

## A New Sumerian Fragment Preserving an Account of the Mesopotamian Antediluvian Dynasties

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A small fragment in the University Museum in Philadelphia partially preserves an account of the antediluvian dynasties that does not duplicate any extant context to the best of my knowledge. This fragment also preserves a fragmentary portion of a passage that seems to most likely describe the divine decision to send the flood due to their displeasure with humanity, although the explicit disclosure of a new actor is not preserved and it is also possible that the ensuing lines describe actions of the antediluvian kings. The interpretation of this portion of the fragment must remain provisional at present.

However, although N 3514 preserves only one side of the tablet surface and has the dimensions 5.1 x 4.3 x 2.2 cm. It is too small to decisively conclude whether it had more than one column, although the straightness of the preserved surface makes it quite possible that it belonged to a two or multi-column source. The script and ductus of this fragment point to a late Old Babylonian or post-Old Babylonian date.

Although the text that this small fragment belonged to cannot be decisively proven, possible candidates may be briefly considered. It is possible that this fragment belongs to the *Sumerian Flood Story*, which has long been known from only one exemplar, CBS 10673 (PBS 5/1 pl. 89) + CBS 10867.<sup>2</sup> This exemplar was classified as late Old Babylonian or post-Old Babylonian in date by Civil.<sup>3</sup> Recently, however, a new fragment of this composition of Old Babylonian date has been informally reported in the Schøyen collection.

The fragment N 3514 could belong to the lacuna that Civil estimated to be approximately thirty-four lines at the top of CBS 10673+, column iii. Before this lacuna, the first five Mesopotamian cities, Eridu, Badtibira, Larag, Sippar, and Šuruppak, are founded and allotted to deities, and after the lacuna, the decision to destroy humanity appears to have already been made. It is possible that this lacuna contained the resolution to destroy humanity via the flood and possibly the reason for this resolution as well. This is a configuration that could potentially be partially fulfilled by the preserved content of N 3514.

However, although N 3514 could pertain to the content of this lacuna in the *Sumerian Flood Story*, it does not physically join CBS 10673+, and the comparison of the hand and ductus of the respective pieces does not decisively identify them as belonging to the same tablet. The depth of incision on N 3514 appears

1. I would like to thank Professor John Brinkman and Matthew Rutz for useful observations made in conjunction with this article.

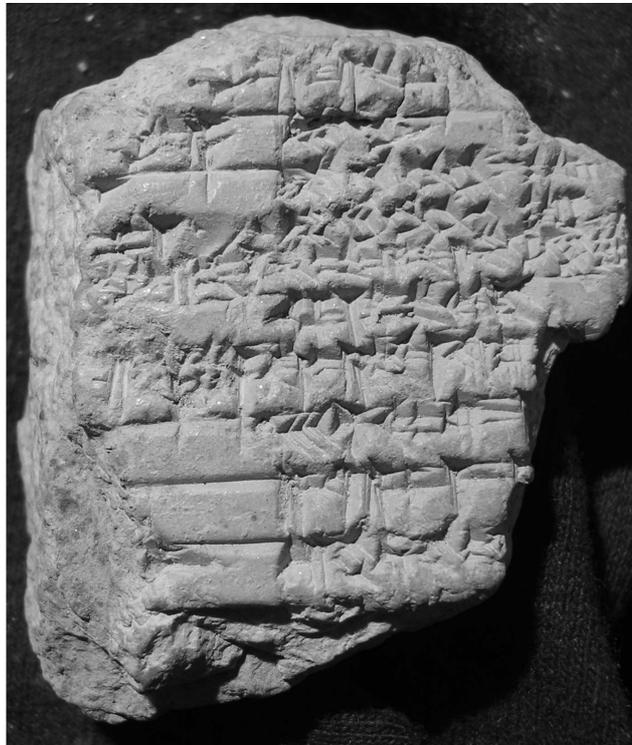
2. Edited by Civil 1969: 138f.

3. Note, for example, the notably post-OB *Gestalt* of the IB<sub>2</sub> sign in this manuscript.

to be somewhat deeper, and some of the few overlapping signs between N 3514 and CBS 10673+ (E, SU) do not have exactly the same *Gestalt*. In addition, the wear at the top of obverse column ii and iii of CBS 10673+ could be taken as an indication that the entire top of the tablet was in a similar state of preservation before additional breakage occurred. These factors implicate N 3514 as part of another tablet, if not necessarily another composition.

