

## BEER AS A MEANS OF COMPENSATION FOR WORK IN MESOPOTAMIA DURING THE UR III PERIOD

Hans NEUMANN – Berlin

In the last 20 years, a number of serious monographs and articles on the history, economy, law and social problems of the Neo-Sumerian period have been published. This is not surprising, since it is well known that the period of the so-called IIIrd Dynasty of Ur (about 2111-2003 B.C.) is one of the best documented periods of ancient Mesopotamian history altogether. At present more than 30,000 cuneiform texts of the Ur III period are available – as a rule published in copy or transliteration<sup>1</sup> –, and the exact number of texts of this period still unpublished in museums and smaller collections<sup>2</sup> remains unknown. Our primary sources for investigation of the socio-economic situation at that time are the thousands of administrative texts from the southern provinces of the Ur III Empire, supplemented by legal texts<sup>3</sup>, by royal and private inscriptions<sup>4</sup> and by some literary texts<sup>5</sup>.

1. Cf. now M. SIGRIST – T. GOMI, *The Comprehensive Catalogue of Published Ur III Tablets*, Bethesda 1991.

2. R.K. ENGLUND, *Organisation und Verwaltung der Ur III-Fischerei*, Berlin 1990 (BBVO 10), 3 n. 23 estimates the number of the still unpublished Ur III texts «sehr grob auf etwa 50.000 bis 60.000». Most of them are in the national museums in London, Paris, Istanbul, St. Petersburg, and – according to information supplied by Prof. H. WAETZOLDT – in the Yale Babylonian Collection. Concerning the cuneiform texts in Istanbul cf. now B. LAFONT, «La collections des tablettes cunéiformes des Musées Archéologiques d'Istanbul» in: *Travaux et Recherches en Turquie*, Paris – Louvain 1984, 179-185.

3. Cf. H. NEUMANN, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien*, 19f. n. 3; cf. also the general view of the (Neo-)Sumerian legal texts published by W.H.Ph. RÖMER, «Einige Bemerkungen zum altnesopotamischen Recht sonderlich nach Quellen in sumerischer Sprache», *ZAW* 95 (1983), 319-336.

4. Cf. I. KÄRKI, *Die Königsinschriften der dritten Dynastie von Ur*, Helsinki 1986 (StOr 58), and now H. STEIBLE, *Die neusumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften*, Stuttgart 1991 (FAOS 9).

5. Literary texts are of special importance relating to the reflection of social structures and circumstances as well as at times of historical events; cf. e.g., C. WILCKE, «Politische Opposition nach sumerischen Quellen: Der Konflikt zwischen Königtum und Ratsversammlung. Literaturwerke als politische Tendenzschriften», in: A. FINET (ed.), *La voix de l'opposition en Mésopotamie*. Colloque organisé par l'Institut des Hautes Études de Belgique 19 et 20 mars 1973, Bruxelles 1973, 37-65. The Neo-Sumerian royal hymns in particular contain information about the structure of kingship and the imperial administration of the Ur III state; cf., e.g., C. WILCKE, «Zum Königtum in der Ur III-Zeit», in: P. GARELLI (ed.), *Le palais et la royauté (archéologie et civilisation)*, Paris 1974 (CRRA 19), 176-232; G. KOMORÓCZY, «Die Königshymnen der III. Dynastie von Ur», *AcOrHu* 32 (1978), 33-66; J. KLEIN, *Three Šulgi Hymns. Sumerian Royal Hymns Glorifying King Šulgi of Ur*, Ramat Gan 1981. Cf. also the city laments (P. MICHALOWSKI, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, Winona Lake 1989, 4-8),

These sources and published investigations support the supposition that the Neo-Sumerian state, i.e. the palace and the temple bureaucracy, was the most important proprietor, since it concentrated the essential economic means in its administrative units. This becomes evident in the spheres of agriculture<sup>6</sup>, cattle-breeding<sup>7</sup>, trade<sup>8</sup> and crafts<sup>9</sup>. The state sector of the economy was organized differently in the cities and the provinces. The reasons for this may be found in local traditions as well as in particular economic, political and geographical factors<sup>10</sup>. Measures in the field of economic policy<sup>11</sup> as well as the legislation of the Neo-Sumerian kings<sup>12</sup> were, after all, important as guarantees of royal economic and political power. On the other hand, the economic possibilities of small land holders and private craftsmen were limited. The private legal documents, however, attest to important commercial activities outside of the palace and temple economies<sup>13</sup>.

The economic conditions which could only very briefly be sketched here make clear that the most important employer in the Ur III period was the state. H. WAETZOLDT pointed out that «the total number of persons in the service of the state and the temples ... must have exceeded three hundred thousand», including «persons serving in the bureaucracy in villages or towns, in the larger cities, in provinces, in the central government; those serving in

and the literary royal correspondence (P. MICHALOWSKI, *The Royal Correspondence of Ur*, PhD. Yale University 1976); cf. the general view of Sumerian literature published by D.O. EDZARD, *RIA VII* (1987-1990), 35-48. But in this connection pay attention to the remarks of M. CIVIL, «Les limites de l'information textuelle», in: *L'archéologie de l'Iraq du début de l'époque néolithique à 333 avant notre ère. Perspectives et limites de l'interprétation anthropologique des documents. Paris 13-15 juin 1978*, Paris 1980, 225-232.

