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GREATER MESOPOTAMIA STUDIES 1

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Topography and Toponymy in the Ancient Near East

Perspectives and Prospects

edited by

Jan TAVERNIER, Elynn GORRIS,
Kathleen ABRAHAM and Vanessa BOSCHLOOS

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FIELDS OF NIPPUR
IRRIGATION DISTRICTS AND LEXICOGRAPHY IN
OLD BABYLONIAN NIPPUR

Anne GODDEERIS
(Universiteit Gent)

1. *Sources for the topography of Old Babylonian Nippur and its environs*

As the religious capital of Babylonia during the 3rd and the 2nd millennium BCE, the topography of the city of Nippur, and its surroundings, is well documented through an unusually varied range of sources dating from this period.

As with other Old Babylonian sites, private archives from the early 2nd millennium BCE contain numerous deeds of ownership that describe real estate plots in detail, in order to avoid misunderstandings concerning the sold item and its price. References to topographical features are to be found in the administrative documents as well. In Nippur, the administrative archives originate from the temple authorities and contain references to temple domains, temple complexes, and shrines (see e.g. Van Lerberghe 1989 for an elaborate administrative list of offerings to various shrines in Nippur).

With regards to Nippur, this economic source material is supplemented with literary texts, eternalizing the glory of the religious centre and its divine inhabitants. This was done the Sumerian way, with hymns and lexical lists (Richter 2004, 41-50, 53-63 and 70). The Ekur is glorified in a hymn from the Old Babylonian period, in which the major edifices of the complex are extolled (Kramer 1957). Its various components are enumerated in a section of the Old Babylonian list *ká.gal* (MSL 13, 71-72), and in the list with the “Tempel und Götterschreine von Nippur” from the Kassite period, which also mentions the dimensions of each building (Bernhardt/Kramer 1975). The Nippur forerunner to Ura 20, Old Babylonian Ura 5 (cf. below), opens with a list of field names, many of which are known from legal and administrative documentation. These manifestations

of praise from Nippur became part of the Babylonian school curriculum and have therefore been preserved for us in numerous copies.

Furthermore, from the middle of the 2nd millennium onwards, scribes from Nippur occasionally draw maps of the city. The most famous one is now located in the Hilprecht-Sammlung in Jena (fig. 1), but another fragment, from the Neo-Babylonian period, exists (fig. 2).¹

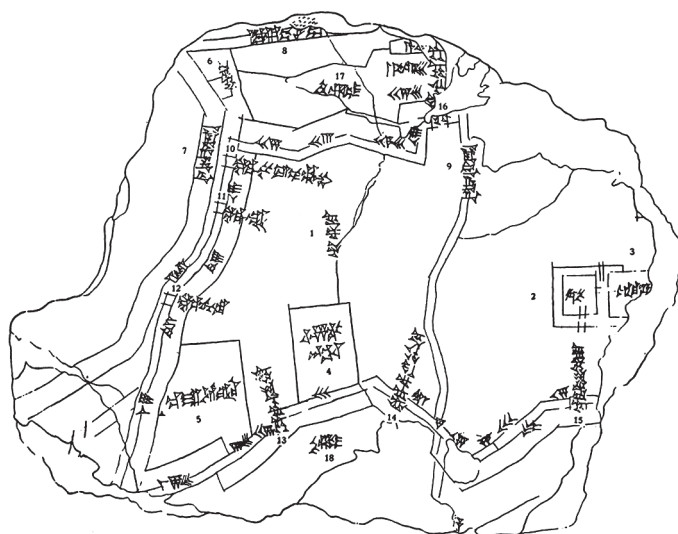


Fig. 1: Cuneiform map of the city of Nippur, from the Kassite period (Kramer 1956, 274, Copy Inez Bernhardt).

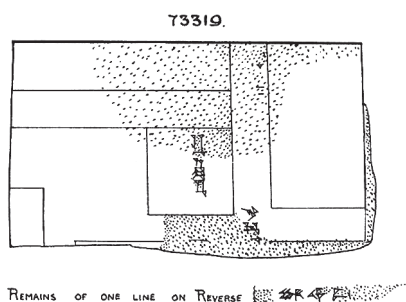


Fig. 2: Fragment of a map of Nippur (CT 22 49).

¹ Röllig 1980-1983.

