

Warfare in Ur III Dynasty
A Comprehensive Study about
Military and Diplomacy

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the relationship between wars and the historical development of the Ur III Dynasty, with the aim of exploring the economic, political, religious, and cultural factors that interact with war. Chapter One begins with a brief introduction to the historical background of the Ur III Dynasty, and how the political landscape was influenced by the geographical and environmental factors of that time. Chapter Two examines six elements related to war during the Ur III period, including armament, logistics, military ceremony, booty, military building, and hostile forces. By studying the “šu-lugal” weapons and the official Dayyānu-mišar who was responsible for the arsenals, it is argued that there was a sophisticated system of management for forging and storing bronze weapons in the Ur III period. Chapter Three establishes the framework for a military history of Ur III by using year-names, royal inscriptions, and other textual references. Rather than chronologically enumerating every conflict from the founder Ur-Nammu to the last king Ibbi-Suen, this chapter highlights some important time points and changes in military strategy during the reigns of different kings. Chapter Four investigates the interaction between war and economic, political, and other social factors in the Ur III period. It contains a discussion of the central economic system represented by Puzriš-Dagan, the political forms relating to war, the religious innovations reflected by divine kingship, the importance of diplomatic marriages. By investigating the history and development of the Ur III state from a military perspective, it is suggested that the interaction between war and other social factors influenced not only contemporary economic, political, and religious development, but also the future direction of development towards a wider range of unification.

Abbreviations

<i>AANEA</i>	<i>Archaeopress Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>AnOr</i>	<i>Analecta Orientalia</i>
<i>AOAT</i>	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i>
<i>AoF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
<i>AOS</i>	<i>American Oriental Series</i>
<i>ArOr</i>	<i>Archiv Orientalni</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>Assyriological Studies</i>
<i>ASJ</i>	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i>
<i>AUCT</i>	<i>Andrews University Cuneiform Texts</i>
<i>BARIS</i>	<i>BAR International Series</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BCT</i>	<i>Catalogue of cuneiform tablets in Birmingham City Museum</i>
<i>BDTNS</i>	<i>Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Museum siglum of the British Museum</i>
<i>BPOA</i>	<i>Biblioteca del Proximo Oriente Antiguo</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago</i>
<i>CANE</i>	<i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i>
<i>CBS</i>	<i>Museum siglum of the University Museum in Philadelphia</i>
<i>CDLB</i>	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Bulletin</i>
<i>CDLI</i>	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative</i>
<i>CDLJ</i>	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Journal</i>
<i>CHANE</i>	<i>Culture and history of the ancient Near East</i>
<i>CM</i>	<i>Cuneiform Monographs</i>
<i>CNIP</i>	<i>Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications</i>
<i>CTPSM</i>	<i>Cuneiform Texts in the Collection of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts</i>

<i>CUSAS</i>	<i>Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology</i>
<i>ETCSL</i>	<i>Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature</i>
<i>HANE/S</i>	<i>History of the Ancient Near East / Studies</i>
<i>HSAO</i>	<i>Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>ISET</i>	<i>Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde bulunan Sumer edebi tablet ve parçaları (Sumerian Literary Tablets and Fragments in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul)</i>
<i>ITT</i>	<i>Inventaire des tablettes de Tello</i>
<i>IUOA</i>	<i>Istituto Universitario Orientale</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Civilizations</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JCSSS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplemental Series</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>KEF</i>	<i>Kārum Emporion Forum</i>
<i>MC</i>	<i>Mesopotamian Civilizations</i>
<i>MSL</i>	<i>Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon/Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon</i>
<i>MVN</i>	<i>Materiali per il vocabulario neosumerico</i>
<i>N.A.B.U.</i>	<i>Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires</i>
<i>NISABA</i>	<i>Studi Assiriologici Messinesi</i>
<i>OBO</i>	<i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</i>
<i>OIP</i>	<i>Oriental Institute Publications</i>
<i>OIS</i>	<i>Oriental Institute Seminars</i>
<i>OrNS</i>	<i>Orientalia, NS</i>
<i>PDT</i>	<i>Die Puzris-Dagan-Texte der Istanbuler Archäologischen Museen Part 1</i>
<i>PIHANS</i>	<i>Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique</i>

