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NAM₂:HUB₂ — Sumerian Official in the Archaic Period

The oldest Sumerian lexical list of professions and titles is preserved on a clay tablet from the ancient city of Uruk. This tablet was found together with a large group of other documents behind the north-eastern corner of the so-called "Limestone Temple", in the debris dated to the Uruk-IV period (approximately 3250–3100 B.C.). The tablet, published by A. Falkenstein in *Archaische Texte aus Uruk* (Berlin, 1936, phot. No. 340), originally consisting of about 100 entries, now is partly damaged. The first entry is not preserved, the next five agree with those from later profession lists with the famous Standard Professions List from Shurupak at the head¹. The following entries of the Uruk list are only partly similar to those from the Early Dynastic lists. In the second case of the Uruk list we can see the sign group: HUB₂:NAM₂². We do not know such a title from later economic and literary Sumerian texts, it repeats only in the above mentioned lists. Who therefore was named NAM₂:HUB₂ in the archaic period? The answer can be only given by a detailed study of respective texts.

Among economic documents from the archaic periods the above mentioned title occurs relatively often. In the published collections of the archaic tablets from Uruk

¹ S. A. Deimel, *Die Inschriften von Fara II*, Leipzig 1923, tablets Nos. 33, 75 and 76; *Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon* (MSL) XII, 1969, Ch. I; s. also S. Langdon, *Oxford Edition of Cuneiform Texts*, vol. VII, 1928 — *Pictographic Inscriptions from Jemdet Nasr* (PI), tablet No. 193.

² In majority of economic texts and lexical lists from the Jemdet Nasr and Fara periods the sequence of signs is: NAM₂:HUB₂, and this one can be recognized as a standard, a correct mode of writing. I give the original sequence by the transcriptions quoted along in this article.

and Jemdet Nasr³ the title occurs in thirteen texts (eleven from Uruk, one from Jemdet Nasr and one of uncertain provenience)⁴.

The tablets from Uruk according to their findspots and their paleography relate to various periods: Uruk IV, III and II, and represent various formats. We find among them a few oldest tablets with continuous inscriptions on one side only, as well as large accounts on the tablets divided into several columns and cases, with grand totals and subscripts. Three tablets come from the same common findspot place as the tablet ATU No. 340, five tablets have been found not far from them, in the region of the so-called Red Temple, the three remaining come from other places. Noteworthy is the fact that all these tablets have not been found "in situ", but in irrelevant debris, so we cannot designate exactly their provenience. Taking, however, into consideration that all the tablets, except one, have been found in batches, we can suppose that they belonged to some archives, presumably those of the temple administration.

The oldest three small oval tablets from Uruk IV record the object LAL, with all probability the wispy skirt worn by the Sumerian dignitaries⁵. On the tablet ATU No 177 the inscription reads as follows: 1) 1 LAL NAM₂:HUB₂ 2) 1 LAL e n -SI₄. No 424⁶. In both cases the ideogram L A L repeats beside the number "1"; the sign group "e n -SI₄: No. 424" designates a person (e n = lord; en-priest; often the first element of various personal names), analogically with the title NAM₂:HUB₂ in the first case. Thus the scribe recorded with all probability: "one (skirt) L A L (for/from) the NAM₂:HUB₂ (and) one (skirt) LAL (for/from) the e n -SI₄. No 424."

On the tablet ATU No. 133 the short inscription is the same as that in the first

³ The tablets examined for the present analysis are published in ATU (A. F a l k e n s t e i n, *Archaische Texte aus Uruk*, Berlin 1936), and in various volumes of UVB (*Vorläufiger Bericht über die in Uruk unternommenen Ausgrabungen*), moreover in "Baghdader Mitteilungen", Bd 2, and in "Orientalistische Literaturzeitung", XL/7, 1937. The Jemdet Nasr tablets are published in PI and ATU, moreover some tablets probably from Jemdet Nasr or its countryside — in RA ("Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale") T. XXIV, 1927, XXVI, 1929 and XXXIII, 1935. From the collection of unpublished Uruk tablets in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin I could utilize for this work three tablets, due to the kindness of the Director Dr. Liane J a c o b - R o s t.

⁴ Tablets: ATU Nos. 133, 152, 177, 351, 457, 585, 606, 609; VAT Nos. 16 761, 17 599 and 17 777; PI tabl. No. 9; AO 8850 (in RA XXIV, vol. 1, 1927, p. 33).

⁵ S. A. D e i m e l, *Šumerisches Lexicon*, sign No. 481, 52. The ideogram L A L in the archaic Uruk texts appears often as a counted object beside others such as: G A D (= 'flax, linen garment'), S U M U N (= 'old thing, among others: used garment'; cf. t u g₂ - s u m u n), and ideograms of some indefinite garments or textiles (for example signs No. 755 and 759 in the ATU sign list). The L A L is sometimes summed up with the above mentioned objects.