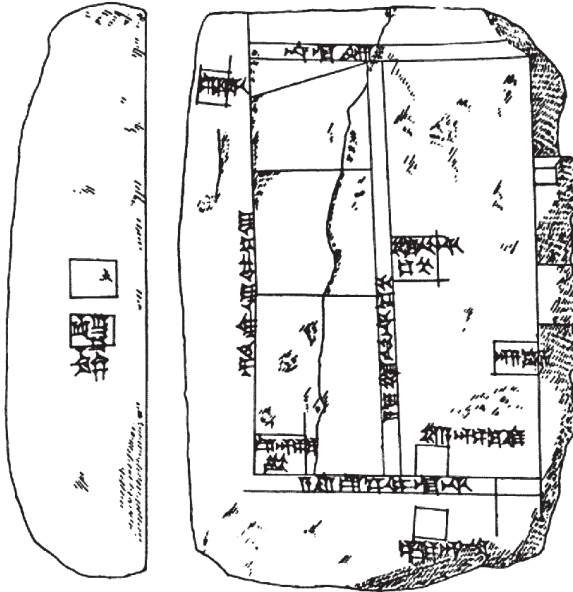


Fig. 3: Map from Nippur showing the canals of an irrigation district (Clay 1905, 224).

In addition to the city plans of Nippur, we know of several maps from the Kassite period, depicting agricultural lands in the surrounding vicinity. The map published by Clay (1905, fig. 3) seems rather schematic, whereas the other plan depicting agricultural lands (fig. 4) is more realistic and comparable to the modern examples given by Tanret (1998, 216-128) depicting a meandering canal, from which several branches depart – larger irrigation canals, *namkarū*, as well as smaller ones, *atappū*, constructed to divert water to different agricultural units. These agricultural units are referred to by the sumerogram a-šà, followed by a qualification. One can also recognize several hamlets (encircled on the original document).

Recently, a field plan dated to the late Old Babylonian period has been identified in the Schøyen collection (MS 3196²), but its location could not be identified. Because of its date (reign of Ammiditana), it does not originate from Nippur.

² <http://www.schoyencollection.com/24-smaller-collections/maps/map-irrigation-ms-3196>, consulted on June 19th 2015.

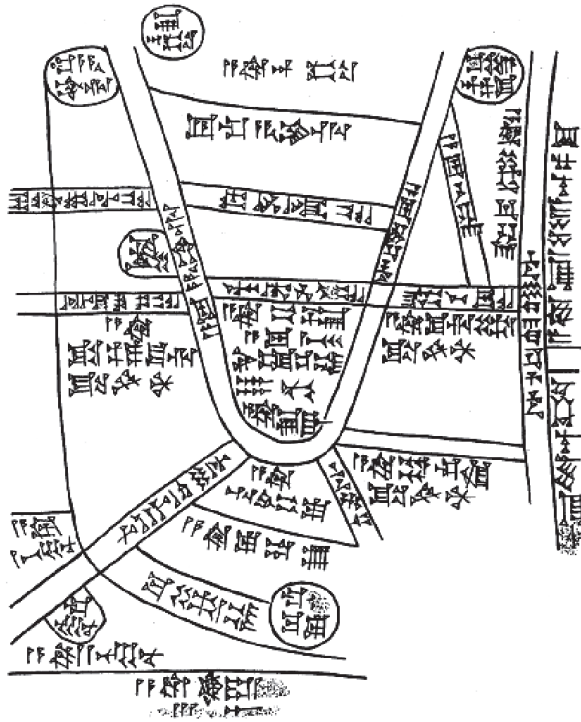


Fig. 4: CBS 13885. Map from Nippur showing fields and canals (Finkelstein 1962, 80).

The archaeological remnants of Nippur correspond surprisingly well with the Kassite city plan (Gibson – Hansen – Zettler 1998-2001). The city walls, the canal cutting the city in two, the ancient course of the Euphrates, and the Ekur – the temple of Enlil, can all be recognized (Kramer 1956, 271-275). However, apart from the assertion that the scribes from Nippur had an excellent sense of cartography, these maps and the remains of the city and its environs do not offer any new topographical information.

Nearly all of the topographical texts enumerated above have been brought to light by the Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, which investigated the site at the end of the nineteenth century, but kept no records relating to the archaeological context of the finds. The excavations of the Oriental Institute of Chicago that took place after WW II, are documented more thoroughly, and Stone was able to attribute some of the private houses excavated to archives owned by families and individuals (Stone 1981 and 1986).