Another possibility is that N 3514 represents a unilingual Sumerian royal expository kinglist, or the Sumerian column of a bilingual version, with partial parallels to the late bilingual kinglist K 8532+ and duplicates, which is also referred to in the secondary literature as the *Babylonian Royal Chronicle* or the *Dynastic Chronicle*.<sup>4</sup>

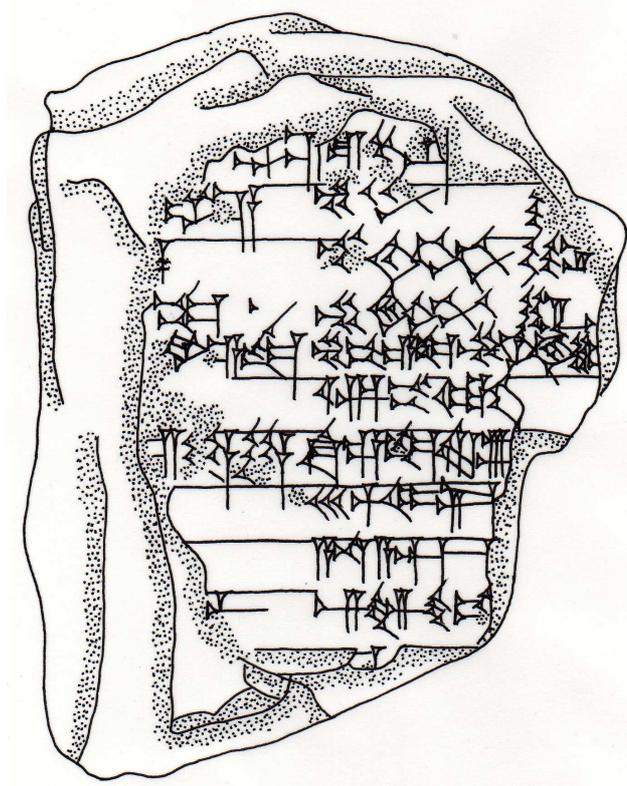
N 3514 enumerates the antediluvian dynasties of Mesopotamia in a manner that is similar to the section of the antediluvian dynasties contained in some manuscripts of the *Sumerian Kinglist*, a section that may be understood to be a later addition to the text.<sup>5</sup> The rulers and reign lengths of the antediluvian dynasties are also enumerated in the late bilingual kinglist K 8532+ and duplicates, with some variance in reign length and number of kings.



N 3514

4. See now Glassner 2004: 126-131 with additional bibliography. The fragments of this composition that are pertinent to the current discussion were published by Lambert (1973) and Finkel (1980).

5. For discussion of the antediluvian section and its distribution across manuscripts, see, for example, Jacobsen 1939: 55f., Vincente 1995: 244. As a partial confirmation of the secondary status of the antediluvian section of this text, note the absence of the antediluvian section in the lone Ur III manuscript of SKL (Steinkeller 2004: 269f.)



1') [...] lugal-e SU.KUR.R[U<sup>ki</sup> ...]  
*... king ... Shuruppak...*

2') [...] lugal-e mu šaru i[n-AK]  
*..., the king, reigned 36,000 years*

3') [...lugal-]e' mu šaru-šar<sub>2</sub>-šar<sub>2</sub> in-[AK ]  
*..., the king, reigned 43,200 years*

4') [... lugal-e]-ne mu ŠAR<sub>2</sub>xNIŠ-šar<sub>2</sub>-šar<sub>2</sub> in-A[K ]  
*[These two kings of Shuruppak] reigned 79,200 years*

5') [... lu]gal-e-ne mu-bi-e-ne mu ŠAR<sub>2</sub>xDIŠ-ḪI<sub>4</sub>U i[n-AK ]  
*[These ...] kings reigned 360,000 years*

6') [...] ḫul-bi gig [...]  
*... with hatred ...*

7') [...inim?]-e' si<sub>3</sub>-si<sub>3</sub>-ke-e-de<sub>3</sub> šag<sub>4</sub>-ga [... kuš<sub>2</sub>?]  
*... took counsel(?) in order to put into words(?)*

8') [...] eš-bar mi-ni-i[b? ...]

...a decision

9') [...] a-na-am<sub>3</sub> me-a? [...]

...all of the...

10') [... eš?]-bar gi-gi-N[E ...]

... making correct(?) decisions(?)...

11') [...] 'x' [...]

*Commentary*

1'-5') This fragment lists the reigns of antediluvian kings in a manner which is analogous to the *Sumerian Kinglist*, giving the reign length of an individual king, the reign length of a dynasty, and an overall total for the antediluvian dynasties.