	<i>n éerlandais de Stamboul</i>
RA	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Arch éologie Orientale</i>
RAI	<i>Proceedings of the Rencontre assyriologique internationale; Compte rendu de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale</i>
RHA	<i>Revue hittite et asianique</i>
RIME	<i>The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods</i>
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archaologie</i>
SACT	<i>Sumerian and Akkadian Cuneiform Texts in the Collection of the World Heritage Museum of the University of Illinois</i>
SAKI/SAK	<i>Die sumerischen und akkadischen K önigsinschriften</i>
SANER	<i>Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records</i>
SANTAG	<i>Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde</i>
SAOC	<i>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</i>
SAT	<i>Sumerian Archival Texts</i>
SCCNH	<i>Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians</i>
SET	<i>Sumerian Economic Texts from the Third Ur Dynasty</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>
TCL	<i>Textes cun éiformes, Mus ées du Louvre</i>
TIM	<i>Texts in the Iraq Museum</i>
TRU	<i>L. Legrain, Le temps des rois d'Ur</i>
TUAT	<i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i>
UAVA	<i>Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Arch äologie</i>
UE	<i>Ur Excavations</i>
UET	<i>Ur Excavations Texts</i>
WAW	<i>Writings from the Ancient World</i>
YNER	<i>Yale Near Eastern Researches</i>
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Arch äologie</i>

Conventions

References to cuneiform sources and other abbreviations in this study follow the conventions of the *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative* (CDLI). Sumerian texts are usually referenced according to their first publication listed in the database.

Dates are represented in the format of royal name + regnal year/month/day, and abbreviations for royal names are as follows: Š = Šulgi, AS = Amar-Suen, ŠS = Šu-Suen, IS = Ibbi-Suen. For example, the 15th day of the eighth month of Šulgi's 39th year would be represented as Š 39/8/15. All dates are given in Arabic numerals.

Translations of metrological notations and their conversions are as follows:

Weight

$$\begin{aligned} 1 \text{ gun}_2 (\text{talent}) &= 60 \text{ ma-na (mina)} = 3,600 \text{ gin}_2 (\text{shekel}) \\ &= 648,000 \text{ še (grain)} \approx 30 \text{ kilograms} \approx 66.08 \text{ pounds} \end{aligned}$$

Chapter I: Introduction

I.1) Historical Background of Ur III Dynasty

The third dynasty of Ur (ca. 2112-2004 BCE, commonly abbreviated as Ur III Dynasty) was the last unified dynasty established by the Sumerians, who had five kings: Ur-Nammu, Šulgi, Amar-Suen, Šu-Suen, and Ibbi-Suen.¹ Tens of thousands of administrative texts have survived from the period, making the Ur III Dynasty one of the best-documented periods in the entire history of the ancient Near East.² However, this wealth of data comes with several caveats, represented by temporal and geographic biases.³ First, 75% of the entire corpus comes from only three sites, namely Umma, Girsu and Puzriš-Dagan. The vast majority of these tablets date from Šulgi's 40th year to Ibbi-Suen's third, meaning that only about one-third of the dynasty is relatively well documented.⁴ Due to the uneven distribution of administrative documents, other not-so-reliable propagandistic materials (such as year names and literary texts) have to be used to some extent in the reconstruction of the political history of Ur III. This is especially the case with regard to the reigns of Ur-Namma, half of Šulgi and most of Ibbi-Suen.⁵ The usage and practical difficulties of linking year names to absolute dates and events in historical reconstructions will be discussed later in this chapter.

First of all, it is necessary to define the state form of the Ur III Dynasty, in order

¹ The dates used in this dissertation follow the middle chronology; see J. Reade, "Assyrian King-Lists, the Royal Tombs of Ur, and Indus Origins", *JNES*, vol. 60, no. 1 (January 2001), pp. 1-29.

