A New Historical Syncronism Relating to Sargon of Akkade

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Abstract

This article offers an edition of an early Sargonic cuneiform tablet in the Cornell University Collections (Ithaca), which contains two dedicatory inscriptions "for the life of Sargon, king of Akkade" by a temple administrator named Egalêsi. The same official occurs in a legal document dated in the third year of a governor of Umma, whose name has been read as "TE.UŠ.GIM". It is argued that "TE.UŠ.GIM" should in fact be read as *sùr-ús-gen₇*. The name of this Sargonic governor was already known, although under different spellings, but he was considered to be a contemporary of Man'iśtūśu or an even later governor. The new text published here allows us to date him to the time of Sargon of Akkade.

Keywords

Chronology, cuneiform, Mesopotamia, Sargonic, Sumerian.

CUNES 51-09-004 (cm 9.3×9.8; Figs. 1-2)[1] is an unusual tablet containing either the copies of two dedicatory inscriptions or their preparatory drafts. Both epigraphs were commissioned by the same official for the benefit of king Sargon of Akkade. The text reads as follows:

col. i

1. ^{d} ⌜šára⌝	To Šara,
2. [l]ugal é-maḫ-ra	the master of the Emaḫ,
3. ⌜é⌝-gal-NI-si	Egalêsi,
4. saĝĝa AB.MÙŠ-ke₄	the temple administrator of Zabala(m),
5. nam-ti	for the life
6. [s]ar-ru-⌜GI⌝ lugal	of Śarrumkēn (= Sargon), king
7. [a-ga-d]è-ka-šè	of Akkade,
8. [a mu-na]-ru	has presented (this object).

col. ii

1. ^{d}šára [l]ugal	To Šara, the master
2. abzu-bànda^{da}-[ra]	of the Abzubanda,
3. ⌜é⌝-gal-NI-si	Egalêsi,
4. saĝĝa AB.MÙ[Š-ke$_4$]	the temple administrator of Zabala(m),
5. nam-ti	for the life
6. *sar-ru*-GI lu[gal]	of Śarrumkēn (= Sargon), king
7. a-ga-dè-k[a-šè]	of Akkade,
8. a mu-na-ru	has presented (this object).

Comments:

i 1-2. lugal é-maḫ as an epithet of the god Šara also occurs in an inscription of Parag'irnun, the wife of the Pre-Sargonic ruler Ĝeššagkidug (STEIBLE 1982: 268-269; FRAYNE 2008: 371). Emaḫ ("August/Supreme House") was the name of the main temple of Šara in the Umma district. SALLABERGER (1993: 84-85) has suggested that it was localized in the town of KI.AN. According to the "Temple Hymns," however, the Emaḫ was the temple of Šara in Umma (see SJÖBERG – BERGMANN 1969: 35; also cf. GEORGE 1993: 119-120).

i 3. It is not clear whether NI in é-gal-NI-si is to be read ì or lé. Since the same name is written elsewhere as é-gal-le-si (DP 132 viii 1; VS 14, 173 vii 1) or é-gal-e-si (see LIMET 1968: 403), it is tempting to transliterate é-gal-lé-si, although lé is very rarely used in Sumerian contexts[2]. On the other hand, a reading é-gal-ì-si is suggested by the comparison with ereš-éš-dam-ì-si in an early Sargonic text from Nippur (OSP 1, 23 v 5). Quite interestingly, the spelling é-gal-NI-si is also found in the same text in the writing of the PN ereš-é-gal-NI-si (*ibid.* vi 8 and xiii 18'). Here, by analogy with ereš-éš-dam-ì-si, we should almost certainly read ereš-é-gal-ì-si. Finally, the fact that the name of our é-gal-NI-si saĝĝa AB.MÙŠ is written é-gal-e-si in another text (see below) does not necessarily imply that it should be transliterated here as é-gal-lé-si; in fact, both é-gal-ì-si and é-gal-e-si could well represent a name with the grammatical form {egal.e.'i.si} and the pronunciation /egalêsi/[3]. In other words, é-gal-ì-si could simply be a morphographemic writing that reflects the underlying grammatical structure of the name[4].

i 4. saĝĝa AB.MÙŠ$^{(ki)}$ was the title of the chief administrator of the temple of the goddess In'anak at AB.MÙŠ, a town that is known to have been called Zabala(m) in later times (cf. POWELL 1976). Accordingly, AB.MÙŠ is usually transliterated either

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[2]   The only sure attestation I know of is ga-ti-lé (PN) in AUCT 1, 356 rev. 6.

[3]   Cf. en-me-parag-ge$_4$-e-si (KLEIN 1991: 126 n. 12; OELSNER 2003: 213; MARCHESI 2010: 241-242 sub 7a with n. 53) and lugal-zag-ge$_4$-e-si (COOPER – HEIMPEL 1983: pl. 3b, 3N T296 lower edge 2), in which the *scriptio plena* makes the pronunciation of {e.'i} as /ê/ explicit (cf. also MARCHESI – MARCHETTI 2011: 98 n. 12).