6. Cf. R.K. ENGLUND, *Ur III-Fischerei*, 1 n. 11.

7. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 13.

8. Cf. H. NEUMANN, «Handel und Händler in der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur», *AoF* 6 (1979), 15-67; D.C. SNELL, *Ledgers and Prices. Early Mesopotamian Merchant Accounts*, New Haven 1982 (YNER 8); R.K. ENGLUND, *Ur III-Fischerei*, 14ff.

9. Cf. H. NEUMANN, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien*.

10. Cf. *ibid.*, 33f.; 91f.; 112f.; 143; 148f.

11. For instance the standardization of weights and measures, the extension and maintenance of the irrigation systems, the creation of a centralized civil administration, the introduction of a new calendar, and so on; cf. P. STEINKELLER, in: McG. GIBSON – R.D. BIGGS (eds.), *The Organization of Power. Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, Chicago 1987 (SAOC 46), 20f.

12. Cf. the so-called Codex Ur-Nammu, which was enacted in reality probably by the second Ur III king Šulgi; cf. S.N. KRAMER, «The Ur-Nammu Law Code: Who Was Its Author?», *Or* 52 (1983), 453-456; P. STEINKELLER, *SAOC* 46, 21 n. 10; H. NEUMANN, «"Gerechtigkeit liebe ich..." Zum Strafrecht in den ältesten Gesetzen Mesopotamiens», *Altertum* 35 (1989), 13-22, with the literature cited in n. 1. Concerning the recently expressed doubts against the dating the law code to the time of Šulgi cf. P. MICHALOWSKI, in: H. BEHRENS – D. LODING – M.T. ROTH (eds.), *dumu-e<sub>2</sub>-dub-ba-a. Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*, Philadelphia 1989, 384ff.; cf. also H. SAUREN, *OLP* 20 (1989), 11ff.; M.J. GELLER, *ZA* 81 (1991), 145f.

13. Cf., e.g., H. NEUMANN, «Zur privaten Geschäftstätigkeit in Nippur in der Ur III-Zeit»; in: M. DEJONG ELLIS (ed.), *Nippur at the Centennial: Papers Read at the 35<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia 1988*, Philadelphia (CRRA 35) (in press).

the army and the messenger corps; and those engaged in economic activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, and industry (primarily weaving cloth and grinding grain)<sup>14</sup>. This enormous number of persons engaged in work for the palace and the temples, i.e., for the state sector, confronts us with the problem of the remuneration system at that time. It is an accepted fact that the basic type of payment was the distribution of rations. The normal rations consisted of barley, distributed monthly, and a wool distribution once each year<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, there were some variations from normal rations, consisting of bread, flour or emmer instead of barley and of a garment instead of wool<sup>16</sup>. In addition to these basic types of payment in kind, fields were assigned as subsistence allotments<sup>17</sup>. In special spheres of the economy the state sector used available free workers in its labor force or placed work orders with free craftsmen<sup>18</sup>. Hired labor was employed in field agriculture, cattle-breeding, craft, transportation and in irrigation works. As a rule, hirelings did not receive rations but rather wages<sup>19</sup>.

The ancient Mesopotamian ration system as well as the problem of remuneration in the Ur III period have been investigated – in greater or lesser detail – by I.J. GELB<sup>20</sup>, K. MAEKAWA<sup>21</sup>, P. STEINKELLER<sup>22</sup> and H. WAETZOLDT<sup>23</sup>, to name but the more recent studies. Already these investigations show clearly that beer as a means of compensation for work did not belong to the regular rations or to the variations mentioned above. Beer belonged to the so-called extraordinary rations, issued either when the beverage was available in abundance or on special occasions. Extraordinary rations consisted, for instance, of oil, meat, fish, milk products, fruit, vegetables, and beer<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, in connection with the special allotments

14. H. WAETZOLDT, in: M.A. POWELL (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, New Haven 1987 (AOS 68), 119.

15. *Ibid.*, 118; 121-126; cf. also the literature cited below nn. 20-23.

16. *Ibid.*, 118; 125f.

17. *Ibid.*, 128-132.

18. Cf. H. NEUMANN, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien*, 178 (Index: «Auftragstätigkeit von Handwerkern»).

19. *Ibid.*, 22, with n. 14; K. MAEKAWA, Aof 16 (1989), 47f.

20. I.J. GELB, «The Ancient Mesopotamian Ration System», JNES 24 (1965), 230-243.

21. K. MAEKAWA, «Rations, Wages and Economic Trends in the Ur III Period», Aof 16 (1989), 42-50.

22. P. STEINKELLER, «The Foresters of Umma: Toward a Definition of Ur III Labor», AOS 68, 73-115.

23. H. WAETZOLDT, «Compensation of Craft Workers and Officials in the Ur III Period», *ibid.*, 117-141; ID., «Die Situation der Frauen und Kinder anhand ihrer Einkommensverhältnisse zur Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur», Aof 15 (1988), 30-44. Cf. in this connection also H. LIMET, «Complexité salariale et complexité sociale à l'époque néo-sumérienne», *ibid.*, 231-242; R.K. ENGLUND, «Administrative Timekeeping in Ancient Mesopotamia», JESHO 31 (1988), 121-185; ID., «Hard Work – Where Will It Get You? Labor Management in Ur III Mesopotamia», JNES 50 (1991), 255-280; D.M. ŠARAŠENIDZE, *Formy ekspluatácii robočej sily v gosudarstvennom chozjajstve Šumera II pol. III. tys. d.n.e.*, Tbilisi 1986; B. HRUŠKA, «Bemerkungen zu den Arbeitskräften in der neusumerischen Landwirtschaft», ArOr 55 (1987), 399-405.