In spite of this wealth of source material, it has become clear that, with regards to Nippur, it is impossible to locate the agricultural zones and the fields transferred in the title deeds and to draw (parts of) a map, precisely as was done for some fields in the Sippar region (Tanret 1998).

First of all, various records often relate to one single property, forming a so-called chain of transmission. On the one hand these are extremely interesting because they enable us to follow the ownership of a piece of real estate over several generations but on the other hand the ultimate result is a reduction in number of identifiable fields and houses.

Another factor is that the title deeds from Sippar require at least two, and preferably four, descriptions of adjacent topographical features (watercourses or owners of neighbouring plots) in the description of a piece of real estate, whereas the Nippur deeds generally give only one neighbour and the irrigation district in which the field is located. Along the same lines, the watercourses and canals, which were a key factor in enabling Tanret (1998) to locate the irrigation districts, are mentioned only rarely. In addition, when neighbouring plots can be identified in the Nippur title deeds, we are often dealing with the possessions of siblings who acquired these plots after the division of the paternal estate among the heirs.

This latter aspect provides us with a unique view into the fluctuations of family estates in Nippur, but does not help draw a map of Nippur and its environs much beyond the famous city map and those areas that have been thoroughly excavated.

2. *The ‘veracity’ of Old Babylonian Ura 5*

As already noted by Stol (1982, 355-356; 1998-2001, 540), many of the fields enumerated in the field section of the Nippur forerunner to Ura 20-22 (MSL 11, 93-109), currently labelled ‘Old Babylonian Nippur Ura 5’, also appear in economic documents from Old Babylonian Nippur.

Ura³ is the most emblematic of all Babylonian lexical lists, forming a part of the school curriculum during the 2nd and 1st millennium, and compiling, within a series of canonized tablets, all types of realia, from types of trees and wooden objects, to lists of wild and domestic animals, to geographical names and designations. In the course of time the size of the list grew from five tablets to twenty four, the content changed, and Akkadian translations were added to the entries, but the thematic groups are retained, as are large sections of the list.

³ Also known as ‘HAR-RA = *hubullu*’ or ‘ur₅-ra = *hubullu*’.

Old Babylonian Nippur Ura 5 consists of fields (l. 1-160), cities (l. 161-328), watercourses (l. 329-386), stars and astral constellations (l. 387-410), and measuring ropes ((l. 411-431), and concludes with a praise to Nisaba, the goddess of grain and writing.

Below, the list of fields is reproduced, with the fields that appear in the non-literary, economic sources printed in bold.

*Old Babylonian Ura 5: 1-160:*⁴

- 1 a-ša duḥ “cultivated field”
- 2 a-ša ^dnisaba “Nisaba field”
- 3 **a-ša túl-a mušen-na** “at the bird’s pond field”
- 4 a-ša é-ninnu “field of the Eninnu temple”
- 5 a-ša é amar-ra “field of the calf-house”
- 6 a-ša alim-ma “bison field”
- 7 **a-ša igi-nim-ma** “northern field”
- 8 **a-ša igi-nim-ma an-ta** “upper northern field”
- 9 **a-ša igi-nim-ma ki-ta** “lower northern field”
- 10 a-ša ḥa-at-num₂ “field of Ḥatnum”
- 11 **a-ša da-ab-ta** “field of Dabta”
- 12 a-ša da-ab-ta bal-a-re “field of Dabta at the opposite side (of the river)”
- 13 **a-ša ḥu-bu-zi** “field of Ḥubu-zi”
- 14 a-ša ^dnin-mug “field of Ninmug”
- 15 a-ša pa₅ ^dnidaba “Nisaba’s ditch field”
- 16 a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ “abundant harvest field”
- 17 a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ tur “small abundant harvest field”
- 18 a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ gu-la “large abundant harvest field”
- 19 **a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ ^den-líl-lá** “Enlil’s abundant harvest field”
- 20 a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ ^dSAL.TÚG-A “the god ...’s abundant harvest field”
- 21 **a-ša ^den-líl-ġar-ra**⁵ “field of Enlilgarra”
- 22 a-ša ^den-líl-igi-bar-ra “field of Enliligibarra”
- 23 a-ša tum₁₂^{mušen} ġar-ra “field where doves are placed”
- 24 **a-ša ŠIM**[?] “field of ...”
- 25 a-ša edin-lá “field of ...”
- 26 a-ša ^usaġ-kéš “field of the saġkeš-plant”

⁴ Reconstruction of the text based on “Old Babylonian Nippur Ura 05” in: *Digital Corpus of Cuneiform Lexical Texts*.