[4]   Spelling variants of the type ì~(C)e are well attested in the writing of other personal names; cf., for instance, ušur$_x$(LÁL×TÚG)-ì-dùg and ušur$_x$(LÁL×LAGAB)-ré-dùg (see MARCHESI – MARCHETTI 2011: 126 n. 278). Also note mes-ùĝ-ì-dùg (BIN 8, 50 i 4; POWELL 1978: 46, no. 10 i 9) representing either Mes'uĝe'idug or Mes'uĝêdug (see MARCHESI 2004: 191).

zabalam$_6$ or zabala$_6$. The reading /zabalam/ was certainly current in the Ur III period[5], while /zabala/ represents the standard Sumerian pronunciation for this toponym in later times[6]. However, the writing of the locative as AB.MÙŠ^{ki}-la in an early Sargonic text from Umma (Nik 2, 49 rev. 3; cf. FOSTER 1982: 39) does not fit either readings but rather points to a third form of the name ending in /l/. In this connection, we may note that the Akkadian name of the town was Sugal[7]. Therefore, it appears that either the Akkadian reading /sugal/ or a related Sumerian form /zugal/ or /zagal/ was attached to AB.MÙŠ$^{(ki)}$ in Sargonic Umma.

i 6. Note (here and in col. ii 6) the use of the Akkadian spelling of the name, *sar-ru-GI*, in spite of the fact that the text is written in Sumerian (cf. SOMMERFELD 2009: 44 § 1). For additional exceptions of this kind, see GELB – KIENAST 1990: 39 (seal inscriptions S-1 and S-2), 64-65 (Sargon A1 and B1); KIENAST – VOLK 1995: 102 (Gir 26).

ii 2. The Abzubanda shrine ("Little *Abzu*") is also attested in Nisaba 11, 41 rev. ii 5. It was situated in KI.AN^{ki} (see *ibid*. line 11).

ii 6. See above, comment to i 6.

The dedicant of these inscriptions, Egalêsi, is also known from two additional texts: (1) an administrative document dating to the first year of office of an unnamed governor of Umma[8] and (2) a sale document from Zabala(m)[9]. The latter text is dated to year 3 of a governor of Umma whose name was read by its editor, T. Ozaki, as "TE.UŠ.GIM"[10]. However, this apparently new governor of Umma does not actually exist: the sign interpreted as "TE" by Ozaki is, in fact, ḪI×DIŠ[11]. The name in question should probably be read *sùr-ús-gen$_7$*[12] and interpreted as Śuruśkēn, "The Root Is Legitimate"[13]. The entire colophon of the Ozaki tablet reads: ud-ba *sùr-ús-gen$_7$* PA.TE.SI umma^{ki} é-gal-e-si saĝĝa AB.MÙŠ^{ki} 60×4+10×3 ìnda banšur kaš dug 3 m[u], "At that time

[5]   See STEINKELLER 1985.

[6]   See Riftin 2:2, 8 and 14 (^{d}in'anak$_x$(MÙŠ) za-ba-la^{ki}); SJÖBERG – BERGMANN 1969: 116.

[7]   See Proto-Diri Nippur 257 (MSL 15, p. 20); Proto-Diri Oxford 183 (*ibid*., p. 42); ANBAR 1978: 137-138; VOLK 1989: 134, úru àm-ma-ir-ra-bi XX 6. Also note the bynames Bēletsugal ("Lady of Sugal") and Sugallītum ("She of Sugal"), which In'anak of Zabala(m) was also called; see ANBAR 1975: 121, BM 13912:27, and 124 *ad loc.*; MICHALOWSKI 1986: 169 with n. 11; CUSAS 9, 66:6 (^{d}*bēlet-su-gal*), 83:36' (^{d}*eštar bēlet su-gal*), 371:56 (^{d}*sugallītum-ereš*). Needless to say, the hypothesis of a derivation of Sugallītum from Akkadian *sukkallu* (MICHALOWSKI 1986: 169-170) is to be rejected.

[8]   MS 2191/12 (http://cdli.ucla.edu/P250918). See rev. 1: é-gal-NI-si saĝĝa AB.MÙŠ$^{⌈ki⌉}$.

[9]   OZAKI 2008: no. 3.

[10] OZAKI 2008: 55 and 58.

[11] Note how this sign is quite different from the TE sign that occurs in the writing of the governor's title PA.TE.SI (see photo of the tablet in OZAKI 2008: 64).

[12] Cf. STEINKELLER 1992: 15-19.

[13] Cf. Apilkīn, "The Heir Is Legitimate." The absolute forms *śuruś* (later *šuruš*; cf. CAD Š/3: 364) and *apil* in these names are two examples of the usage of the *status absolutus* as *status determinatus*: a grammatical relic from an earlier stage of the Akkadian language.

Śuruśkēn was the governor of Umma and Egalêsi was the temple administrator of Zabala(m). 270 loaves of table bread and jars of beer (were distributed). Year 3"[14].