24. Cf. H. WAETZOLDT, AOS 68, 118.

we have to consider that beer, bread, onions and other products were issued as rewards for special services and to special groups of officials, as it will be demonstrated presently.

We know that beer was a common beverage and enjoyed great popularity in ancient Mesopotamian society<sup>25</sup>. This is shown, for instance, by such proverbs as «He who drinks much beer must drink much water!»<sup>26</sup>. S. COHEN describes vividly the real background of this proverb: «Drinking large quantities of beer will make the throat dry and necessitate the drinking of equally large amounts of water»<sup>27</sup>. Another proverb says: «Pleasure – it is beer. Discomfort – it is an expedition!»<sup>28</sup>. Lexical lists and literary texts such as the hymn to the beer goddess Ninkasi give information about beer production, about the various steps of the brewing process, about different brewing techniques as well as about the varying materials and intermediate products of the ancient Mesopotamian brewing process and about the various kinds of beer known in Mesopotamia<sup>29</sup>. We find such informations also in administrative texts such as the so-called beer “recipes” from Presargonic Girsu and similar texts of the Sargonic period<sup>30</sup>.

The Sumerian word for “brewer” is LÚ.ŠIM, written also ŠIM, which is probably to be read as <sup>lú</sup>lunga<sup>31</sup>. Its akkadian equivalent is *sirāšū*<sup>32</sup>. The Ur III texts mention several brewers designated by their personal names. Some of the brewers used their own seals<sup>33</sup>. According to Presargonic

25. Cf. D.O. EDZARD. «Brauerei, Bierkonsum und Trinkbräuche im Alten Mesopotamien», in: *Gesellschaft für die Geschichte und Bibliographie des Brauwesens E.V., Jahrbuch* 1967, 9-21; W. RÖLLIG, *Das Bier im Alten Mesopotamien*, Berlin 1970.

26. Cf. E.I. GORDON, *Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Philadelphia 1959, 96 (l. 105). For this proverb cf. also D.O. EDZARD, *Jahrbuch* 1967, 20; S. COHEN, in: B.L. EICHLER (ed.), *Kramer Anniversary Volume. Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer*, Kevelaer-Neukirchen-Vluyn 1976 (AOAT 25), 101.

27. *Ibid*

28. Cf. E.I. GORDON, *Sumerian Proverbs*, 264 (2.123); cf. also W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 63, with n. 248.

29. Cf. L.F. HARTMANN – A.L. OPPENHEIM, *On Beer and Brewing Techniques in Ancient Mesopotamia*, JAOS Suppl. 10 (1950); M. CIVIL, «A Hymn to the Beer Goddess and a Drinking Song», in: *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim, June 7, 1964*, Chicago 1964, 67-89; cf. also W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 19-43.

30. Cf. M. STOL, RIA VII (1987-1990), 326.

31. Cf. J. KRECHER, WdO 4 (1967-1968), 257; P. STEINKELLER, *Sale Documents of the Ur-III-Period*, Stuttgart 1989 (FAOS 17), 291.

32. Cf. AHw 1050a; CAD S 306bff.; E. SALONEN, *Über das Erwerbsleben im alten Mesopotamien*. I, Helsinki 1970 (StOr 41), 192ff.; W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 44ff.; K. DELLER, AfO 34 (1989), 63.

33. Cf., e.g., the following seal impressions: AOS 32, H 20 (= PIOL 19, 360); J 10 (= PIOL 19, 193); S 7 (= PIOL 19, 356); ASJ 2, 7 no. 10 (seal of a brewer's slave; cf. P. STEINKELLER, in: McG. GIBSON – R.D. BIGGS [eds.], *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, Malibu 1977 [BIMes 6], 48, with n. 52); *ibid.*, 27 no. 79; AUCT III 396; BJV 2, 207 no. 4 (cylinder seal); BRM III 155; FT II LI (AO 12992 = TG 3964); HÉU 43 (cf. HÉO 18, pl. 6 no. 43); ITT IV 7469 (= MVN VI 445); JCS 23, 100 no. 5; 24, 169 no. 88 (= MVN XV 88); MVN V 173; XII 28; 66; 147; 380; 387; XIV 59; NATN 33; 453; Rochester 188; SET 191; TMH NF I/II 68b (48\*; cf. H. WAETZOLDT, OA 15 [1976], 325); 108 (76\*; cf. H. WAETZOLDT, OA 15, 326); 117 (82\*;

administrative texts, the brewmaster received ingredients requisite to the brewing of beer<sup>34</sup>. Men or women working in beer production stood by his side, in Sumerian *guruš/géme kaš-a gub-ba*<sup>35</sup>. As a rule, the brewer was engaged in work for the palace and temple households. For his services he received barley rations<sup>36</sup>. But there is also evidence that he received land allotments<sup>37</sup>. According to some Puzriš-Dagān texts, brewers received donkeys, lambs or other kinds of livestock<sup>38</sup>. Different brewers enjoyed different social positions. Some of them were wealthy persons of higher rank. This is proven by the Neo-Sumerian court proceedings, according to which brewers were owners of male and female slaves<sup>39</sup>. Other legal documents of that period mention brewers as sellers or buyers of slaves and livestock<sup>40</sup>. Female slaves were donated to temple households by brewers, according to the so-called *a-ru-a* texts<sup>41</sup>.