This fragment lists two kings for the antediluvian dynasty of Šuruppak, whose names are not preserved. In contrast, the *Sumerian Kinglist* attributes it with only one king, *Ubār-Tutu*, who is typically named as the father of Ziusudra, but is described as an ancestor who is at least one generation removed from Ziusudra in *Instructions of Šuruppak* 7-8.<sup>6</sup> The late bilingual kinglist K 8532+ and duplicates name two kings of Šuruppak, *Ubār-Tutu* and Ziusudra. The antediluvian kinglist W-B 62 9-11 (OECT 2 pl. 6)<sup>7</sup> lists a <sup>DISŠ</sup>Šuruppak, son of *Ubār-Tutu*, a curious misinterpretation which is probably predicated on the interpretation of the toponym as it occurs in *Instructions of Šuruppak* 7 as a personal name instead of a gentilic,<sup>8</sup> and Ziusudra as kings of Šuruppak.

The reign totals given in N 3514 for the two individual rulers (36,000 and 43,200 years), the Šuruppak dynasty as a whole (79,200 years), and the antediluvian dynasties as a whole (36,000), all differ from those that are advanced in SKL as preserved on the prism Ash 1923.444 (OECT 2 pl. 1-4) (18,600, 18,600, and 241,200 years). WB 62 9-11 assigns reign lengths of 28,800 and 36,000 years, respectively, to the two kings.<sup>9</sup> The fragments of the late bilingual kinglist K 8532+ and duplicates unfortunately do not preserve the reign lengths of the Šuruppak dynasty.

The fact that N 3514 lists the same number of kings for the Šuruppak dynasty as W-B 62 9-10 and the kinglist K 8532+ and duplicates suggests that N 3514 can be restored accordingly, with either *Ubār-Tutu* or the erroneous Šuruppak, son of *Ubār-Tutu* and Ziusudra.

2') The restoration of the verb AK here is reasonably certain from the preservation of the initial horizontal. Note the finite verbal form in-ak which is contained in the Tall Leilān recension of SKL in conjunction with reign lengths. Whether or not the conjugation of the verb was rendered in the third person plural cannot be ascertained due to the state of preservation, but an explicit formal rendering of the plural is not known from manuscripts of SKL.

6. Alster 2005: 57, 104-105, with further bibliography; see also George 2003: 154-155.

7. For this text, see the discussion of George 2003: 154-155.

8. Note as well the occurrence of the personal name marker with the toponym Šuruppak in this basic context also is attested in VAT 10151 (KAR 27, Lambert 1960: pl. 30) 1', a late Akkadian version of *Instructions of Šuruppak* (Lambert 1960: 95, Alster 2005: 57).

9. An additional Old Babylonian Sumerian kinglist has also been reported in preliminary fashion from the Schøyen collection.

4'-5') Lines 4' and 5' appear to have been jammed into the manuscript, perhaps due to the initial omission of line 5' by the scribe. Line 4' appears to have been erased and rewritten in order to provide sufficient space for the omitted line.

6') I understand the BI sign that occurs between the HUL and GIG signs as an adverbial suffix. It does not usually occur in conjunction with these two lexemes, which combine to form a compound verb with the meaning "to hate" in other contexts. For this expression, see the detailed discussion of Jaques 2006: 147f.

7') The reading of the first preserved sign is uncertain. It echoes the *Gestalt* of the E sign, but it lacks the lower final vertical of the sign as attested elsewhere on the fragment, although a reduced form of the E sign may occur with the broken initial sign in line 3'. The reduplicated verbal root is followed by e-NE. When it is used to express a bound morpheme after a lexeme with a consonantal *Auslaut*, this graphemic combination usually pertains only to plural nouns. Given the position in the line, it may be understood to reflect a defective non-finite form with the futurizing morpheme /ed/. It is possible also that it reflects a defective 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural *marû*/imperfective finite verb.

A possible restoration for this line would be the expression *inim---sig<sub>10</sub>*. This expression is discussed by Civil 1985: 75, who offers the basic definition of "exprimer en paroles la pensée ou les désires" when it occurs with the noun *šag<sub>4</sub>*. It is possible that the compound verb *šag<sub>4</sub>---kuš<sub>2</sub>*, which means approximately "to take counsel with" as a transitive verb in conjunction with the comitative infix *da*, occurred here. For this verb, see Karahashi 2000: 147, Jaques 2006: 561-563.

9') The expression *a-na-me-a-bi*, an indicator of totality, appears to occur here, albeit with a spurious enclitic copula occurring in the middle of the expression. This divergent spelling is also observed, for example, in the Meturan exemplar H 172 of the *Death of Gilgameš*, line 52 (Cavigneaux and al-Rawi 2000: 27).

10') The restoration of another occurrence of the lexeme *eš-bar*, "decision," is not assured, as the occurrence of this lexeme with *gin*, "to be/make true," is not well known. If *eš-bar* occurs here, it may be a phonetic error for the well-attested expression *eš-bar-kin<sub>2</sub>* (*dug<sub>4</sub>*), "to make a decision." For this expression and its auxiliary construction, see Attinger 1993: 507-509.

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