owen 2013, *Cuneiform Texts Primarily from Iri-Saĝrig*.
Nisaba 32	see Notizia 2019, *Neo-Sumerian Administrative Texts*.
OBO	*Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* (Fribourg / Göttingen 1973 ff.).
OBO 160/3	see Sallaberger 1993, *Ur III-Zeit*.
OLZ	"Orientalistische Literaturzeitung. Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft vom ganzen Orient und seine Beziehungen zu den angrenzenden Kulturkreisen" (Berlin 1898 ff.).

OLZ 10	see Thureau-Dangin 1907.
OrNS	*Orientalia*, Nova Series (Roma 1932 ff.).
OrNS 9	see Schneider 1940.
PPAC	*Periodic publications on ancient civilisations* (Changchun Institute for the History of Ancient Civilizations, 1989 ff.).
PPAC 5	see Sigrist / Ozaki 2013, *Administrative Ur III Texts*.
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* (Paris 1886 ff.).
RA 54	see Lambert 1960.
RA 58	see Lambert / Figulla 1964.
RIAA	see Speleers 1925, *Recueil des inscriptions*.
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie (und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie)* (Berlin / Leipzig 1928-1938, Berlin / New York 1957 ff.).
SANTAG	*SANTAG - Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde*, K. Hecker / H. Neumann / W. Sommerfeld (eds.), Wiesbaden 1990 ff.
SANTAG 5	see Blake, J. / George, A. / Postgate, N. (eds.) 2000.
SOL	*Studi Orientali e Linguistici. Quaderni Istituto Glottologia Università degli Studi di Bologna* (Bologna 1983 ff.).
SOL 2	see Picchioni 1984-1985.
Sumer	*Sumer. Journal of Archaeology and History in Iraq* (Baghdad 1945 ff.).
Sumer 42	see Picchioni 1984.
TRU	see Legrain, 1912, *Le temps des rois d'Ur*.
UET	*Ur Excavations. Texts* (Londyn 1928 ff.).
UET 3	see Legrain 1937, 1947, *Ur Excavations, Texts*, vol. 3.
WUW	Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (Warsaw).

Bibliography

Blake, J. / George, A. / Postgate, N. (eds.) 2000: *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, SANTAG 5, 2nd edition, Wiesbaden.

Attinger, P. 2021: *Glossaire sumérien-français, principalement des textes littéraires paléobabyloniens*, Wiesbaden.

Delaporte, L. 1912: *Inventaire des tablettes de Tello conservées au Musée Impérial Ottoman*, Tome IV. *Tablettes de l'époque d'Ur (fouilles d'Ernest de Sarzec en 1898 et 1900)*, ITT 4, Paris.

Fish, T. 1932: *Catalogue of the Sumerian Tablets in the John Rylands Library*, Manchester.

Fish, T. 1949: 'Some Ur III Tablets from Lagash' *ArOr* 17, 227-229.

Fish, T. 1951: 'More gá-dub-ba Texts' *MCS* 1, 20-26.

Frayne, D.R. / Stuckey, J.H. 2021: *A Handbook of Gods and Goddesses of the Ancient Near East: Three Thousand Deities of Anatolia, Syria, Israel, Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria, and Elam*, Philadelphia.

Garfinkle, S.J. / Johnson, J.C. (eds.) 2008: *The Growth of an Early State in Mesopotamia: Studies in Ur III Administration. Proceedings of the First and Second Ur III Workshops at the 49th and 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, London, July 10, 2003, and Chicago, July 19,* 2005, BPOA 5, Madrid.

Genouillac, H. de 1921: *Inventaire des Tablettes de Tello conservées au Musée Impérial Ottoman*, Tome V. *Époque Présargonique, Époque d'Agadé, Époque d'Ur*, ITT 5, Paris

Genouillac, H. de 1936: *Fouilles de Telloh. II. Époques d'Ur III. dynastie et de Larsa, avec un appendice sur les fouilles de Mēdaïn par R. Girshmann*, Paris.

Keiser, C.E. 1914: *Cuneiform Bullae of the Third Millennium B.C.*, BRM 3, New York.

Lafont, B. 1985: *Documents administratifs sumériens provenant du site de Tello et conservés au Musée du Louvre*, DAS, Paris.

Lambert, M. 1960: 'Les archives d'Urabba fils de Bazig' *RA* 54/3, 113-130.

Lambert, M. / Figulla, H.H. 1964: 'Les archives d'Urabba fils de Bazig (II)' *RA* 58/3, 97-110.

Legrain, L. 1912: *Le temps des rois d'Ur*, TRU, Paris.

Legrain, L. 1937: *Ur Excavations, Texts: Business Documents of the Third Dynasty of Ur: Plates*, vol. 3, No. 1, UET 3/1, London.

Legrain, L. 1947: *Ur Excavations, Texts*, vol. 3, part 2: *Business Documents of the Third Dynasty of Ur: Indexes, Vocabulary, Catalogue, Lists,* vol. 3, No. 2, UET 3/2, London.

Molina, M. 2003: *Testi amministrativi neosumerici del British Museum 13601 - 14300*, MVN 22, Roma.