⁶ The unidentified signs will be designed in this article with the aid of the numbers given in the ATU sign list.

case of the preceding tablet: 1 LAL HUB₂:NAM₂ = "one (skirt) LAL (for/from) the HUB₂:NAM₂."

On the tablet ATU No. 152 we read: 4 LAL HUB₂:NAM₂ UNUG SUHUR, what can be translated: "four (skirts) LAL (for/from) the HUB₂:NAM₂ Uruk (?) SUHUR." The last sign used in later texts as ideogram for some kind of fish or a bunch of leaves or hair provides some additional information difficult to interpret for the time being, but without greater importance for the problem examined in this article (the arrangement of signs does not suggest that SUHUR represents the counted object⁷, moreover this ideogram in the archaic period could still have other meanings⁸). On a small fragment of the tablet ATU No. 457 we can find the inscription: HUB₂:NAM₂ UNUG SUHUR, thus the similar one to that from the tablet ATU No. 152.

Another group of texts show a more complex type of accounts⁹. From Uruk IV period comes the tablet ATU No. 351 belonging to the same tablet group as the lexical list ATU No. 340. The object of this account cannot be established, because of the damage of several signs and especially of the one written directly under the total on the reverse, where the sign indicating this object could be expected. In particular cases of the obverse we can find, beside the numbers, ideograms indicating some persons, similar to those from the list ATU No. 340:

- col. I 1) 60 [NAM₂]. ŠITA.GIŠ (entry as in the later professions lists)
 2) 60 NAM₂:HUB₂ (entry as in the list ATU No. 340 and other lists)
 3) 40 NAM₂ (in all lists we find in this position NAM₂:NAM₂) (all following cases of col. I are damaged)
- col. II 1) 100 No. 932: GAL
 2) and 3) — damaged
 4) 180 (?) EN+NUN — []
- col. III 1) 10 No. 46 (entry as in the list ATU No. 340 rev. II 1))
 2) 10 GA: No. 555
 (the rest damaged)

In the column IV we find only three first cases well preserved, each with the number "10" and ideograms, in the col. V — four cases each with the number "30" and ideograms. Their meanings are not clear though several signs are legible (No. 501: MUŠ; MU (cook ?); UDU: No. 359; IB; DUG; No. 869: No. 558; No. 555: GA:TI (cf. col. III 2). On the reverse we find the total 1900+[], under it — one sign dam-

⁷ S. K. Szarzyńska, *Les plus anciennes inscriptions sur les tablettes d'Uruk* in: "Travaux du Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences", T. 8, "Études et Travaux" III, Varsovie 1970.

⁸ Cf. the lexical list from Shurupak, A. Deimel, *Fara II*, tabl. No. 75 IV 3: SANGA-SUHUR, IV 4: gal-SUHUR.

⁹ The Uruk tablets ATU No. S. 351, 585 and 609; VAT No. S. 16761 and 17599. They come from various periods: Uruk IV, III and II.

aged, on the left the ideogram TE (known from the professions list ATU No. 340, and with additional GAL — from other lists), on the right — the big sign TI.

The tablet ATU No. 585 from Uruk-IV period, found in the "Red Temple" region, appears to show the daily ration of bread and beer¹⁰. Presumably adequately to these two items the first three columns have been separated from the two next ones with a double line. In the sixth (last) column not divided into cases we can read the phrase: "1+UD kaš ninda". In particular cases we meet various, well known ideograms (among others those from professions lists), such as: GAL: TUR₃; TE; compositions with UNKEN¹¹; la gar; en; SAL-In ana; SAL-NIDABA; DUMU; SAG; etc. Col. II 2 (?) shows: "20 HUB₂:NAM₂" (in the first three columns the numbers are mostly "20", some "10", and once "60").

The other accounts of this group of documents are fragmentary and do not add new data to our analysis (NAM₂:HUB₂ occurs in separate cases concerning records of the same goods).

Another group of texts includes the title NAM₂:HUB₂ in subscripts.

The tablet ATU No. 606 (found in the debris of the level III/II in the region of the Red Temple), represents in all probability an offering list for the "evening Inanna", i.e. the goddess Inanna, lady of the evening star Venus¹². The subscript in two last cases of the obverse reads as follows: obv. II 5) en-ŠEM 6) NAM₂:HUB₂-NUN, on the reverse: Ia) 2/5 (?) No. 432- en-ŠEM b) 2+[] š e

II) ^aIn ana - sig (big signs ending the whole text).

En-ŠEM in obv. II 5) could be a personal name, but another interpretation seems to be possible, as well. The ideogram ŠEM indicates among others an aromatic ointment. En-ŠEM x SIG₇, read: en-š e m b i, indicates an en-priest anointed with the antimonic ointment by his cult functions¹³. On the other hand ŠEM-KUG means also: ointment. I admit that in the archaic period, when the very writing was limited to minimum, the ideogram ŠEM, representing the essential meaning element in above mentioned terms, was used as an abbreviated form for ŠEM x SIG₇ or ŠEM-KUG. The second part of the subscript is not so difficult for interpretation. The ideogram "nun" beside NAM₂:HUB₂ performs in all probability the attributive function designating the high rank of this official (nun = princely,

¹⁰ S. ATU p. 48, the subscript.: 1 UD kaš ninda = "(for) 1 day beer (and) bread."

