

# Šāt-kukuti The Daughter of King Šulgi in a New Text from the Iraqi Museum

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## **Abstract:**

The topic of this study deals with the publication of a confiscated cuneiform text kept in the Iraqi Museum from Ur III period. It dates back to the reign of King Šulgi, and it is very likely that it is from the texts of the city of Drehem based on a collection of texts that were recently studied between 2022-2023 including our text where the number of those studied is about (200) cuneiform tablets out of more than (700) cuneiform tablets that entered the Iraqi Museum between (2020-2021) Most of them date back to King Šulgi. Our cuneiform text (IM.239595) is the text of a cuneiform inscription of a royal gift seal (IN-NA-BA) dedicated by King Šulgi (2094-2047 BCE) to his daughter Šāt-Kukuti who is mentioned for the first time of her explicit lineage; that is to her father King Šulgi.

**Keywords:** Šāt-Kukuti, daughter, Šulgi, gift seal, royal, Iraqi Museum.

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## شات-كوكوتي ابنة الملك شولكي في نص جديد من المتحف العراقي

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### الملخص:

يتناول البحث نشر نص مسماري مصادر من عصر أور الثالثة محفوظ في المتحف العراقي، وهو يعود الى عهد الملك شولكي ونرجح كثيراً عائديته الى نصوص مدينة دريهم استناداً الى مجموعة نصوص درست حديثاً بين ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢٣ ونصنا من ضمنها حيث يبلغ عدد النصوص المدروسة ما يقارب من (٢٠٠) نص مسماري من أصل ما يزيد على (٧٠٠) لوح مسماري مصادر دخلت المتحف العراقي بين عامي (٢٠٢٠-٢٠٢١)، معظمها يعود تاريخه للملك شولكي، و نصنا المسماري المرقم (م.ع-٢٣٩٥٩٥) يعد نص كتابة مسمارية لختم هدية ملكي (IN-NA-BA) مهدي من الملك شولكي (٢٠٩٤-٢٠٤٧ ق.م) إلى ابنته الاميرة (شات-كوكوتي) التي تذكر لأول مرة بنسبها الصريح إلى أبيها الملك شولكي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** شات-كوكوتي، ابنه، شولكي، ختم هدية، ملكي، المتحف العراقي.

### Introduction:

The new cuneiform texts from Ur III period (2112-2004 BCE) are still providing us with more new important information and evidence.

No matter how similar the sources of these documents and their varied formats whether those discovered in scientific excavations or confiscated or belong to private collections previously published, or those recently studied, still all of them have a high degree of importance and they serve to provide us with more developments, analyses and new ideas. Which in turn shed light on the mysteries or complex issues and perhaps ambiguous problems that were difficult to solve or understand. The study of some cuneiform documents is useful in filling the lack of

information about the name of any person who's characteristic or lineage was not mentioned in previous texts. If we review previous studies and analyze them with modern insights by conducting more comparisons between previously published cuneiform texts with newly discovered texts, we will have enough information that enable us to decide on many outstanding issues or problems.

### **1- Dating Confiscated Tablets Kept in the Iraqi Museum:**

The cuneiform text which is the subject of this article, is mainly based on a confiscated cuneiform text which is now in the holdings of the Iraqi Museum according to the SBAH decision No.119 in 2020-2021. We have chosen it from among a confiscated collection of more than (700) cuneiform tablets; all of which begin with the Iraqi Museum number (239...) and the text we will deal with (IM.239595).

Through examining of some of master's students at the University of Mosul and the University of Al-Qadisiyah about cuneiform texts from this collection in master's theses completed between 2022- 2023<sup>1</sup>, as well as others that have not yet been finished (under study) which are about (200) cuneiform tables out of the total number of this collection and based on the names contained in them of Year Names. We can confirm that all these documents date back to Ur III period, and that the largest part of them belong to King Šulgi for the years: (34,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48) followed by King Amar-Suen in second place. While texts dating back to the reign of Kings Šu-Suen and Ibi-Suen took the lowest percentage in the collection of recent confiscated tablets of the Iraqi Museum.