² M. Molina, "The Corpus of Neo-Sumerian Tablets: An Overview", in S. J. Garfinkle and J. C. Johnson (eds.), *The Growth of an Early State in Mesopotamia: Studies in Ur III Administration*, Madrid: CSIC Press, 2008, pp. 19-53; For a recent discussion of the vast numbers of cuneiform texts from Ur III, see Widell Magnus, "The Sumerian Expression a-ra2 X-kam and the Use of Installments in the Ur III Administration", *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 8-9.

³ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 16-17, 24-25.

⁴ For possible factors that influenced the number of tablets drafted and preserved, see Miguel Civil, "Ur III Bureaucracy: Quantitative Aspects," in McGuire Gibson and Robert D. Biggs (eds.), *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, SAOC 46, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1991, pp. 35-44. More recently, see Magnus Widell, "Administrative and Archival Procedures in Early Babylonia: With an Addendum on the Implications on Sealing Practices", in Sven Günther, Wayne Horowitz and Magnus Widell (eds.), *Of Rabid Dogs, Hunchbacked Oxen, and Infertile Goats in Ancient Babylonia: Studies Presented to Wu Yuhong on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, Journal of Ancient Civilizations, Supplement Series 7, Changchun: Northeast Normal University Press, 2021, 293-319.

⁵ Magnus Widell, "Reconstructing the Early History of the Ur III State: Some Methodological Considerations of the Use of Year Formulae", *JAC*, vol. 17 (2002), pp. 99-111; Jacob L. Dahl, "Naming Ur III Years", in Alexandra Kleiner and Jack M. Sasson (eds.), *Why Should Someone Who Knows Something Conceal It? Cuneiform Studies in Honor of David I. Owen on His 70th Birthday*, Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2010, pp. 85-93.

to better understand the reasons for some of its political, economic and military activities.⁶ Scholars conventionally use the word “empire” to describe the Ur III Dynasty and view this dynasty as a highly centralized state with an enormously bureaucratic system. However, specific definitions differ in modern terminology; some scholars take a skeptical view of the degree of the empire’s centralization and development of bureaucracy.⁷ In terms of the political and economic system, the Ur III state was mainly composed of the core and periphery regions, which in turn were divided into a number of provinces, with different means of organization and management. During the Ur III period, it is possible that civil and military powers in central provinces were intentionally separated; the civil power was held by local ruling families, while the military power was wielded by military commanders who came from the royal family.⁸ That is to say, the king had the core region under his relatively firm control and also had limited jurisdiction over the periphery areas, especially the land governed by local ruling families. As a result, in addition to external threats, all Ur III kings also faced challenges from local powers and had to dedicate their forces to fighting against internal centrifugal tendencies.

The origin of the Ur III Dynasty is unclear, but the beginning of the story should begin with the establishment of the fifth dynasty of Uruk.⁹ (ca. 2123-2113 BCE, commonly abbreviated as Uruk V Dynasty) Utu-hegal, the king of Uruk, defeated the Gutian and brought back ancient Mesopotamia to Sumerian time. At that time,

⁶ For a general introduction to the Ur III Dynasty, see most recently, Piotr Steinkeller, “The Sargonic and Ur III Empires”, in Peter F. Bang, C. A. Bayly and Walter Scheidel (eds.), *The Oxford World History of Empire, Volume 2: The History of Empires*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 43-72.

⁷ For different definition of “empire”, see Mark Chavalas, “The Age of Empires, 3100-900 BCE”, in Daniel C. Snell (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 34-47. Skepticism about the centralization level, see typically Steven J. Garfinkle, “Was the Ur III State Bureaucratic? Patrimonialism and Bureaucracy in the Ur III Period”, in Steven J. Garfinkle and J. Cale Johnson (eds.), *The Growth of an Early State in Mesopotamia: Studies in Ur III Administration: Proceedings of the First and Second Ur III Workshops at the 49th and 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, London July 10, 2003 and Chicago July 19, 2005*, BPOA 5, Madrid: CSIC Press, 2008, pp. 55-62.

