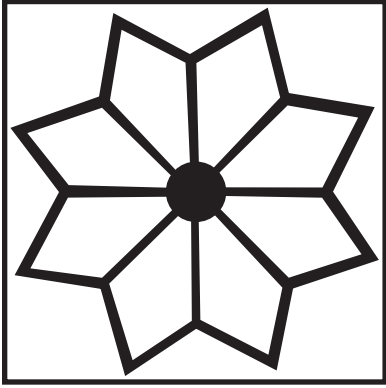


# ON THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR



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ON THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR  
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Edited by

Piotr Michalowski

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## ON THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR

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# ORTHOGRAPHY AND POLITICS: ADDA, “CARCASS” AND KUR<sub>9</sub>, “TO ENTER”

*Niek Veldhuis (University of California, Berkeley)*

The calendrical and cultic reforms that took place in the year Šu-Suen 3 coincided with a number of terminological and orthographic changes, in particular at Drehem. In this contribution, I will argue that the orthographic changes are diagnostic for changes in personnel, motivated by broader political circumstances. The signs/words to be discussed are adda “carcass” (Š1) and kur<sub>9</sub> “to enter” (Š2). I will argue that the change in orthography for adda may be attributed to one individual, while the distribution of the different orthographies for kur<sub>9</sub> (first discussed by Watson 1986: 79–85) points at the royal chancellery as the origin of these changes.

Several pieces of data suggest that Šu-Suen worked hard to erase the memory of his predecessor Amar-Suen. Amar-Suen is skipped in the list of recipients of royal offerings, and a temple named after him in Girsu returns to its old name. No hymns to Amar-Suen have been preserved and he is hardly mentioned in other literature (see Sallaberger 1999: 167). In Šu-Suen’s third year, the month “festival of Amar-Suen,” which had been part of the Umma calendar for several years, was replaced by its old name (two shrines). At the same time, a festival for Šu-Suen was introduced in the Drehem calendar (other local calendars did not include either month/festival at any time). Maeda (1989: 93–103) has argued that during Šu-Suen 3, several aspects of the taxation system were rearranged (see also Sallaberger 1999: 170). Due to the nature of our sources, much of the motivation and the mechanics of Šu-Suen’s actions remain hidden from view. The sudden changes in a few details of the orthographic standard at Drehem may indicate that, as part of this process, Šu-Suen fired a number of officials or scribes and replaced them with loyal servants educated at the royal chancellery.

It is a pleasure to dedicate this contribution to Marcel Sigrist. Research like this is only possible because of the availability of large databases of Ur III texts. Without Marcel’s publication work, and without his generosity in sharing his material, such databases would only be a pale reflection of what they are now.

The two databases that have been used are CDLI (<http://cdli.ucla.edu>) and BDTSN (<http://bdts.filol.csic.es/>), directed by Bob Englund and Manuel Molina respectively. Only those references have been used where either a photograph or a copy was available. The words kur<sub>9</sub> (to enter) and adda (carcass) are relatively frequent and only a selection of the references is quoted below. This study concentrates on the three main Ur III find spots Drehem, Girsu, and Umma. Other provenances, while occasionally referenced, do not provide enough material for a proper analysis. The data collection for section 1. (adda) was done by Terri Tanaka, UC Berkeley.

## 1. Adda (cadaver)

### 1.1. General: Orthographies of adda (cadaver)

The principal orthographies for the word adda (cadaver) are:

ad <sub>3</sub>	UDU×BAD
ad <sub>6</sub>	LU <sub>2</sub> ×BAD
ad <sub>7</sub>	LU <sub>2</sub> -šeššig
ad <sub>8</sub>	LU <sub>2</sub> -šeššig×BAD
ad <sub>x</sub>	GUD×BAD

The common writing in pre-Ur III texts is ad<sub>6</sub>(LU<sub>2</sub>×BAD) or ad<sub>8</sub>(LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig×BAD);<sup>1</sup> for references see <http://psd.museum.upenn.edu> under adda[cadaver]. Ur III texts use mostly ad<sub>7</sub>(LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig) and ad<sub>3</sub>(UDU×BAD). For the distribution of these signs see the discussion below. The variant ad<sub>8</sub>(LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig×BAD) is very rarely used in Ur III;<sup>2</sup> ad<sub>6</sub> is used occasionally in Drehem.