The largest proportion of these tablets is likely to come from the city of Puzriš-Dagān (Drehem) based on the month names<sup>2</sup> contained therein as well as the personal names known to many of the corresponding texts

previously published in the collections of the Iraqi Museum<sup>3</sup> as well as from the Istanbul Museum<sup>4</sup>, the British Museum<sup>5</sup> and other international museums.

The name of the city of Puzriš-Dagān also appears frequently in this collection of texts as well as mentioning nearby cities and geographical sites such as:

- E<sub>2</sub>-sağ-dana<sup>ki</sup>
- Nibru<sup>ki</sup>
- Tummal<sup>ki</sup>
- Iri-sağrig<sup>ki</sup>

Additionally, the seal impressions for which the texts of the city of Drehem are famous with more than other proposed cities. They certainly give us evidence and motivation to present this perception of the belonging of cuneiform texts, although they are confiscated texts that their findspot is unknown as we have already mentioned.

## **2- Cuneiform Inscriptions on the Royal Gift Seal:**

The royal gift seal (IN-NA-BA) is one of the important and irrefutable documents that were common in Ur III period<sup>6</sup> especially during the reign of King Šulgi who had an important and effective role in establishing a unified administrative system based on the distribution of responsibilities in a centralized manner and the determination of powers as well as on personal relations and the degree of kinship of the king and his family (linage) which led Mayr and Owen to call it the bureaucratic system<sup>7</sup>.

The use of the seal and its impression on documents is only a method used in Ur III period to legitimize especially the authority of the palace (the king). So, we find that this period showed us thousands of seal

impressions on the tablets, the main purpose of which was to document and certify the clay tablets. It is worth to mention that the seal impressions on tablets are an unintentional spontaneous preservation of the original seals<sup>8</sup> and most of them have not been found but we now infer them through their impressions on tablets So we have thousands of seal impressions on the tablets discovered from Ur III period preserved in museums around the world in exchange for modest numbers that are not fit with the number of the discovered original seals.

The royal gift seal from Ur III period is characterized by its unique design, quality, rare and precious stones on which it was implemented on.

The name of this type of seal (IN-NA-BA), as proposed by Mayr, is the " royal gift seal" which was given in order to enable the recipient of the royal gift to carry out his official duties<sup>9</sup>.

We can distinguish two types of utilitarian position seals:

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1- IR <sub>3</sub> -ZU | Presentation seals |
| 2- IN-NA-BA            | Royal gift seals   |

With regard to the first type, which is known as presentation seals, are for people with high positions who work as employees of the king and his family and sometimes his retinue. While the second type was known as gift seals which were granted in particular to people of high level and honor and are directly related to the king and often the recipients of the gift seals are members of the royal family (wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, ...) in order to give the gift seal which as we mentioned above is the type of seals distinctive in form, high quality of design and material, as well as the moral strength (honorary) enjoyed by the owner of this type of seals<sup>10</sup>.

Here, we must refer to the memorial or votive inscriptions which are also important sources that shed light on the status of Sumerian women in

Ur III period and show us the extent of love and trust shown by the king to his family members<sup>11</sup>.

In order to tackle the subject of our research from a wider door, we found it necessary to deal with the memorial inscriptions on the seals especially the votive ones of the royal family. A good collection of this type of inscriptions date back to Ur III period specifically from the reign of King Šulgi was collected by Douglas Frayne in the series (RIME,3/2). He organized an important list of the royal family in Ur<sup>12</sup>, and that the list presented was updated from a study previously presented by Schneider<sup>13</sup>. It was compared with specific texts from Drehem presented by Sigrist<sup>14</sup> and Frayne commented on some names such as (son or daughter of the king) and the need to translate them into "prince and princess"<sup>15</sup> as well as a table of a preliminary or interim outcome of the sons of the royal family of King Šulgi which was presented by Michalowski when studying the end of Šulgi 's reign and on the ensuing succession<sup>16</sup>.