⁵ TMH 10 161, col. iii l. 10 gives a settlement “uru ^dEn-líl-le-ġar-ra”.

- 27 a-ša^u su-din “field of the sudin-plant”
 28 a-ša^u KI.KAL “field of the ... grass”
 29 a-ša^u rib-ba “field of the ribba-plant”
 30 a-ša sur “field of the Canal”
 31 **a-ša sur** ^dgilgameš “field of Gilgamesh’s canal”
 32 **a-ša zag-ga ba-an-ús** “field bordering on the side”
 33 a-ša^ē ha-lu-úb an-dul₅ “field of the shade-giving halub tree”
 34 **a-ša gán-da** “field of the Ganda cultic-place”
 35 a-ša gán-bùr “field ...”
 36 **a-ša apin nu-zu** “Unploughed field”
 37 **a-ša** ^{kuš}e-sír **dúb-ba** “Squeaky Sandals field”⁶
 38 a-ša i-na^{ga}₄(GUM) “field ...”
 39 a-ša ni^{gin}₅(LÁL.LAGAB) “field of the district”
 40 **a-ša gír-si** “field of Girsu”
 41 **a-ša** ^ēkiri₆-lú-ús-gi-na⁷ “Orchard of the Loyal Soldier field”
 42 a-ša ú-sal “meadow”
 43 a-ša sal-la “narrow field”
 44 a-ša KA-bur-ra “... field”
 45 a-ša KA-ús-sa “field of the KA’usa-messenger”
 46 **a-ša LAM-ka** “... field”
 47 a-ša a-gàr “meadow”
 48 a-ša a-gàr “meadow”
 49 a-ša a-gàr tur “small meadow”
 50 **a-ša a-gàr gu-la** “large meadow”
 51 a-ša a-gàr gibil “new meadow”
 52 a-ša a-gàr duru₅ “soggy meadow”
 53 **a-ša a-gàr** ^ēasal “poplar meadow”
 54 a-ša a-gàr ^dnin-tu “Nintu’s meadow”
 55 **a-ša a-gàr** ^dlú-làl “Lulal’s meadow”
 56 **a-ša a-gàr kù-ge** “pure meadow”
 57 a-ša a-gàr še-eštub “spring-barley meadow”
 58 a-ša a-gàr še-muš₅ “šemuš barley meadow”
 59 a-ša a-gàr ^dnin-urta “Ninurta’s meadow”

⁶ This irrigation district occurs in numerous Old Babylonian contracts. However, the determinative kuš is often omitted, resulting in the name: a-ša e-sir₂ dub₂-ba (ARN 34, l. 2; ARN 92, l. 2; ARN 95, l. 2; ARN 97, l. 2; OIMA 1, 21: l. 2; TMH 10, 3 l. 17, 4, l. 7, 44, l. 2, 54, l. 6 and 16, 68, l. 5’).

⁷ Is not attested as an actual irrigation district, but as the name of an orchard (district) for which water drawers receive barley (1(gur) 1(bariga) ^{lu}a-bal ^ēis^{is}kiri₆ lú-ús-gi-na, TMH 10 161: iv 1-2).

- 60 a-šà é-DUN “field of ...”
 61 a-šà uz-za “duck field”
 62 a-šà hi-li-a “luxuriant field”
 63 a-šà egir hi-li-a⁸ “field behind the luxuriant field”
 64 a-šà šúm lá “field of the garlic harvest”
 65 a-šà egir šúm lá “field behind the garlic-harvest field”
 66 a-šà id₂ ġir-ta bala-e⁹ “field at a canal that may be crossed on foot”
 67 a-šà mar-ra “field of the shovel”
 67a [a-šà] egir mar-ra “[field] behind the field of the shovel”
 68 a-šà šu-zi-an-na “true hand of An field”
 69 a-šà bàn-da “small field”
 70 a-šà egir bàn-da “field behind the small field”
 71 a-šà ^{ġes}gi maḥ “exalted reed thicket field”
 72 a-šà ús gíd-da “long-sided field”
 73 a-šà ka mun₄ “field at the salty-water inlet”
 74 a-šà maḥ “exalted field”
 75 a-šà ^dnin-unug “field of the Lady of Uruk”
 76 a-šà ki-tur “Kitur field”
 77 a-šà a-naġ ^dutu “field where libations for the Sun god take place”
 78 a-šà ambar-zag-lú-si “field of the ... marsh”
 79 a-šà ambar ^den-ki “field of Enki’s marsh”
 80 a-šà ma-suḥur “masuḥur field”
 81 a-šà ma-da mu-un-ge-en “Land of Mungen field”
 82 a-šà sila₄ “lamb-field”
 83 a-šà zi-ib-na-tum “field of the zibnatum plant”
 84 a-šà KÉŠ-KÉŠ “binding fields”
 85 a-šà igi bar-bar-re “observation field”
 86 a-šà pa₅ usàn “whip ditch field”
 87 a-šà a-kun-ġá “field ...”
 88 a-šà a šúr-ra “angry water field”
 89 a-šà a sig_o-ga “water-filled field”
 90 a-šà a kalag-ga “strong water field”
 91 a-šà a lù-a “muddy water field”
 92 a-šà ud-dè “stormy one field”
 93 a-šà amaš líl-lá “sheepfold of the winds field”