The writing GUD×BAD appears, as far as I know, only twice. In the lexical list ED Animals B 21,<sup>3</sup> it ends the initial section on bovines. The second attestation of GUD×BAD is in an Ur III text (ZA 90 265 2; probably from Umma) dated ŠS 8. This is a variant of UDU×BAD, apparently to emphasize that the carcass is a bovine's.

In Old Babylonian Sumerian literature ad<sub>6</sub>(LU<sub>2</sub>×BAD) is the most common writing. The interpretation of LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig-bi (in broken context) in Šulgi D 197 as ad<sub>7</sub>-bi in PSD A/3 31 is likely, not only because of the violent nature of the passage, but also because this is one of the Šulgi hymns that preserves Ur III orthographic features (Klein 1981: 69–70).

Although the spelling ad<sub>3</sub>(UDU×BAD) is found only in the last decades of the Ur III period, the reading is preserved in the later lexical tradition along with other spellings of the word (see PSD A/3 31).

### 1.2. Distribution in Ur III

In the Ur III period the regular writings for adda, “carcass” are

	-ŠS 3 11 diri	ŠS 4-ŠS 5	ŠS 8-
Drehem	ad <sub>6</sub> (LU <sub>2</sub> ×BAD) ad <sub>7</sub> (LU <sub>2</sub> -šeššig)	ad <sub>3</sub> (UDU×BAD)	
Umma	ad <sub>7</sub> (LU <sub>2</sub> -šeššig)		ad <sub>3</sub> (UDU×BAD)
Girsu	ad <sub>7</sub> (LU <sub>2</sub> -šeššig)		

Drehem texts dated before ŠS 4 use various spellings that involve the sign LU<sub>2</sub>. The variant LU<sub>2</sub>×BAD (ad<sub>6</sub>) is found from Šulgi 44 (*Princeton* 1 118) to ŠS 3 month 11 diri (*AUCT* 1 368). LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig (ad<sub>7</sub>), which is the regular spelling at other Ur III sites, is attested from Šulgi 32 (*Princeton* 1 76) to AS 6 (*TLB* 3 51).

1. For the syllabic use of this sign for adda see Gelb, et al. (1991: 150) with further literature.

2. *JCS* 10 (1956) 29 7:1 (unprovenanced); and *TCTI* 1 1036 (snake incantation; Girsu).

3. <http://cdl.museum.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/cdlpager?prod=ad hoc&input=Q000299&project=DCCLT>. This composition belongs to the Northern ED lexical tradition, and is known exclusively from Abu-Salabikh and Ebla; all sources for line 21 come from Ebla.

The introduction of the sign UDU×BAD in Drehem is related to the official lu<sub>2</sub>-kal-la, who received carcasses in the period ŠS04/00/00 (*MVN* 15 298)–ŠS09/11/00 (*SET* 87)<sup>4</sup> and who may be the same lu<sub>2</sub>-kal-la who received wool from ŠS04/08/29 (*AUCT* 3 192) to IS01/03/28 (*TAD* 63). Lu<sub>2</sub>-kal-la introduced the writing ad<sub>3</sub> (UDU×BAD), as appears from a comparison of *AUCT* 1 368 and *MVN* 15 298:

<i>AUCT</i> 1 368	<i>MVN</i> 15 298
<i>n</i> heads of cattle	<i>n</i> heads of cattle
ġiri <sub>3</sub> <sup>d</sup> šul-gi-diġir-kalam-ma	ġiri <sub>3</sub> <sup>d</sup> šul-gi-diġir-kalam-ma
ba-ug <sub>7</sub> ad <sub>6</sub> kuš-bi	ba-ug <sub>7</sub> ad <sub>3</sub> kuš-bi
nu-ur <sub>2</sub> - <sup>d</sup> suen	lu <sub>2</sub> -kal-la
šu ba-ti	šu ba-ti
ki lugal-me-lam <sub>2</sub> -ta	ki lugal-me-lam <sub>2</sub> -ta
ba-zi	ba-zi
ŠS03/11d/00	ŠS04/00/00

The basic formulary and the persons involved are the same, except for the recipient and the writing of the word adda. Yearly records that list the reception of dead animals by different people use UDU×BAD only in the entries related to lu<sub>2</sub>-kal-la (*PDT* 1 515; *BIN* 3 243; and *SET* 87). *AUCT* 1 368 is the last known tablet in which Nūr-Suen is the recipient of carcasses. He is known in this particular role from AS01/03/00 (*BIN* 3 520) to ŠS03/11d/00 (text quoted above), consistently writing ad<sub>6</sub> (LU<sub>2</sub>×BAD).