Molina, M. 2008: 'The Corpus of Neo-Sumerian Tablets: An Overview' BPOA 5, 19-53.

Nelson, R.C. 1976: *Pisan-dub-ba Texts from the Sumerian Ur III Dynasty, University of Minnesota*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Nelson, R.C. 1979: 'Inventory of Ur III Pisan-Dub-Ba Texts' AOAT 203, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 43-56.

Notizia, P. 2019: *Neo-Sumerian Administrative Texts from the Rosen Collection*, Nisaba 32, Messina.

Owen, D.I. (ed.) 2013: *Cuneiform Texts Primarily from Iri-Saĝrig/Āl-Šarrākī and the History of the Ur III Period*, Nisaba 15, Messina.

Ozaki, T. / Sigrist, M. 2006: *Ur III Administrative Tablets from the British Museum*, Part One, BPOA 1.1, Madrid.

Pettinato, G. / Picchioni, S.A. 1978: *Testi economici di Lagaš del Museo di Istanbul. Parte II: La 7601-8200*, MVN 7, Roma.

Picchioni, S.A. 1980: 'La direzione della scrittura cuneiforme e gli archivi di Tell Mardikh Ebla' *OrNS* 49, 225-251.

Picchioni, S.A. 1984: 'Die Keilschriftrichtung und ihre archäologischen Implikationen' *Sumer* 42, 48-54.

Picchioni, S.A. 1984-1985: 'The Direction of Cuneiform Writing: Theory and Evidence' *SOL* 2, Bologna, 11-26.

Powell, M.A. 1981: 'Three Problems in the History of Cuneiform Writing: Origins, Direction of Script, Literacy' *Visible Language* 15/4, 419-440.

Powell, M.A. / Sack, R.H. (eds.) 1979: *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones*, AOAT 203, Neukirchen-Vluyn.

Sallaberger, W. 1999: *Ur III-Zeit*, OBO 160/3, Teil 2, 119-390.

Sallaberger, W. 2006: *Leipzig-Münchner sumerischer Zettelkasten*, München.

Schneider, N. 1940: 'Die Urkundenbehälter von Ur III und ihre archivalische Systematik' *OrNS* 9, 1-16.

Sigrist, M. 2001: *Neo-Sumerian Archival Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection*, CBCY 3, Bethesda.
Sigrist, M. / Ozaki, T. 2013: *Administrative Ur III Texts in the British Museum*, vol. 1-2, PPAC 5 = Supplement to *Journal of Ancient Civilizations* 3, Changchun.
Sigrist, M. / Ozaki, T. 2019: *Tablets from Iri-Saĝrig Archive. Part One*, CUSAS 40, Bethesda.
Speleers, L. 1925: *Recueil des inscriptions de l’Asie Antérieure des Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire à Bruxelles*, Bruxelles.
Stępień, M. 2006: *Ensi w czasach III dynastii z Ur: aspekty ekonomiczne i administracyjne pozycji namiestnika prowincji w świetle archiwum z Ummy*, WUW Dissertationes 465, Warsaw.
Thureau-Dangin, F. 1907: ‘Le panier à tablettes’ *OLZ* 10, 444-446.
Waetzoldt, H. / Yildiz, F. 1994: *Die Umma-Texte aus den Archäologischen Museen zu Istanbul*, Band II (No. 601-1600), MVN 16, Roma.

Abstract

This article presents the publication and analysis of a previously unpublished Neo-Sumerian cuneiform tablet from the Ur III period (ca. 2110-2005 BC) held in the collection of the National Museum in Wrocław, Poland (museum number MNWr XXI-90). The tablet belongs to the rare category of administrative documents known as *pisan-dub-ba* ("basket with tablets"), which served as archival tags attached to baskets containing collections of administrative and business records in Mesopotamian archives. The study provides a comprehensive examination of this small clay tablet measuring 40 × 33 × 18 mm, which is dated to the 9th year of King Šu-Suen’s reign (ca. 2030 BC) of the Ur III Dynasty. Despite significant damage to the tablet’s surface, the author successfully identifies it as belonging to the subcategory of settlement balance documents (*niĝ₂-ka₉-ak* or *nikkassum*), representing one of only five known examples from this specific regnal year.

The article begins with an extensive introduction to *pisan-dub-ba* documents, explaining their function as organizational tools in ancient Mesopotamian archival systems. These tags, representing less than 0.8% of all known Neo-Sumerian texts (approximately 800 out of over 100,000 published documents), provided crucial information about the contents of document baskets, including the types of records stored, relevant personnel, and dating information. Through careful epigraphic analysis, the author reconstructs portions of the damaged text, identifying several personal names, including Ur-abba, Lugal-ursaĝ, Lu-Nanna, and others, whose activities were documented in the settlement balances contained within the marked basket. The prosopographic evidence strongly suggests the tablet's provenance from the Ĝirsu archive, one of the major provincial administrative centers of the Ur III kingdom. The author also discusses the tablet's acquisition history, noting its donation to the museum in 1974 and its previous ownership by collector Jan Kuglin.