⁸ ARN 23 + PBS 8/2 169, col. iii, l. 37 spells: a-šà egir a-šà hi-li-a.

⁹ This irrigation district is written correctly in OECT 8 17 l. 10. However, in OECT 8, 18 l. 10, it is spelled a-šà íd ġiri-da-bal-e, in TMH 10, 17 l. 20 a-šà ġiri-ki-ta-bal-e, and in TMH 10, 38 l. 2 a-šà íd ġiri-da-bal-a.

- 94 a-ša ^{íd}garaš^{sar} “leek-canal field”
 95 a-ša ^{íd}gambi(SAL.UŠ.DI.KID)^{mušen} “crane-canal field”
 96 a-ša ^{íd}kur-ra “mountain-canal field”
 97 a-ša ^den-líl-lá “Enlil’s field”
 98 **a-ša ^dnin-líl-lá** “Ninlil’s field”
 99 a-ša ^dnin-urta “Ninurta’s field”
 100 a-ša ^dnuska “Nuska’s field”
 101 a-ša šuku “ration field”
 102 a-ša šuku aga-ús-e-[ne] “ration field of the soldiers”
 103 a-ša igi u ĝál “one-tenth of a field”
 104 a-ša igi iá ĝál “one-fifth of a field”
 105 a-ša igi limmu₅ ĝál “quarter field”
 106 a-ša igi eš₅ ĝál “one-third of a field”
 107 a-ša šu-ri-àm[?] “half of a field”
 108 a-ša ús-sa-du “border field”
 109 a-ša dal-ba-na “field held in common”
 110 a-ša ĝarin(LAGAB×KÙ) “meadow”
 111 a-ša ĝarin(LAGAB×KÙ) tur “field of the small meadow”
 112 a-ša ĝarin(LAGAB×KÙ) gu-la “field of the large meadow”
 113 a-ša ĝarin(LAGAB×KÙ) murub₄ “field of the middle meadow”
 114 a-ša ĝarin(LAGAB×KÙ) saĝ an-na “field of the upper meadow”
 115 a-ša ĝarin(LAGAB×KÙ) ki-ta “field of the lower meadow”
 116 a-ša ki-in-dar “field of the crevice”
 117 a-ša ki-úš “barren field”
 118 a-ša kislaḥ “uncultivated field”
 119 a-ša KI.UD “field ...”
 120 a-ša KI.UD “field ...”
 121 a-ša KI.KAL “field ...”
 122 a-ša suḥub “trampled field”
 123 a-ša gud suḥub “field where oxen graze”
 124 a-ša ne-mur “field fertilized with ashes”
 125 a-ša zar-pú-pú “field ...”
 126 a-ša ^{ĝeš}al ak “field worked with the hoe”
 127 a-ša kíĝ-a ak “cultivated field”
 128 a-ša tug₂-gur₁₀-a ak “plowed field”
 129 a-ša ^{ĝeš}níĝ-gul ak “field worked with an adze”
 130 a-ša KU₇[?]-ak “... field”
 131 a-ša ĝeš ùr-ra “harrowed field”
 132 a-ša ĝeš gi₄-a “field harrowed for a second time”
 133 a-ša ĝeš peš-a “field harrowed for a third time”