⁸ Piotr Steinkeller, “The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery”, in McGuire Gibson and Robert Biggs (eds.), *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, SAOC 46, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1991, pp. 18-33. More recently, see Piotr Michalowski, “Networks of Authority and Power in Ur III Times”, in Steven J. Garfinkle and Manuel Molina (eds.), *From the 21st Century B.C. to the 21st Century A.D.: Proceedings of the International Conference on Neo-Sumerian Studies Held in Madrid, 22-24, July 2010*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013, pp. 169-205.

⁹ For more on the early formation of Ur III Dynasty, see Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition*, OBO 166, Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, pp. 1-8; Magnus Widell, “The Calendar of Neo-Sumerian Ur and Its Political Significance.” *CDLJ*, vol. 2004, no. 2 (14 May 2004), pp. 1-7.

Ur-Nammu was a general (šagina) of Utu-hegal in Ur, who may also have participated in the struggle against the Gutian.¹⁰ After Utu-hegal's short-lived hegemony, Ur-Nammu (ca. 2112-2095 BCE) took over power and established the Ur III Dynasty on the basis of the Uruk V Dynasty. Some scholars have speculated that Ur-Nammu may have come from the royal family of Uruk, as Ur III kings forged very close political and cultural ties between Ur and Uruk. However, there is no conclusive evidence of Ur-Nammu's kinship with Utu-hegal.¹¹ During his reign, Ur-Nammu took control of the major cities in the south and actively expanded his influence in the north. While doing so, he appointed his daughter to be entu-priestess of Nanna at Ur and nominated one of his sons to be en-priest of Inanna at Uruk. Ur-Nammu not only wanted to expand his religious influence but also wanted to integrate Ur and Uruk. His building programs and maintenance of the existing canals were mostly recorded in year names and a few historical sources. These programs included building the wall of Ur and some temples or ziggurats for Enki, Nanna and other major gods. Ur-Nammu also returned the Magan trade to Ur, and this trade line continued until the fall of the dynasty.¹² As the first relatively-complete written law code in the world, the Ur-Nammu code was named after him, but some scholars believe that the code should be attributed to the second king, Šulgi.¹³ The circumstances surrounding Ur-Nammu's death are obscure; the only source known is a composition named "Death of Ur-Nammu", which suggests that he died on the battlefield.¹⁴ All in all, very little information exists in recorded literature about the above two kings, Utu-hegal and Ur-Nammu, except for their expelling of the Gutians. This lack of information means investigating the wars under their rule is difficult.

¹⁰ Douglas R. Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*, RIME 2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 295-96.

¹¹ Peeter Espak, "The Establishment of Ur III Dynasty. From the Gutians to the Formation of the Neo-Sumerian Imperial Ideology and Pantheon", in Thomas R. Kämmerer, Mait Kõiv and Vladimir Sazonov (Eds.), *Kings, Gods and People, Establishing Monarchies in the Ancient World*, AOAT 390/4, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016, p. 94.

¹² For the events in time of Ur-Nammu, see Douglas R. Frayne, *Ur III Period (2112-2004 BC)*, RIME 3/2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997, pp. 10-20.

¹³ Piotr Steinkeller, "The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery", in SAOC 46, p. 17, no. 10. For a recent edition of Laws of Urnamma, see Miguel Civil, "The Law Collection of Ur-Namma", in A. George (ed.), *Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection*, CUSAS 17, Bethesda: CDL Press, 2011, pp. 221-286.

¹⁴ For the last and most complete edition, see Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition*, Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, pp. 93-192.