At Umma, the orthographic change occurs a little later. Before ŠS 8, Umma texts consistently use ad<sub>7</sub> (LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig). A good example is WorAM 2000.47,<sup>5</sup> a yearly account of the delivery of slaughtered cattle, dated AS 5 (discussed by Englund 2003). The latest examples are *UTAMI* 3 2126 (ŠS5/04/00) and Ashm 1911-487 (*AAICAB* 1/1 pl. 48; ŠS5/00/00). I found no instances for ŠS 6 and 7; texts dated ŠS 8 or later use ad<sub>3</sub> (UDU×BAD), the earliest examples being *SACT* 2 240 (ŠS8/08/00) and *SACT* 1 122 (ŠS8/10/00).

Girsu texts use ad<sub>7</sub> (LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig) throughout the Ur III period. The only exception that came to my attention is the snake incantation *TCTI* 1 1036, which uses the variant sign LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig×BAD (ad<sub>8</sub>) in the snake name muš-a<sub>8</sub>. The writing UDU×BAD (ad<sub>3</sub>) is not attested in the Girsu archives.

The orthographic change in Drehem is clearly linked to an individual, lu<sub>2</sub>-kal-la, who, when he started his job, introduced a minor novelty in the orthography. The timing of his appointment coincides with changes in calendar, cult, and taxation.

### 1.3. Apparent Exceptions

A quick survey of the Ur III databases turns up a number of exceptions to the distribution rules laid out above. Many of these are due to errors in the description of signs (modern confusion between ad<sub>3</sub>, ad<sub>6</sub>, ad<sub>7</sub> and ad<sub>8</sub>) and will not be discussed here. Two apparent exceptions warrant a brief discussion.

4. Other lu<sub>2</sub>-kal-la texts related to carcasses are *BIN* 3 243; *BIN* 3 456; *PDT* 1 515 (with collations in Picchioni 1975, 162). Further instances of UDU×BAD from Drehem are *AUCT* 2 195 (ŠS 04/06/00); *TRU* 14 (ŠS 07/02/00); and *NABU* 2002 76 (IS 01; Drehem?). Note that *BIN* 3 565 rev. 2 is to be read u<sub>3</sub>-tu-da ba-ug<sub>7</sub> [s]u-su (instead of [a]d<sub>3</sub> kuš). See Maeda (1989: 87) and compare *PDT* 1 435 (with collation Picchioni 1975: 160) and *RA* 9 53, SA 207.

5. <http://cdli.ucla.edu/P218067>

The tablet *Hirose* 340 (Umma) uses the sign UDUxBAD and has been assigned to Šulgi 25 in the publication. The year name, however, is ambiguous (mu si-mu-ru-um<sup>ki</sup> ba-[hul]) and may as well be IS 3. There are no independent (for instance prosopographical) data to support either choice.

*SACT* 1 123 is dated ŠS 9 and was attributed to Drehem by its editor. This is inconsistent with its use of the sign ad<sub>7</sub> (LU<sub>2</sub>-šeššig). A text recently published on *CDLI* (KM 89039a; <http://cdli.ucla.edu/P234833>) proves that *SACT* 1 123 is from Girsu, where the sign ad<sub>7</sub> was used all along.

<i>SACT</i> 1 123	KM 89039a
2 ad <sub>7</sub> udu ba-ug <sub>7</sub>	3582 ad <sub>7</sub> udu
ki ġiri <sub>3</sub> -<ni>-i <sub>3</sub> -sag <sub>9</sub> -ta	490 ad <sub>7</sub> sila <sub>4</sub>
kišib šu- <sup>d</sup> nin-šubur	ad <sub>7</sub> egir zu <sub>2</sub> -si-ka
iti še-kin-kud	ki niġ <sub>2</sub> -u <sub>2</sub> -rum-ta
mu e <sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup> šara <sub>2</sub> ba-du <sub>3</sub>	geme <sub>2</sub> uš-bar gu <sub>2</sub>
	id <sub>2</sub> niġin <sub>6</sub> <sup>ki</sup> -še <sub>3</sub> -du
	ba-ab-gu <sub>7</sub>
	kišib šu- <sup>d</sup> nin-subur
	mu e <sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup> šara <sub>2</sub> ba-du <sub>3</sub>
Two carcasses of dead sheep	3582 sheep carcasses,
From Ġirini-isag	490 lamb carcasses.
Seal of Šu-Ninšubur	After being fleeced, the carcasses
Month 12	were (taken) from Niġurum
ŠS 9	and eaten by the slave girl
	weavers at the bank of
	canal that goes to Niġin.
	Seal of Šu-Ninšubur
	ŠS 9

Since the same official Šu-Ninšubur is involved, and both tablets are from the same year, they are most probably from the same office. Therefore, it is possible that the yearly summary in KM 89039a includes the two dead sheep received in *SACT* 1 123.<sup>6</sup> The location of the weaver's workshop on the bank of the canal that goes to Niġin demonstrates beyond doubt that KM 89039a and *SACT* 1 123 belong to the Girsu archives.