There is some evidence of the development that has occurred in the nature of the use of the gift seal (IN-NA-BA). There has been a change in the methods of using the royal gift seals over time and they have become seals of honorary value reserved for their owners. Most of them are selected from the members of the royal family, and this type of seals was commonly used during the reign of King Šulgi because of his trust in them based on the kinship that binds them to him. The text that we will tackle in this article belongs to the same king and goes in the same direction<sup>17</sup>.

It is also possible to give an older date for the gift seals that adopted the formula (DUMU-NI) We mean here the reign of King Šulgi, especially since he had a wide list of sons, daughters and consorts, and on the contrary in a later time, especially during the reign of King Ibi-Suen

(2028-2002) BCE, where some believe that this honorary value of the recipients of this type of seals has declined<sup>18</sup>.

### 3- Šāt-Kukuti in Cuneiform Texts:

The name (ša-at-ku-ku-ti) is one of the rare feminine names motioned in cuneiform texts. This name seems at first sight to be one of the akkadian names since the first part of it (Šāt) is a name added from the infinitive (šattu) meaning "year"<sup>19</sup> and there are many public personal names and the names of the daughters of King Šulgi himself begin with (Šāt) such as:

-Šāt-Šulgi

-Šāt-<sup>d</sup>EN-ZU

-Šāt-Mami<sup>20</sup>

-Šāt-Eštar

The second part of the name (Kukuti) is also likely to refer to the Akkadian infinitive (kukūtu) which means the (reed basket) or the enumeration of weapons to mean "the year of the reed basket " or " the year of the enumeration of weapons"<sup>21</sup>. Although the analysis of this name has not been dealt with previously, Volk read it as: ša-at-ba-ba-ti in line 12 of the first column of the text of (Phillips 13)<sup>22</sup> which he published in 2004 in cdli (P126687). We believe that it is an incorrect reading because the text of (Phillips 13) is broken and unclear. We find in the review presented by Paoletti in (PDTNS 023343) she has read the name Šāt-Kukuti in line 14<sup>23</sup> which is the most correct and accurate transliteration because the name has been mentioned in the text of the Iraqi Museum (the text under study) clearly twice and that the sign (ku) is very clear in our text and does not accept doubt or interpretation.

#### 4. Šāt-Kukuti in Phillips 13:

Despite the rarity of this personal name and not widely mentioned in cuneiform sources with the exception of one text. The text of (Phillips 13)<sup>24</sup> as far as we know and according to what is available of cuneiform texts so far at least even the researchers who dealt with it pointed out some limitation and general description that was punctuated by some ambiguity.

But the unique and only reference, as far as we know, is what was reported by Paoletti who deal with in her doctoral dissertation and has supported our research this with some important information about the personality of this princess. She mentioned that the name Šāt-Kukuti based on her vision of the text (Phillips 13) is shrouded in a lot of ambiguity because the text has an uncertain date although Paola preferred the year (Š26) and everything that was put forward about the characters and the date of the text and its belonging and even the name of the month is speculative and the text of (Phillips 13) does not give us a clear conception about the identification or lineage of Šāt-kukuti.

The importance of the referring to the text (Phillips 13) is for its connection to the archives of Puzriš-Dagān which is likely to be dated between years (Š25-27) and that the year (Š26?) of his reign is the most likely date of the text and in the twelfth month according to the calendar of the city of Puzriš-Dagān<sup>25</sup>. We can focus on what Paoletti mentioned about an occasion or celebration of an important marriage that was prepared for a royal couple which may have taken place in the city of Drehem. As for the details of supplies and equipment for travel and gifts provided to the couple which are some ritual tools, utensils, flutes, horns, throne, footrest, table, bed with drinking holders and various clothes. Most importantly (13) different persons have been named as recipients of