The main purpose of the produced beer was of course its use both as a nutritional and certainly as a recreational beverage. On the other hand, we know that beer played an important role in ritual ceremonies<sup>42</sup>, as a liquid for drug mixtures<sup>43</sup> and also as a means of cleaning cloths<sup>44</sup>. Beer was consumed in private households, but also in public taverns. The tavern was the classical place for drinking and conversing. But it was also a place for conspirators and shady individuals. We read in § 109 of the Codex Hammurapi: «If criminals plot in a tavern keeper's house and she (i.e. the tavern keeper) does not arrest those criminals and bring them to the palace, that tavern keeper shall be put to death»<sup>45</sup>. The «Instructions of Shuruppak»

cf. H. WAETZOLDT, OA 15, 326); UDT 6; 29; UET III 39 (cf. P. STEINKELLER, FAOS 17, 300f. no. 108); 874; 1003; 1053; VR 269 (= VA 3466; cylinder seal).

34. Cf. W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 45, with n. 173; M. STOL, RIA VII (1987-1990), 326.

35. Cf., e.g., AUCT I 326, 50; TÉNS 426, 4f.; TUT 146 IV 3; 150 III 3; UET III 1423, 1. For (*guruš/gémé*) *kaš-a gub-ba* cf. M. SIGRIST, RA 74 (1980), 19f.; G. PETTINATO, SVS I/3 (1985), 214.

36. Cf., e.g., AUCT I 303, 4; Rochester 161, 18; UDT 59 I 6, 14, II 2; W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 45, with n. 174.

37. Cf. TCS I 49, 4.

38. Cf., e.g., AUCT I 71; III 396; BIN III 478; 491, 11f., 61f.

39. Cf. NG II 82 (= ITT III 5246+6513); 177 (= ITT II 752), 17-21; 197 (= RTC 293), 31'-41'; cf. in this connection also NG II 179 (= ITT III 6580), 28'-36' (the brewer Anina is owner of a house); 207 (= ITT II 923), 15-18.

40. Cf. FAOS 17, 290f. no. 98; *ibid.*, 300ff. no. 108 (= UET III 39); *ibid.*, 302 no. 109 (= UET III 41).

41. Cf., e.g., MVN II 176 I 12f.

42. Cf. M. STOL, RIA VII (1987-1990), 327f.; W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 68f.

43. Cf. *ibid.*, 76, with nn. 311ff.

44. Cf. H. WAETZOLDT, *Untersuchungen zur neusumerischen Textilindustrie*, Rom 1972, 173f.

45. For the §§ 108-111 of the Codex Hammurapi, the «Bestimmungen über die *sabitum*, konventionell «Schankwirtin», und ihren Betrieb», cf. H. PETSCHOW, ZA 57 (1965), 156; D.O. EDZARD, *Jahrbuch* 1967, 18; R. BORGER, TUAT I/1 (1982), 55. For the translation and interpretation of § 109 cf. also CAD S 182a; W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 52f.

contain the warning: «Do not swear like a liar in a tavern!»<sup>46</sup>. In the tavern people also entered into contracts. We know from an Ur III private legal document, for instance, that a credit contract was drawn up «(in) the house of Ur-LI, the tavern keeper»<sup>47</sup>.

Beer as a beverage was popular not only with the plain people but also with the king. In the royal hymn Šulgi A the king describes a feast in Nippur: «With my brother (and) companion, the hero Utu, I drank beer in the palace, founded by An; my singers sang for me to the (accompaniment of) seven tigi-drums; my consort, holy Inanna, the lady, the joy of heaven and earth, sat with me at the banquet»<sup>48</sup>. And in the «Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur» we can read, according to P. MICHALOWSKI: «There was no beer in his (the king's) beer-hall, there was no more malt (for making) it, there was no food for him in the palace, it was made unsuitable to live in»<sup>49</sup>.

Beer was an essential part of the banquet in ancient Mesopotamia. This is proven also by other literary texts, according to which the gods and goddesses were feasting and drinking beer or wine<sup>50</sup>.

Documents from the Sargonic period which mention beer as a part of the *tirhatum*, translated conventionally as «bridal price»<sup>51</sup>, suggest that this foodstuff was also intended for a banquet<sup>52</sup>. The mentions of beer as a special gift or the like in Presargonic sale contracts points in the same direction<sup>53</sup>.

46. Cf. B. ALSTER, *The Instructions of Šuruppak. A Sumerian Proverb Collection*, Copenhagen 1974 (MCSA 2), 38f., l. 72. For this line cf. also C. WILCKE, ZA 68 (1978), 205 and 217; K. VOLK, *Die Balaḡ-Komposition úru àm-ma-ir-ra-bi. Rekonstruktion und Bearbeitung der Tafeln 18 (19'ff.), 19, 20 und 21 der späten, kanonischen Version*, Stuttgart 1989 (FAOS 18), 217. For the profession of the (female) tavern keeper and for the tavern, the place of pleasure and merriment, cf. generally W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 48ff. For the connection between drinking beer and making love according to some Babylonian terra-cotta reliefs cf. U. WINTER, *Frau und Götin. Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt*, Freiburg – Göttingen 1983 (OBO 53), 349; 352-354 (for the literary composition SRT 23 cited p. 353 cf. now Th. JACOBSEN, *The Harps that once ... Sumerian Poetry in Translation*, New Haven – London 1987, 95f.; in addition cf. E. SOLLBERGER, «A Note on the Lyrical Dialogue SRT 23», JCS 30 [1978], 99f.). Taverns were, however, not always such appealing havens due to the ubiquitous flies there; cf. W.H.Ph RÖMER, BiOr 46 (1989), 632f. For the tavern as a place where ritual actions were also performed, cf. forthcoming S.M. MAUL, CRRA 38, Paris 1992.