¹¹ UNKEN (= assembly), occurs in many archaic Uruk texts as ideogram indicating a person or an administrative unit taking part in economic accounts. Cf. the well known terms from later Sumerian texts: gal-UNKEN = assembly chief; UNKEN-MEZ = elder, senior. Various sign compositions with the sign UNKEN appear also in the lexical professions list ATU No. 340 and later ones.

¹² S. ATU p. 44 n. 3 and p. 52 n. 4. In archaic texts the expression: e z e n -sig/UD-^aIn ana = "evening/morning festival of Inanna" occurs relatively often.

¹³ S. J. Renger, *Untersuchungen zum Priestertum in altbabylonischen Zeit*, "Zeitschrift der Assyriologie", NF 24/58/ 1967, p. 128.

dignified) or indicating his subordination to a deity, dignitary or administrative unit represented by the ideogram "n u n" (here: prince). After this analysis it seems to be admissible that on the obverse two persons authorized this document. On the other hand, one official could possess two different titles at the same time, but taking into consideration that on the reverse we find only e n - Š E M, the last interpretation appears to be less probable. On the reverse col. I a), before e n - Š E M and after the fraction, we see a third sign unidentified — No. 432. Its function remains unclear, we can suppose, however, that it has no direct connection with the group e n - Š E M, but brings some different information connected with the fraction number¹⁴.

On the tablet AO 8850 (provenience unknown) concerning the account of grain, in spite of its somewhat damaged surface, we can see in the case next to the last one the ideogram ŠU (of essential meaning: hand), and in the last case a distinct subscript: NAM₂:HUB₂-SANGA (s a n g a/š i t a₅ = a priest, accountant of the temple administration). The designation given in one separate case concerns always a single person only, in this case either an official performing simultaneously both functions (such cases are known in Sumerian administration), or the official NAM₂:HUB₂ subordinated to a priest/accountant SANGA.

The tablet VAT No. 17777 and another one from Jemdet Nasr (PI No. 9) include the sign group NAM₂:HUB₂ in large phrases ending the whole accounts. These phrases, very difficult to interpret, will not be examined in this article (they can include additional titles or personal names or some other details of transaction).

What conclusions about the title NAM₂:HUB₂ could be drawn from the review of the above quoted economic and lexical documents? All imply that the title designates an official of the central administration, in that time probably of the temple administration. This conclusion can be supported moreover by the presence of the ideogram NAM₂ in the term NAM₂:HUB₂. This NAM₂ repeats in some other administrative titles, such as: NAM₂—ENGAR, NAM₂+ŠE, and PA-NAM₂-RAD, recently established by M. W. Green from the Freie Universität Berlin¹⁵. In Sumerian the administrative and professional names often show a similar type of composition, in which one element is common (for example the compositions with GAL, PA, IGI).

Unfortunately, I cannot say much about the very official NAM₂:HUB₂, since the range of his activities is not richly documented. In the economic texts he appears as one of the receivers or delivers of various goods, sometimes probably as a receiver of a wispy skirt LAL, as well as the allowances of bread and beer. In general NAM₂:

¹⁴ Treating the group: e n - Š E M as independent expression is suggested not only by the fact of its repeating in a separate case on the obverse, but also by the appearing of the sign ATU 432 alone in separate cases beside the fractions (!) and the number "1" in other archaic texts from Uruk (ATU Nos. 599, 600, 602, 612).

¹⁵ M. W. Green, *Animal Husbandry at Uruk in the Archaic Period*, JNES 39, 1, 1980.

:HUB₂ figures near the beginning of the account lists, and in the second position in the lexical lists. This could imply his relatively high rank in the administrative staff. The lack of a more ample documentation makes better corroboration impossible. The official NAM₂:HUB₂ sometimes undersigned the accounts of grain and offerings for the goddess Inanna festivals. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that in subscripts the title NAM₂:HUB₂ is always followed by an additional personal designation: *e n - ŠEM*, *SANGA* or *n u n*. Thus the supposition is possible that in the case of subscribing the NAM₂:HUB₂ function was not sufficient, and the particular type of documents had to be authorized either by the official NAM₂:HUB₂ possessing an additional required title, or by two different persons: NAM₂:HUB₂ and a second responsible dignitary¹⁶. The present remark is a preliminary one, it is based on few documents and calls for verification when more archaic texts will be available.

The title NAM₂:HUB₂ went out of use probably already in the Early Dynastic period, only the lexical lists have preserved its memory through many centuries.

¹⁶ Note also the expression: NAM₂:HUB₂ - *š i t a* (*š i t a* = 'a priest') given on the obverse col. II 6 in the lexical list from Jemdet Nasr (tablet PI No. 193).