Šulgi (ca. 2094-2047 BCE), the son of Ur-Nammu, was the actual builder of the Ur III state and promoted the state's prosperity.¹⁵ Researches about Šulgi focus heavily on the last eight to ten years of his long reign, in large part because of the extensive textual records available since then. Although the year names are intended to promote the king's legitimacy and praise his greatest deeds, they also provide a window into the early years of Šulgi. According to year names, the remarkable long reign of Šulgi could be roughly divided into two stages. The first 20 years focused on domestic and cultic activities. After that, Šulgi turned to frequent military campaigns for the rest of his reign, which can be seen from the table below.¹⁶

Table 1. Year Names of Šulgi that Contain Military Elements

Transliteration of Year Names	Translation of Year Names
20b. mu dumu uri ₂ ^{ki} -ma lu ₂ ^{ges} gid ₂ -še ₃ ka ba-ab-keš ₂	Year: The men of Ur were conscripted as lancers
21c. mu BAD ₃ -ANki (= Der) ba-hul	Year: Der was destroyed
24. mu kar ₂ -har ^{ki} ba-hul	Year: Karahar was destroyed
25b. mu si-mu-ru-um ^{ki} ba-hul	Year: Simurrum was destroyed
26b. mu si-mu-ru-um ^{ki} a-ra ₂ 2-kam-ma-aš ba-hul	Year: Simurrum was destroyed a second time
27b. mu ha-ar-ši ^{ki} ba-hul	Year: Harszi was destroyed
31b. mu kar ₂ -har ^{ki} a-ra ₂ 2-kam-aš ba-hul	Year: Karhar was destroyed for the second time
32. mu si-mu-ru-um ^{ki} a-ra ₂ 3-kam-aš ba-hul	Year: Simurrum was destroyed for the third time
33b. mu kar ₂ -har ^{ki} a-ra ₂ 3-kam-aš ba-hul	Year: Karhar was destroyed for the third time
34c. mu an-ša-an ^{ki} ba-hul	Year: Anshan was destroyed
37b. mu dnanna u ₃ ^d šul-gi lugal-e bad ₃ ma-da mu-du ₃	Year: Nanna and Šulgi the king built the wall of the land
37c. mu bad ₃ ma-da ba-du ₃	Year: The wall of the land was built

¹⁵ Jacob. L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, p. 15.

¹⁶ For an overview study of Šulgi's reign, see Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011.

42b. mu lugal-e ša-aš-ru-um ^{ki} mu-hul	Year: The king destroyed Šašrum
44b. mu si-mu-ru-um ^{ki} u ₃ lu-lu-bu-um/bum ^{ki} a-ra ₂ 1(u) la ₂ 1(aš)-kam-aš ba-hul	Year: Simurrum and Lullubum were destroyed for the ninth time
45b. mu ^d šul-gi nita kal-ga lugal uri ^{ki} -ma lugal an ub-da limmu ₂ -ba-ke ₄ ur-bi ₂ -lum ^{ki} si-mu-ru-um ^{ki} lu-lu-bu ^{ki} u ₃ kar ₂ -har ^{ki} 1-še ₃ sag-du-bi šu-bur ₂ -a bi ₂ -ra-a / im-mi-ra	Year: Šulgi, the strong man, the king of Ur, the king of the four quarters, smashed the heads of Urbilum, Simurrum, Lullubum and Karhar in a single campaign
46b. mu ^d šul-gi nita kal-ga lugal uri ^{ki} -ma lugal an ub-da limmu ₂ -ba-ke ₄ ki-maš ^{ki} hu-ur ₅ -ti ^{ki} u ₃ ma-da-bi u ₄ 1-a mu-hul	Year: Šulgi, the strong man, the king of Ur, the king of the four quarters, destroyed Kimaš, Hurti and their territories in a single day
48b. mu ha-ar-ši ^{ki} ki-maš ^{ki} hu-ur ₅ -ti ^{ki} u ₃ ma-da-bi u ₄ 1-bi ba-hul	Year: Harshi, Kimaš, Hurti and their territories were destroyed in a single day
48c. mu ki-maš ^{ki} a-ra ₂ 2-kam ba-hul	Year: Kimaš was destroyed for the second time
48d. mu 2-kam ha-ar-ši ^{ki} ba-hul	Year: Harši was destroyed for the second time

As indicated by year names, royal inscriptions and a few administrative documents, Šulgi waged more than a dozen wars.¹⁷ A detailed examination of the wars themselves will be covered in later chapters; only a brief introduction of the preparations and measures used to support the war effort will be given here. According to P. Steinkeller, Šulgi implemented ten important social and political reforms during his reign:¹⁸