47. NRVN I 8, rev. 5'; cf. P. STEINKELLER, FAOS 17, 110.

48. Šulgi A, ll. 79-83; cf. J. KLEIN, *Three Šulgi Hymns*, 198f.; cf. also *ibid.*, 181.

49. ll. 306ff.; cf. P. MICHALOWSKI, *Lamentation*, 54f.

50. Cf., e.g., W. RÖLLIG, *Bier*, 30f.; 66f.; J.-J. GLASSNER, ZA 80 (1990), 62.

51. For this difficult legal term cf. C. WILCKE, in: E.W. MÜLLER (ed.), *Geschlechtsreife und Legitimation zur Zeugung*, Freiburg – München 1985, 252ff.; R. WESTBROOK, *Old Babylonian Marriage Law*, Wien 1988 (AfO Beiheft 23), 59ff.; 99ff.; S. GREENGUS, «Bridewealth in Sumerian Sources», HUCA 61 (1990), 25-88.

52. MAD I 129; cf. L. MILANO, «Oakk. BAN-ha-tum = *tirhatum* "bridal price"», Or NS 56 (1987), 85f.; S. GREENGUS, HUCA 61 (1990), 66.

53. Cf., e.g., SR 11 (= WF 40), II 5; 14 (= CIRPL Ean. 65), II 5; 31 (= DP 31), II 1, VI 10; 32 (= DP 32), VII 5; 34 (= Nik I 318), II' 2'; 35 (= BIN VIII 352), III 3, 8, VIII 1; 44 (= RTC 17), II 7; 60 (= RTC 18), VI 9. Cf. D.O. EDZARD, *ibid.*, 40 (comm. ll. II 4-5); J. KRECHER, RIA V (1976-1980), 491ff.

According to a Sargonic court proceeding, the *maškim*, that is, the official who was responsible for judicial inquiry, received a goat, a garment as well as beer, bread and barley<sup>54</sup>. This can be interpreted as a list of items forming a special fee<sup>55</sup>. Court costs, especially the *maškim*'s fee, are also mentioned in other legal documents from Sargonic and Ur III Girsu, but, as a rule, these texts concern barley and livestock, not beer<sup>56</sup>. Jugs of beer were part of a special fee for burials in Presargonic Girsu, insofar as they are described in the so-called Uru'iningina Reforms<sup>57</sup>.

In connection with a greeting ceremony, beer is mentioned in the so-called silver ring texts from Ur III Puzriš-Dagān, investigated by P. MICHALOWSKI<sup>58</sup>. The occasions on which the silver rings were disbursed are described here as a ceremony connected with the drinking of beer. The greeting ceremony took place in the palace<sup>59</sup>, in the house of the cantor (*gala*) Dada<sup>60</sup>, in the house of the general (*šakkana*) Nir-idagal<sup>61</sup>, in the house of a certain Lugal-kuzu<sup>62</sup>, in the house of Lu-Nanna, the son of Namhani, the *ensi* of Hamazi<sup>63</sup>, and in the *é-ŠIM* (presumably «brewery») of Šulgi<sup>64</sup>. The real background of these phrases is not entirely clear, but we can assume that the use of beer is connected here with the activities of the king<sup>65</sup> visiting various cities or high dignitaries<sup>66</sup>.

54. Cf. SR 85 (= BIN VIII 164), obv. 11-14.

55. Cf. D.O. EDZARD, *ibid.*, 109 (comm. II. IV 1 and 7).

56. Cf. A. FALKENSTEIN, NG I, 54; B.R. FOSTER, WdO 13 (1982), 21ff.; but, cf. now also MVN XV 187 from Ur III Girsu (ll. 7-12: beer, bread and oil are designated as *zi-ga-di-ku*, «expenditure by a judge»; the foodstuffs were intended for an armorer: *lu-š<sup>8</sup>i<sup>8</sup>tukul-gu-la*); for such unpublished texts in Istanbul cf. F. YILDIZ, *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Yıllığı* 15-16 (1969), 235f.

57. Cf. Ukg. 1 V 6'-15'; 4 VI 4-27 = 5 V 24-VI 18, 4 IX 26-X 9 = 5 VIII 32-IX 10; for the sources cf. H. STEIBLE – H. BEHRENS, *Die altsumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften*, I: *Inschriften aus "Lagaš"*, Wiesbaden 1982 (FAOS 5/I), 278ff.; J.S. COOPER, *Sumerian and Akkadian Royal Inscriptions*, I: *Presargonic Inscriptions*, New Haven 1986, 70ff. For this fee and the following tariffs for the mourning ceremony cf. B. HRUŠKA, ArOr 41 (1973), 112-114.