gifts including the couple and the important thing that I would like to emphasize is that the concerned wife is Šāt-kukuti and here we must emphasize what Paoletti reported in (BPOA.10, p.323 n.522) where she says: **"As far as I know, the personal names: Šāt-kukuti and Bēlī-nabišti are not otherwise attested in administrative documents from Ur III period"**<sup>26</sup>. Paoletti believes that the proposed date by comparing some of the personal names that were documented in the text of (Phillips 13) is between years (Š32-41) according to the Drehem documents and based on the evidence presented in the margins (BPOA.10, P.323 n.522; n.524)<sup>27</sup> which is likely if we compare it with the 200 confiscated texts that have been published up to now from the texts of the Iraqi Museum where it is definitely dated between years (Š36-48). We found it is useful here to mention the quality of the gifts offered to a character such as Šāt-Kukuti being a royal wife and has a lofty position in this ceremony where she was presented with rings of bright yellow gold, silver rings and twenty robes, and a bottle of oil of a special type perhaps a type of luxurious essential oil<sup>28</sup>.

##### 5- Šāt-Kukuti in IM.239595:

The text in our hands, as we mentioned, was selected from among about (700) confiscated tablets, which entered the Iraqi Museum between 2020-2021:

IM.	Measurements	Date	Object	Provenience
239595	5.5×4.3×1.9 cm.	Š	Tablet	Puzriš-Dagān

The importance of this text comes from the fact that it dates the character Šāt-Kukuti who was given a gift seal by the King Šulgi directly and her name was mentioned in this text twice in the obverse of the tablet in the fifth line of it and in the reverse in the ninth line as well where it was mentioned in the two line colophon that the cuneiform inscription of the seal was given by the king belongs to Šāt-Kukuti who was described as the beloved daughter of King Šulgi and he gives us the strong evidence and decisive lineage of this princess who was mentioned ambiguously and unclearly in the text (Phillips 13). The text of the Iraqi Museum begins by mentioning the name of King Šulgi and his titles. In this particular part this text combined the second with the third and fourth types according to the classification provided by Myer and Owen of the royal gift seal<sup>29</sup>. Although the sign (mi<sub>2</sub>) does not appear after the sign (DUMU) in order to show us the gender of the name, i.e. (daughter) instead of (son), but this was usual in the Sumerian language as it often does not differentiate between the masculine and feminine names but rather depends on the formula of the personal name and the context of the text.

As we mentioned earlier those two feminine names from the royal family of two known daughters of the king; the first part of their names begins with the syllable (Šāt) and this gives us certainty and motivation to judge the name of the princess Šāt-Kukuti as a feminine name regardless to the way her lineage to King Šulgi is written in the text itself. Thus we can propose to translate the formula contained in the text of the Iraqi Museum:

dumu-<mi<sub>2</sub>> ki-ag<sub>2</sub>-ga<sub>2</sub>-ni-ir

that it is (to his beloved daughter) and that the line that followed it specified the type of text given is of the category (IN-NA-BA) i.e., according to the Sumerian formula that comes with the honorary seals of important persons who have a direct relationship with the king's institution. We mean the royal family.

### 6- Transliteration and translating the text:

Below is a reading of the text of the Iraqi Museum and its translation so that the image presented of King Šulgi 's daughter is clear:

#### (IM. 239595)

Obv.	1	d <sup>h</sup> šul-gi	Šulgi
	2	nita-kala-ga	mighty man
	3	lugal uri <sup>ki</sup> -ma	king of Ur
	4	lugal an-ub-da/limmu <sub>2</sub> -ba-ke <sub>4</sub>	king of the four quarters
	5	ša-at-ku-ku-ti/[x?]	Šāt-kukuti/(..?)
Rev.	6	dumu-<mi <sub>2</sub> > ki-ag <sub>2</sub> -ga <sub>2</sub> /ni-ir	to his beloved daughter
	7	in-na-ba	granted
		Space	
Colophon.	8	mu-sar kišib <sub>3</sub> -ni	inscription of his seal
	9	ša-at-ku-ku-ti	Šāt-kukuti