- 134 a-šà še mú-a “field where the crop grows”
 135 a-šà še nu-mú-a “field where the crop does not grow”
 136 a-šà isin “field of the stalk”
 137 a-šà šub₃ še “field of barley stubble(?)”
 138 [a-šà a] dé-a “irrigated field”
 139 [a-šà a nu]-dé-a “field that has not been irrigated”
 140 [a-šà] é[?]-ri-a “abandoned field”
 141 a-šà še nim “field of the early crop”
 142 a-šà še sig “field of the late crop”
 143 a-šà a má ùr-ùr “field where the boat is pulled from the water”
 144 a-šà a má su-su “field where the boat is sunk in the water”
 145 a-šà du₆ “field of the mound”
 146 **a-šà du₆ ^dsuen-na** “field of Sin’s mound”
 147 a-šà du₆ sal-la “field of the thin mound”
 148 a-šà du₆ a-DU-da “field of the ... mound”
 149 a-šà du₆ ur-maḥ “field of the lion’s mound”
 150 a-šà du₆ ur-nig “field of the lioness’ mound”
 151 a-šà du₆ ur-gi₇-ra “field of the dog’s mound”
 151a [a-šà du₆] ur-bar-ra “field of the wolf’s mound”
 152 a-šà du₆ ur-ki “field of the dog’s mound”
 153 a-šà du₆ maš-mìn “field of the mašmin mound”
 154 a-šà du₆ ^{ééš}šinig “field of the tamarisk mound”
 155 a-šà du₆ bán-ḪU “field of the chameleon’s mound”
 156 **a-šà du₆ uzud** “field of the goat’s mound”
 157 a-šà du₆ ^dnin-ḫur-sag “field of Ninḫursag’s mound”
 158 a-šà KA-ús-sa “field of the ka’usa-messenger”
 159 a-šà KA-ús-sa ^den-ki “field of Enki’s ka’usa-messenger”
 160 **a-šà KA-ús-sa ^dnin-urta** “field of Ninurta’s ka’usa-messenger”

Discussion

A note concerning the term a-šà.

In Nippur, a-šà may refer to a **plot of land** on which barley or sesame is cultivated (belonging or assigned to an individual who may work it to earn his living or who may lease it) as well as to a **track of land** watered by a single canal designated with the German term “Flur”, English term “irrigation district” or French term “district d’irrigation” in translations. These two uses occur alongside one another in most of the Nippur title deeds pertaining to fields. In a typical field sale, the field plot

is described in terms of size and quality on the first line and is located in its irrigation district on the second, and then followed by the mention of one or two neighbours.

e.g. PBS 8/1 27 l. 1-3:

0.0.1 iku 10 sar a-ša numún-še
 šà a-ša gibil
 ús-a-du ^dnanna-me-DU dumu šeš-ma-kal

“a stubble field of 1 iku 10 sar, in the new field (the irrigation district), adjacent to Nanna-meDU, brother of Šeš-ma-kal”

In other Old Babylonian cities, these irrigation districts are not qualified by the sumerogram a-ša, but are simple toponyms like the district *Eble* in Sippar (for a list of *ugārū*, cf. Tanret 1998, 76). From the reign of Hammurabi onwards, these toponyms are labelled with the term a-gār (Akkadian *ugārum*, meadow) in Sippar and other Old Babylonian towns. No such “cadastral innovation” is discernible in Nippur (Stol 1982, 355-356), where a few names of irrigation districts contain the word ‘a-gār’ both before and after the reign of Hammurabi.

With regards to the list itself, in the absence of detailed topographical data from the economic records, this section of Old Babylonian Ura does not enable an actual reconstruction of the topographical reality. On the other hand, being able to link certain entries in the list to specific occurrences in judicial and administrative texts may tell us a lot about scribal lexicographical activity. Is the list exhaustive, and is it describing the topographical reality of the Nippur region? Or does it contain fictitious field names?

2.1. Does Ura 5 offer an exhaustive list of Nippur’s irrigation districts?

The first question can be answered easily, since many irrigation districts occurring in the archival documents do not appear in OB Ura 5 (see list below). Some of these refer to individuals or to ancestors, such as a-ša du₆ *A-hu-ni* (2N-T 341), a-ša (dumu) *i-din-d*^dšu-ul-la (TMH 10 13) and a-ša *ib-ba-ta-num* (BE 6/2 26, col. iii l. 1), and may not have been considered lexicographical material. Also, subdivisions of an irrigation district may not systematically be included in the lexical list. Thus OB Ura 5 l. 7-9 lists the *igi-nim-ma* (“northern”) field and its upper and lower sections, whereas the components of a-ša ^dnin-unug, “the field of the lady

of Uruk”, a-šà ^dnin-unug an-na and a-šà ^dnin-unug ki-ta are attested only in the division of inheritance ARN 103. Maybe a-šà lukur-ra and a-šà sá-dug₄ are fluid terms fluctuating between irrigation districts and technical descriptions.