58. P. MICHALOWSKI, *The Neo-Sumerian Silver Ring Texts*, Malibu 1978 (SMS II/3).

59. AUCT I 457, 5: *u<sub>4</sub> é-gal kaš i-in-nag-gá-a*; cf. C. WILCKE, ZA 78 (1988), 13f. Cf. in this connection also MVN XV 226, 4-6: *u<sub>4</sub> lugal-mu / šà-é-gal-ka / kaš i-na-ni-dé-a*.

60. AUCT I 918, 3-5: *u<sub>4</sub> lugal-mu / é-Da-da-gala-ka / kaš i-nag-gá-a*; cf. C. WILCKE, ZA 78 (1988), 13 n. 49; for the *gala* Dada cf. H. NEUMANN, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien*, 40 n. 117.

61. AUCT I 942, 10f.: *u<sub>4</sub> lugal-mu é-Nir-i-da-gál-šakkana-ka / kaš i-nag-gá-a*; for the *šakkana* Nir-idagal cf. A. GOETZE, JCS 17 (1963), 14.

62. AUCT I 793, 2f.: *u<sub>4</sub> é-Lugal-kú-zu-[ka]*? / *lugal-mu kaš i-in-nag-gá-[a]*; cf. C. WILCKE, ZA 78 (1988), 13, with n. 50.

63. JCS 10, 31 no. 12, rev. 1f.: *u<sub>4</sub> lugal-mu é-Lú.<sup>4</sup>Nanna dumu-Nam-ha-ni ensi-Ha-ma-zi<sup>ki</sup>-k[a]* / *kaš i-nag-gá-a*; cf. P. MICHALOWSKI, SMS II/3, 13.

64. AUCT I 176, 2f.: *u<sub>4</sub> lugal-mu é-ŠIM.<sup>4</sup>Šul-gi-ra-ka-šé<sup>2</sup> / kaš i-nag-gá-[a]*; cf. P. MICHALOWSKI, SMS II/3, 12f. According to *ibid.*, 5f., l. 2 is possibly to be interpreted as «on the way to *é-ŠIM-Šulgira*». But this would be unusual; cf. C. WILCKE, ZA 78 (1988), 13 n. 49: «das ŠE am Ende von AUCT 1, Nr. 176,2 bedarf der Kollation».

65. *lugal-mu* is certainly not a personal name. It is to be translated as «my king» and probably to be interpreted as «His Majesty»; cf. similarly C. WILCKE, ZA 78 (1988), 13 n. 49.

66. Cf. P. MICHALOWSKI, SMS II/3, 5f.; 13.

It was mentioned above that beer belonged to the extraordinary rations. Furthermore, we can state that this foodstuff occurs on the whole rarely in Ur III texts mentioning allotments to persons engaged in work for palace and temple households. This can be explained generally by the fact that the persons receiving rations were able to produce beer using barley or malt in their own households. It would thus not have been necessary to give them this foodstuff separately<sup>67</sup>. Beer was on occasion rationed to personnel working only a few days for the temple. This was especially the case with the work of women and their children (*gême*, *dumu-ni*) receiving, respectively, two or one *sila* of beer daily<sup>68</sup>. Deported women and children received monthly beer rations. According to Umma text Nik II 329, dealing with the distribution of rations of flour and beer and listing names of 39 deported women and 10 children, the female workers received 20 *sila* of beer, whereas the children received 10 *sila* per month<sup>69</sup>. The distribution to deported women and children of particular foodstuffs including beer could be associated with the fact that these persons had no household of their own<sup>70</sup>. Such persons were dependent upon regular rations of such food. The food allotments are designated as *ša-gal-gême-nam-ra-a-aka* «food for female POW's»<sup>71</sup>.

Beer rations issued to specialized craftsmen are very seldomly mentioned in the texts. We can demonstrate such allotments – in every case designated as *ša-gal*, «food»<sup>72</sup> – only for professions such as *dub-nagar*<sup>73</sup>, a craftsman working with wood, metal and ivory<sup>74</sup>, as well as *nagar*, «carpenter»<sup>75</sup>. The latter was a *nagar-é-gal* «carpenter of the palace». Whether we are dealing here with special allotments issued as rewards for special services cannot be determined, however. The *dub-nagar* received 30 *sila* of beer and 30 *sila* of bread<sup>76</sup>.

The text BCT I 131 from Umma lists the names of some male persons receiving beer as allotments<sup>77</sup>. According to line 24 of this text the persons

67. It should not to be overlooked in this regard that the main beverage was always water. Beer was a supplementary foodstuff enjoying great popularity but not being essential.

68. Cf. H. WAETZOLDT, *AoF* 15 (1988), 35, with n. 30.

69. Cf. I.J. GELB, *JNES* 32 (1973), 74f.; H. WAETZOLDT, *AoF* 15 (1988), 39 with n. 64.

70. For the social status of POWs and deportees cf. I.J. GELB, *JNES* 32 (1973), 90ff.

71. Nik II 329 IV 6; cf. also CTNMC 28.

72. For *ša-gal* = *ukullá* cf. A. FALKENSTEIN, *NG* III, 160; E. SOLLBERGER, *TCS* I, 172; H. WAETZOLDT, *AOS* 68, 120 n. 25.

73. Cf. TÉNS 407, 9f.

74. For this profession cf. the literature cited in H. NEUMANN, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien*, 35f. n. 87.