## 7- Conclusion:

Šāt-Kukuti is an unknown daughter (not mentioned) previously as it was not included in the tables of researchers who counted the sons of the royal family of Šulgi and that her name did not appear in the table prepared by Frayne in (RIME, 3/2, PP.167-8) as well as the same with Michalowski who provided a provisional tally of the royal family during the reign of Šulgi where they mentioned there (18) princes and (8) princesses of Šulgi. Here we can add Princess Šāt-Kukuti to be the ninth daughter of Šulgi based on the dates of the (200) confiscated texts in the Iraqi Museum including this text which were recently studied. All of them date back to the years (Š36-48) and all date back to the city of Drehem.

From what has been presented about the character of Šāt-Kukuti in published cuneiform sources especially the comments that were presented about the text of (Phillips 13) and the transliteration and analysis of the text under study. It is necessary to present the following ideas:

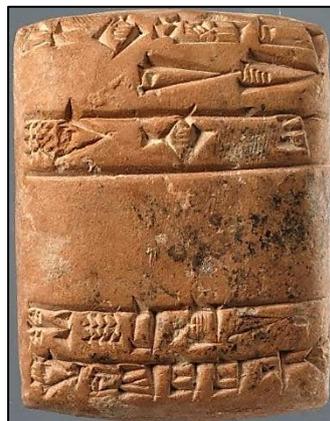
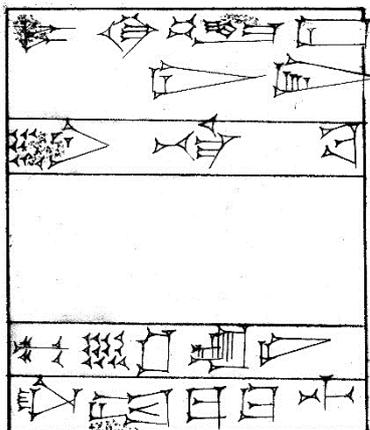
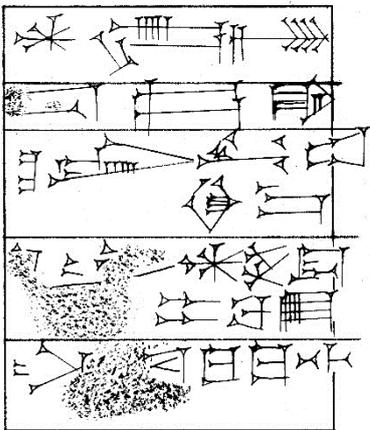
- 1- Šāt-Kukuti is the daughter of Šulgi mentioned for the first time by her explicit lineage in the text under study and can be added to the list of daughters of Šulgi.
- 2 - The text of the cuneiform inscription this time did not come to us from a seal impression on a tablet or cylinder seal, but a cuneiform inscription on a tablet with a colophon of the text contained the name of the princess.
- 3 - Although this new text from the Iraqi Museum is one of the confiscated texts but it is based on the texts studied in the same collection and also preserved in the Iraqi Museum which most of them belong to Puzriš-Dagān and date to the reign of King Šulgi. Thus this, text reveals the personality of the princess who was mentioned in the

text (Phillips 13) as one of the recipients of royal gifts at a marriage ceremony and that she herself is the daughter of Šulgi.

4 - Bēlī-Napišī is Šāt-Kukuti's husband who was mentioned at the royal couple ceremony in the text of (Phillips 13).

5 - From the text (Phillips 13), it can be guessed that the mother of Šāt-Kukuti is Šulgi-Simiti, the second wife of Šulgi (BPOA.10, P.323 n. 522) being the invitee(sponsor) of the marriage ceremony through combining the information of (Phillips 13) text with the information of our text, we can document or identify the personality of Šāt-Kukuti and her husband.

**(IM.239595)**



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