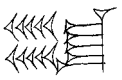
## 2. KUR<sub>9</sub>

During the Ur III period, there are two orthographies for kur<sub>9</sub> (to enter): *KWU* 147 (= LIL) and *KWU* 636 = ŠE.ŠU. The two signs are independent developments that both go back to *LAK* 208, which may be described as ŠE.ŠU/ŠU—where one ŠU sign is placed upside down on top of the other—as discussed by Krecher (1987: 17–21).

The distribution of the signs used for KUR<sub>9</sub> was first described by Watson (1986: 79–85), with corrections by Carnahan and Hillard (1993: 195; see also Sallaberger 1999: 170). Watson noted that in Drehem around ŠS 3 the form *KWU* 147 (LIL) is replaced by *KWU* 636 (ŠE.ŠU), which in post-Ur III

6. This same Šu-Ninšubur signs off on deliveries of carcasses in *MVN* 2 7 (ŠS 6) and Deimel, *OrSP* 5 49 Wengler 04; *ITT* 3 5417; *MVN* 22 157 (all ŠS 9).

orthography merges with TU. For other (non-Drehem) provenances Watson’s data were less consistent and he did not try to investigate the question in detail.<sup>7</sup>

kur <sub>9</sub> “to enter” <sup>77</sup>		
	KWU 147 = LIL	KWU 636 = ŠE.ŠU

A reexamination of the material allows a further refinement. In Girsu, KWU 147 (LIL) is the regular sign, used as late as Ibbi-Su’en 2.<sup>8</sup> I found only three Girsu attestations of KWU 636: *ITT* 2 4123 (ŠS 9); *NSGU* 76 (ŠS 9; written ŠU.ŠE); and *SNAT* 243 (IS 2). The situation seems to be similar in Umma. The sign KWU 636 becomes more regular around ŠS 8 (the same year in which ad<sub>3</sub> was introduced in Umma), but KWU 147 is still common in texts dated to Ibbi-Su’en.<sup>9</sup> One may conclude that in Umma and Girsu, KWU 147 was the normative writing, but that late in the reign of Šu-Suen, KWU 636 became an alternative.

At Drehem, before the time of Šu-Suen, the writings KWU 147 (LIL) and KWU 636 (ŠE.ŠU) were used side by side, with strong preference for the former (LIL). It seems that different scribes working at Drehem used slightly different conventions—presumably acquired at different scribal schools. There is one group of texts, most likely written by the same scribe, that consistently uses KWU 636. This is a file that records animal offerings that “enter with the *anzam* vessel” (an-za-am-da kur<sub>9</sub>-ra), or, in one case “enter with a gold offering” (kug-sig<sub>17</sub>-da kur<sub>9</sub>-ra), dated between Šulgi 44–46.<sup>10</sup> In addition, there are several more isolated instances of KWU 636 at Drehem, dated between Šulgi 37 and AS 8.<sup>11</sup> As Hillard pointed out (*ASJ* 15, 195), there is a monthly tablet that has both forms—KWU 147 in the entry for day 11 and KWU 636 in the one for day 18—apparently copying exactly what was found on the daily tablets (*PDT* 2 970; Š41 month 1). These earlier attestations of KWU 636, however, do not diminish the importance of Watson’s initial observation of a sudden change during ŠS 3. In all verifiable cases KUR<sub>9</sub> is written LIL in ŠS 1–2 (about thirty instances) but ŠE.ŠU in ŠS 4 and later. Unfortunately, out of eight attestations of KUR<sub>9</sub> dated ŠS 3 that are listed in BDTNS, only one is available in hand copy (SA 33 [pl. 1], ŠS 3/11d/26: ŠE.ŠU).