75. Cf. TÉNS 455, 5-7.

76. Cf. above n. 73. For a *simug ša-en-nu* receiving two *sila* of beer cf. Rochester 152, 13; for *ninda* as *ša-gal-simug-e-ne* cf. T.B. JONES – J.W. SNYDER, *SET*, 288, with n. 25.

77. According to H. WAETZOLDT, *OLZ* 83 (1988), 30, the following texts belong together: BCT I 129; 130; 131; CST 290 = 393; 682. But note that the persons mentioned in BCT I 129 were clearly not recipients, but rather suppliers of beer. The personal names listed in BCT I



here were àga-ús «gendarmes», which may be defined as a kind of soldier<sup>78</sup>. Similar allotments are attested in texts from Ur, where, besides the àga-ús, Amorites (mar-tu) and other foreigners received beer allotments<sup>79</sup>. The officials responsible for the distribution of the beer were the dub-sar-šabra «the scribe of the prefect», and the dub-sar-é-gal «the scribe of the palace»<sup>80</sup>.

From Umma we have still another group of texts dealing with the distribution of beer together with other foodstuffs. The texts are dated from the years AS 8 to ŠS 6<sup>81</sup>. They mention the officials responsible for the distribution of beer, namely a certain A'alni as well as Ur-mes and Šara-izu. The receivers of the allotments – insofar as they are mentioned – were generals (šakkana), àga-ús, messengers (lú-kin-gi<sub>4</sub>-a), singers (nar), riders (rá-gaba), and other persons without mention of their profession or function<sup>82</sup>.

All these texts suggest that the beer allotments depended upon the special role played by the serving persons. Almost all of them were immediately connected with institutions of the central or provincial government. They did not belong to the ordinary workers, but rather had to perform special services. Some of them were of higher rank, as for instance the generals. àga-ús and Amorites may have formed a kind of royal guard<sup>83</sup>. Together with the riders, the lú-kin-gi<sub>4</sub>-a and foreigners, they also served as messengers<sup>84</sup>. The special task of a nar, «singer», is also clear. The beer allotments to the mentioned personnel may thus be characterized as a special, more or less regular allowance in kind.

129 and in the other texts are, moreover, for the most part not identical. Thus, there seems to be a difference between BCT I 129 and the other texts, and I assume that BCT I 129 does not belong to the group placed together by WAETZOLDT.

78. Cf. A. FALKENSTEIN, NG I, 98; III, 172; E. SOLLBERGER, TCS I, 96 «constable (a military official with occasional (?) police duties)»; G. PETTINATO, SVS I/3 (1985), 19f.

79. Cf. UET III 90; 1114; 1136; 1401.

80. Cf. also UET III 898, 4-7 (beer for a royal messenger); for beer rations cf. also UET III 1427 and the texts cited in T. GOMI, JCS 36 (1984), 220, with n. 24; cf. also *ibid.*, 223.

81. Cf. V. DAVIDOVIĆ, OA 21 (1982), 90ff. (type G); cf. also the table *ibid.*, 95-105; additional texts are: ASJ 9, 239 no. 13; 11, 160 no. 55; DC 72; MVN X 110; XIII 264; NSATH 376 (cf. T. GOMI, BAOM 6 [1984], 145f.); RA 84, 153f. no. 3; Rochester 155; TPTS 530; VO 8, 62 no. 59.

82. Cf., e.g., šakkana: AOS 32, F 21 (= PIOL 19, 88), 12; MVN I 21, 16, 19; Nik II 287, 21; àga-ús: SACT II 299, 9; lú-kin-gi<sub>4</sub>-a: MVN I 21, 21; Nik II 287, 19; Rochester 155, 6; SACT II 301, 11; nar: MVN I 20, 8; rá-gaba: MVN I 21, 13; 22, 11. It is possible that A'alni and Ur-mes were brewers; cf. SNSAT 376 I 21f. (Ur-mes and A'alni among LÚ.ŠIM); for the brewer Ur-mes in Umma cf. also the seal of AOS 32, H 30 (= PIOL 19, 360) and FAOS 17, 290f. no. 98: Ur-mes / dumu-Ur-GAR / LÚ.ŠIM; other brewers (from Umma) with the PN Ur-mes are mentioned in JCS 23, 110 no. 5, seal; HÉU 43, seal (cf. HÉO 18, pl. 6 no. 43); cf. also BIN III 478, 3.

83. Cf. G. BUCCELLATI, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, Naples 1966, 340f.; H. LIMET, in: D.O. EDZARD (ed.), *Gesellschaftsklassen im Alten Zweistromland und in den angrenzenden Gebieten – XVIII. Rencontre assyriologique internationale, München, 21. Juni bis 3. Juli 1970*, München 1972 (CRRA 18), 132; C. WILCKE, WdO 5 (1969-1970), 17.

84. Attested in the so-called messenger texts; cf. G. BUCCELLATI, *Amorites*, 342f., and below.

In this connection it is interesting to compare this fact with the evidence derived from the Ebla archive L. 2712, which has been investigated by L. MILANO<sup>85</sup>. This archive consists of tablets dealing with the management of food supplies for the royal household. The Ebla ration texts show that the king, the elders and the male personnel received amounts of bread and beer (ŠE + TIN)<sup>86</sup>. Contrary to this, the female personnel received only barley<sup>87</sup>. As L. MILANO has shown, all these ration lists mentioning also the distribution of beer «concern various groups of people pertaining to, or depending upon, the palace administration. The ration system involves kings and senior members of clannish groups, as well as palace officials and teams of workers»<sup>88</sup>.