However, enough ‘real’ irrigation districts remain unaccounted for in OB Ura 5, such as a-šà *ḥa-ba-šu* (ARN 20+OIMA I 52; TMH 10 13) and a-šà ^dnin-súmun (TMH 10 14 and 17).

Alphabetic list of irrigation districts attested in archival documents, but absent in OB Ura 5.

a-šà a-gàr a ARN 22, 70, ARN 103; OIMA 20, OIMA I 48
a-šà dagal ARN 103
a-šà du₆ *a-ḥu-ni* 2N-T 341
a-šà du₆ an-na (?) TMH 10 67
a-šà é-danna OIMA I 31, OIMA I 51
a-šà é-a níĝ-gi-ni ARN 78; BE 6/2 49; BE 6/2 61
a-šà eĝir uru^{ki} TMH 10 13
a-šà gibil PBS 8/1 27; ARN 151; TMH 10 21 and 53
a-šà ĝir-MA ARN 44; TMH 10 14
a-šà gú íd bar-ra ARN 44
a-šà *ḥa-ba-šu* ARN 20+OIMA I 52; TMH 10 13
a-šà (dumu) *i-din*-^dšu-ul-la TMH 10 13
a-šà *ib-ba-ta-num* BE 6/2 26
a-šà igi-sa₆-ḤU-[] TMH 10 21
a-šà ká-gú-na TMH 10 13
a-šà ká-din-na OECT 8, l. 2
a-šà ká ^dištaran TMH 10 17
a-šà ka-šEŠ TMH 10, 67 (l. 2: 1 iku a-šà du₆¹-an-na šà a-šà ka-šEŠ), ARN 18
a-šà KA-ús-sa ^dnuska TMH 10 3
a-šà kù-KA/du₆ TMH 10 35
a-šà lukur-ra TMH 10 13
a-šà ni-kéš PBS 8/1 31, l. 1; ARN 29; ARN 68
a-šà niĝin₅ PBS 8/1 8; PBS 8/1 18; ARN 31; ARN 103; TMH 10 64
a-šà ^dnin-súmun TMH 10 14 and 17
a-šà ^dnin-unug an-na ARN 103
a-šà ^dnin-unug ki-ta ARN 103
a-šà ra-zi-zi-i TIM 5 2 and 3
a-šà sá-dug₄ TMH 10 3
šuku uru^{ki} é-an-na PBS 8/2 146

2.2. Fictitious irrigation districts?

Given the plausibility that some actual irrigation districts have not been preserved in the Nippur archival records, it is not possible to confirm that an entry in OB Ura 5 is fictitious simply because it does not correspond to an archivally documented irrigation district. However, the number of unattested entries is very high and some sections seem to be composed along associative principles known from other Babylonian canonical lists such as *omina*, where an entry is followed by a list of slight variations that are not necessarily realistic. Examples of such sequences are OB Ura 5 l. 16-20, where different descriptions of “abundant harvest fields” are listed but only one of which appears in the archival documentation; and lines 145-157, which list fields named after different mounds.

Strangely enough, two irrigation districts named after a mound, a-ša du₆ a-*hu-ni* (2N-T 341) and a-ša du₆ an-na (TMH 10 67) do not appear in this list. On the other hand, the list of fields of different mounds combined with ur (OB Ura 5, l. 149-152), virtually corresponds to the ur section (l. 286-291) of OB Ura 3, the lexical list of animals. Only, ur-bar-ra is listed before ur-gi₇-ra in Ura 3, whereas in Ura 5, they appear as variants of each other on line 151.

Another conspicuous element in the OB Ura 5 list is the sequence tur – gu-la. On three occasions (l. 16-18 “a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ”, l. 48-50 “a-ša a-gàr” and l. 110-112 “a-ša ḡarin”), a sequence of three entries is repeated: irrigation district – irrigation district tur – irrigation district gu-la. After these three entries, the lists continue with other qualifications of the districts: for “a-ša buru₁₄ maḥ” l. 19-20, for “a-ša a-gàr” l. 51-59 and for “a-ša ḡarin” l. 113-115. The names of the three “simple” irrigation districts distinguished with these various qualifications all seem to be descriptions of the agricultural quality of the soil, and the simple versions are not attested to in the archival documentation.