This *sùr-ús-gen₇* PA.TE.SI umma[ki] is almost certainly the same person as *su₄-ru-ús-*GI PA.TE.SI umma[ki], who occurs in a long known inscription from Djokha[15]. A third spelling variant for the name of this governor of Umma, *su-ús*-GI, is found in two Sargonic tablets of Adab from the time of Meskigalla[16]. This last spelling seems to suggest that the name Śuruśkēn was actually pronounced /śu'uśkēn/ at Adab[17].

In previous scholarship, Śuruśkēn was considered either a contemporary of Man'iśtūśu or an even later governor[18]. The combined evidence of the Cornell tablet edited here and the sale document published by Ozaki allows us to date the beginning of Śuruśkēn's rule over Umma back to the time of Sargon[19]. He was presumably the immediate successor of Ḫinnānum (*en-na-núm*), the governor of Umma at the time of the so-called "mu-iti A" archives[20], and governed that city for at least six years[21].

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[14]   For similar colophons, see MS 1952/2 (http://cdli.ucla.edu/P250675) and MS 1952/3 (http://cdli. ucla.edu/P250676).

[15]   THUREAU-DANGIN 1912: 76. For additional attestations, see MS 1952/2 (http://cdli.ucla.edu/ P250675) colophon: ud-ba *su₄-⌈ru-ús⌉*-GI PA.TE.SI [umma[ki]] … [(x+)]2 mu, "At that time Śuruśkēn was the governor of Umma … Year 2(+x);" and MS 1952/15 (http://cdli.ucla.edu/ P250688) rev. 4ff.: *su₄-ru-ús*-GI / PA.TE.SI umm[a][ki]-ke₄ / é-ĝidri umma[ki]-ka / e-ne-ba / *ì-lí-a-ḫi* / maškim-bé / 6 mu, "Śuruśkēn, the governor of Umma, distributed (the garments) to them in the Eĝidri of Umma. Ilīaḫī acted as *maškim*-official. Year 6" (cf. VISICATO – WESTENHOLZ 2010: 7 n. 43).

[16]   CUSAS 11, 90 and 122 (cf. VISICATO 2010: 265, 268-269).

[17]   I am not aware of any other example of this sort of /r/-reduction.

[18]   See, among the others, THUREAU-DANGIN 1912: 76; SOLLBERGER – KUPPER 1971: 121; FOSTER 1982: 154-155; GELB – KIENAST 1990: 48; FRAYNE 1993: 261 and 263. A very different position has most recently been taken by G. Visicato: according to Visicato (2010: 269 and 271), Śuruśkēn was installed by Sargon when the latter conquered Umma and captured its ruler Mes'e. However, since it is based solely on the synchronism of Śuruśkēn with Meskigalla, governor of Adab, that is provided by two recently published tablets (see note 16 above), this reconstruction is undermined by the fact that Meskigalla is known to have still been in office in the time of Rīmuś (see FRAYNE 1993: 41-42). Also cf. note 20 below.

[19]   Contrary to what has generally been thought so far, this Śuruśkēn is to be kept distinct from the Śuruśkēn that occurs as "the one (in the service) of PAP.ŠEŠ, governor of Umma," in the Obelisk of Man'iśtūśu (OIP 104, 40 side A xii 21-24: 2 DUMU *su-ru-ús*-GI / *ši* PAP.ŠEŠ / PA.TE.SI / umma[ki]; *passim*. Cf. GELB 1979: 44-46. For a different interpretation of PAP.ŠEŠ, see POMPONIO 1983: 529-530).

[20]   For Ḫinnānum, see, most recently, MARCHESI in press: § III *sub* D 16 with nn. 101-103. D. Frayne's (1992: 629; 1993: 43) suggestion to restore this governor's name in two half-broken passages of inscriptions of Rīmuś is now also contradicted by new collations of the two passages in question by W. Sommerfeld: according to Sommerfeld (2007: 372 § 2.1), the name of the governor of Umma who was defeated and captured by Rīmuś is, in fact, Amarki. Finally, note that two officials that occur in the Śuruśkēn text MS 1952/2 (see note 15 above) – á-kal-le um-mi-a (rev. ii 2) and ur-[d]alla dub-sar (*ibid*. 4) – are also attested in documents from the time of Ḫinnānum; see Nik. 2, 14 (= SOMMERFELD – MARKINA – ROUDIK 2005: 186ff., Erm. 14342) ii 3 (á-kal-le um-mi-a) and Nik. 2, 55:2 (ur-[d]alla dub-sar diĝir-ra). Although neither is dated, the prosopographical study of the names found in these two documents suggests that they both stem from the final part (years 4-6) of the governorship of Ḫinnānum.

[21]   See note 15 above. Note that Ilīaḫī also occurs as *maškim*-official in MS 1952/29 (http://cdli. ucla.edu/P250703), which is dated: "year 6, month 10" (presumably, of Śuruśkēn's governorship).

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Fig. 1. CUNES 51-09-004.

Fig. 2. CUNES 51-09-004 – detail of the top.