But let us return to the Ur III period. One of the most important groups of texts concerning beer as a means of compensation for work is the group of the so-called messenger texts from Girsu and Umma, investigated mainly by T.B. JONES and J.W. SNYDER<sup>89</sup>, F. YILDIZ<sup>90</sup>, R.C. MCNEIL<sup>91</sup>, M. YOSHIKAWA<sup>92</sup> and M. SIGRIST<sup>93</sup>. These texts record the payment of rations to officials, employees, and conscripts of the crown. Apart from some differences between the texts from Umma and those from Girsu, which cannot be described in detail here<sup>94</sup>, we can state that, as a rule, the rations listed in the messenger texts consisted of various amounts of beer, bread, onions, oil, and spice. The persons receiving the food allowances are described as individuals who were going to (or coming from) a certain place, or going for a specific purpose respectively. As a rule, these persons were called sukka1 and lú-KAS<sub>4</sub>, the classical messengers, but also other functionaries or individuals can be found in the texts, for instance maškim, riders (rá-gaba), various kinds of soldiers or workers, couriers (lú-kin-gi<sub>4</sub>-a), Amorites and

85. L. MILANO, «Food Rations at Ebla: A Preliminary Account on the Ration Lists Coming from the Ebla Palace Archive L. 2712», MARI 5 (1987), 519-550, and now ID, *Testi amministrativi: assegnazioni di prodotti alimentari (Archivio L. 2712 - Parte I)*, Rom 1990 (ARET IX).

86. For ŠE + TIN cf. L. MILANO, *ibid.*, 405 «(un tipo di) birra».

87. Cf. ID., MARI 5 (1987), 522; cf. also V. DAVIDOVIĆ, *OrAnt* 26 (1987), 307. That the female personnel did not receive special foodstuff is explained by V. DAVIDOVIĆ, *ibid.*, 304, with the assumption that «women are appointed to the preparation of the food».

88. L. MILANO, MARI 5 (1987), 549.

89. T.B. JONES - J.W. SNYDER, SET, 280-310.

90. F. YILDIZ, «A New Group of Messenger Texts from Lagash», *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Yıllığı* 15-16 (1969), 235-238.

91. R.C. MCNEIL, *The "Messenger Texts" of the Third Ur Dynasty*, PhD. University of Pennsylvania 1970.

92. M. YOSHIKAWA, «GABA-aš and GABA-ta in the Ur III Umma Texts», ASJ 10 (1988), 231-241.

93. M. SIGRIST, «Les courriers de Lagaš», in: L. DE MEYER - H. GASCHÉ - F. VALLAT (eds.), *Fragmenta Historiae Elamicae. Mélanges offerts à M.J. Steve*, Paris 1986, 51-63; ID., *Messenger Texts from the British Museum*, Potomac 1990.

94. Cf. the summary of R.C. MCNEIL, *Messenger Texts*, 29f.

other foreigners, scribes and so on<sup>95</sup>. According to G. BUCCELLATI «the kind of employment reflected by texts was only temporary, and the allowances were issued not on a regular basis, but as an indemnity due to the “messengers” while on special service»<sup>96</sup>. Some of these services were done «by the order of the *sukkal-mah*»<sup>97</sup>, conventionally translated as “chancellor”. The amount of the food allotment corresponded to the rank occupied by each individual within the Neo-Sumerian bureaucracy<sup>98</sup>. As M. YOSHIKAWA recently pointed out, the messengers going from Umma to Elam received amounts of the so-called *dida-beer*, *billatu* in Akkadian<sup>99</sup>. *dida* seems to have served as «a kind of sterilized beer, indispensable for journeys of long distance in the intense heat of Mesopotamia. As a rule, *dida-beer* is not disbursed for journeys of short distances»<sup>100</sup>.

The services of the people mentioned in the messenger texts were directly connected with governmental policy of the Ur III Empire. Foreign affairs and domestic policy required a smoothly operating messenger system. Such a system can be shown to have existed during the greater part of the Ur III period, beginning with Šulgi 32<sup>101</sup>.

Concluding these few remarks, it can be said that in the Ur III period beer as a means of compensation for work was issued only irregularly, however it played more than a passing role as a part of the remuneration system of that time.

95. Cf. in detail the literature cited above, nn. 91 and 93.

96. G. BUCCELLATI, *Amorites*, 312.

97. Cf. T.B. JONES – J.W. SNYDER, SET, 301, with n. 69 (texts); R.C. MCNEIL, *Messenger Texts*, 72 n. 165; see DAS 75, 10f.; 79, 22; 82, 9f.; MVN II 223, 11; RA 80, 10 no. 3, 10.

98. Cf. G. BUCCELLATI, *Amorites*, 312; R.C. MCNEIL, *Messenger Texts*, 47ff.

99. M. YOSHIKAWA, ASJ 10 (1988), 231f.

100. *Ibid.*, 237.

101. Cf. R.C. MCNEIL, *Messenger Texts*, 31ff. For Sargonic parallels to the Ur III messenger texts cf. now P. STEINKELLER, *Third-Millennium Legal and Administrative Texts in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad*, Winona Lake 1992, 51 (cf. *ibid.*, nos. 23-25).