Besides, the Ura 5 entries also occurring in archival documents often form individual sections of the OB Ura 5 list. Thus, five entries of the entries in lines 31-37 are well-known as part of descriptions of fields in legal and administrative documents. Lines 60-69 list ten consecutive irrigation districts appearing in the administrative and judicial documents from Nippur. On the contrary, hardly any of the entries from line 78 onwards are found in the archival texts. As will be discussed in the following section, several of these entries appear to be administrative terms rather than topographical names.

Together, these observations clearly point towards the inclusion of fictitious irrigation districts in OB Ura 5. However, these cannot be identified with certainty.

2.3. Non-topographical entries

From line 101 onwards, the OB Ura 5 list also contains sections of terminology used to describe fields in administrative and judicial documents besides topographical names, opening with terminology used for sustenance fields. The entries on line 103-109 can be used to describe shares of a field in a division of inheritance (with line 108, a-šà ús-sa-du, listing the expression used in Nippur title deeds to describe neighbouring fields). Lines 110-116 look like a lexical excursus followed by line 117 that opens a new section listing possible states of cultivation of fields. From line 143 or 145 onwards, a new topographical section opens, including the “field of the mound” section.

In the first 100 lines of OB Ura 5, only the entry on line 36, a-šà apin nu-zu, “field not knowing a plough”, seems to relate to the state of cultivation of a field rather than to list an irrigation district – real or fictitious. However, although it seems to describe a previously uncultivated plot of agricultural land, it actually appears in two title deeds as an irrigation district: SAOC 44 32 (l. 2) and TMH 10 46 (l. 2). In both cases the field plot is described as ki-kal, “fallow”, but that does not prevent it from being a topographical name rather than a description of the state of cultivation of a field. Fallow fields are located in other irrigation districts in the surroundings of Nippur as well.

3. *The names of the irrigation districts of Nippur*

Although only a part of them existed in reality, the topographical entries in OB Ura 5 lines 1-160, along with the names of irrigation districts not included in the canonical list, do give us a good sense of the names given to irrigation districts.

Many of the names originate from descriptions pertaining to the landscape (e.g. OB Ura 5 l. 3 ‘a-šà túl-a’, “field at the bird’s pond”) or from geographical qualifications (e.g. OB Ura 5 l. 7 ‘a-šà igi-nim-ma’, “northern field”).

Toponyms also often refer to the owner or cultivator, who may be a god, a private person, or a professional group to whom the field is assigned

as sustenance (e.g. OB Ura 5 l. 4 ‘à-šà é-ninnu’, “field of the Eninnu temple”). In a few title deeds from Nippur (ARN 65, l. 14; TMH 10 17, l. 9 and TMH 10 38, l. 3-4), the name of the irrigation district is replaced by the qualification šà me-at PN, ‘in the “hundred” of PN’ or even ‘me-at PN1 šà nam-10 PN2’. In those cases where it can be identified, the personal name belongs to a member of the early generations of one of the families holding the major temple offices of the city. Obscure as they are, these locations seem to be related to a system of sustenance fields involving overseers overseeing a number (hundred or ten) of subordinates.

The field descriptions in the archival documents show that agricultural characteristics such as ‘a-šà apin nu-zu’ “unploughed field” and ‘a-šà šúm-lá’ “field of the garlic harvest”, may become topographical designations.

The entries of the OB Ura list seem to be organized according to principles of association, resulting in a random sequence of sections concerned with the same topics, and acrostic sections.

4. *Conclusion*

Although drawing a map of Nippur’s vicinity still remains beyond the scope of possibility within the current state of research, this investigation has brought to light other aspects of Nippur culture, specifically with regards to the redaction of the lexicographic Ura list. This list was clearly composed in Nippur and the topographic section contains many toponyms known from the Old Babylonian private and administrative archives from the city. In between these actual irrigation districts, the author included fictitious field names and administrative terms often used to describe fields in the archival records in Nippur. Fictitious irrigation districts cannot be identified with certainty, but the authors of the lexical lists have applied principles that can be recognized in other lexicographical lists, resuming sequences of qualifications known from other lexical sections, and thus reflecting a strong sense of intertextuality.

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