One may assume that, during the Ur III period, there were different scribal schools with slightly different orthographic traditions, and it is not unexpected or unusual to see these traditions spread and mix. We may take this point one step further, though, and speculate that the new scribes who were brought to Drehem during ŠS 3 were educated at the royal chancellery, and were introduced to Drehem as loyal servants of the king. While LIL was the dominant writing for kur<sub>9</sub> for most of the Ur III period in the main archives of Drehem, Umma, and Girsu, there are small but significant pockets of texts that used ŠE.ŠU. In the royal capitals of Ur<sup>12</sup> and Nippur,<sup>13</sup> kur<sub>9</sub> is commonly written ŠE.ŠU, rather than

7. The signs reproduced here are those used by *ePSD* (<http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/>).

8. *MVN* 5 225 and *SNAT* 178 = Sollberger (1976: 448; BM 14977).

9. For instance *BJRL* 64 99 8; *CST* 788 (with collations in *MVN* 12 129).

10. *MVN* 2 333?; *OIP* 115 378; *OIP* 115 381; *OIP* 115 383; *PDT* 2 1169; SA 21 (pl. 47); *Trouville* 7; *YOS* 18 12. The file contains several other tablets (published in transliteration only) for which the form of the sign could not be established (*CST* 59; *CST* 486; *Nisaba* 8 141; *UTI* 6, 3757). For the expressions see Šallaberger (1993: 148 with n. 702).

11. *BIN* 5 113 (Š 37); *OIP* 115 461 (Š 38); *PDT* 2 970 (Š 41); *TRU* 277 (Š 46); *MVN* 13 672 (Š 47); *PDT* 2 1093 (AS 5); Durand, *DoCu EPHE* 206 (AS 7); *PDT* 2 1264 (AS 8); and *OIP* 121 598 (AS). It is likely that more such examples may be found.

12. The writing LIL is found in *UET* 3 286 and 1410 (both undated) and in *UET* 3 291 (unknown YN); other texts use ŠE.ŠU.

13. LIL is found in BE 3/1 64 (Š 37); BE 3/1 67 (undated); *NATN* 569 (undated); and *MVN* 3 248 (ŠS 2; Nippur?); the writing ŠE.ŠU is currently found in 15 texts dating from SH 36 (BE 3/1 14; year name) to IS 4 (*TMH* NF 1–2 69).

LIL. Royal inscriptions (Amar-Suen 16 and 17; *UET* 8 8 and *RA* 23 32) use ŠE.ŠU and so does the year name promulgation tablet for Šulgi 3 found at Nippur (*Iraq* 22 plate 20, 6N-T382).

A further piece of evidence is found in the peculiar variation—already pointed out by Watson—in the writing of kur<sub>9</sub> in the year name Šulgi 36: mu <sup>d</sup>nanna kar-zi-da<sup>ki</sup> e<sub>2</sub>-a-na ba-an-kur<sub>9</sub>. This variation is apparently caused by the difference in orthographic tradition between the royal chancellery, which issued the year names, and the local scribes who used those same year names in their documents. The year-name promulgation tablets would naturally follow the royal chancellery style and write ŠE.ŠU. While most scribes adapted the year name to their own standards (writing LIL), a few copied the orthography of the royal scribes and a few got utterly confused. I found nine exemplars that use the sign ŠE.ŠU;<sup>14</sup> in one case the tablet has ŠE.ŠU; while the envelope has LIL (*NYPL* 277, as already noted by Watson). Another exemplar has ba-LIL ŠU.ŠE (*MVN* 18 116; Drehem)—apparently hesitating about the correct writing. The ŠE.ŠU writing in the year name Šulgi 36 is attested in Drehem, Umma, and Nippur and does not seem to follow any detectable pattern.

#### 4. Conclusions

It is likely that ŠE.ŠU vs. LIL and a<sub>d3</sub> vs. a<sub>d7</sub> are not more than individual scribal habits that may go back to different educational traditions. As such, these changes are not indicative of orthographic reforms, but rather reflect accidental changes tied to personal lives. These personal lives, however, were touched by politics. The distribution of ŠE.ŠU in particular indicates that this writing was the standard orthography at the royal court, and was used in year name promulgations and royal inscriptions. The sudden replacement of LIL by ŠE.ŠU at Drehem may have been caused by an influx of scribes educated at the court.

The reforms in the calendar and the tax system that Šu-Suen undertook during his third regnal year are an expression of the power of the central authority to impose fiscal, ritual, and chronological order. It is not unlikely that it went along with numerous other changes and measures not so easily visible in our record. Šu-Suen may have enforced his new measures by the time-honored strategy of replacing scribes and officials with people he trusted.

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