1. Self-deification
2. Establishment of a standing army in core provinces
3. Reorganization of the system of temple household and confiscation of its property
4. Unification of administration for southern and northern Babylonia

¹⁷ Marcos Such-Gutiérrez, “Year Names as Source for Military Campaigns in the Third Millennium BC”, in Johanna Luggin and Sebastian Fink (eds.), *Battle Descriptions as Literary Texts: A Comparative Approach*, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020, pp. 9-29.

¹⁸ It should be pointed out that there are no systematic records of the so-called “Šulgi’s reforms” found at present, but they are inferred and summarized from scattered administrative documents and other materials. Piotr Steinkeller, “The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery”, in SAOC 46, pp. 16-17.

5. Introduction of the bala taxation system and the creation of various redistribution centers, represented by Puzriš-Dagan
6. Creation of a bureaucratic apparatus as well as a system of scribal training schools
7. Reform of the writing system
8. Introduction of new accounting methods and new types of administrative archives
9. Reorganization and unification of the system of weights and measures
10. Introduction of a new calendar, which was used as the official calendar throughout the state

In spite of the controversy among scholars surrounding the content of Šulgi's reforms, the contribution of those reforms to the whole dynasty is beyond doubt.¹⁹ It seems likely that successive kings more or less pushed through reforms while they were in office, but not on the scale or to the extent that Šulgi did.²⁰ As the Ur III Dynasty was a state founded on war, the reason and purpose of these reforms was also likely to make preparation for the subsequent wars, which happened frequently in the second half of Šulgi's reign. These reform measures did exert varying degrees of influence on the polity, economy, culture and religion at that time. One benefit of his reform of accounting and recording procedures is that a large amount of administrative archives survived, covering the period from the time of Šulgi to the end of the dynasty. This makes the Ur III Dynasty one of the most documented periods in the history of ancient Mesopotamia.²¹ Although, on the surface, Šulgi's ruling pattern was not much different from that of his predecessor, the orderly and intentional preservation of a large number of official documents reveals the fact that the nature of the state of the Ur III Dynasty changed fundamentally. The well-known Martu Wall, which was finished during Šu-Suen's reign, in fact, started to be built from the time of

¹⁹ Steinkeller proposes a broad scheme of the Šulgi reforms. In contrast, it seems to Sallaberger only the first, fifth and the last reforms are indisputable and verifiable, while the rest are in doubt. See Walther Sallaberger, "Ur III-Zeit", in Walther Sallaberger and Aage Westenholz (eds.), *Mesopotamien: Akkade-Zeit und Ur III-Zeit*, OBO 160/3, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, p.148.

²⁰ For example, Šu-Suen further developed the concept of divine kingship, see Nicole Brisch, "The Priestess and the King: The Divine Kingship of Šu-Sin of Ur", *JAOS*, vol. 126 (2006), pp. 161-176.

²¹ Miguel Civil, "Ur III Bureaucracy: Quantitative Aspects", *SAOC* 46, pp. 44-49.

Šulgi.²² The Martu Wall was not only a military defense facility, but also a symbol of national territorial boundaries. The wall indicated the transformation of the Ur III Dynasty from a territorial state with no clear borders to a relatively unified state; an empire even began to take shape. After the wall was built, the Ur III kings began to focus on expanding their political influence and territory within the Martu Wall and breaking down the influence of local political forces. Fighting foreign enemies also became a means to achieve this particular political end.

The deification of Šulgi, one of the most significant measures in his reform (and a reform followed by all his successors) was in accordance with his military policy of expansion and aggression. This was the first time a Sumerian living king became a god, though the practice of divine kingship was introduced by the Akkadian king Naram-Sin.²³ In many aspects, Šulgi's deification was different from apotheosis in Akkadian Dynasty, the latter of which was described as an act of blasphemy in later literature, such as *The Curse of Akkade*. It seems that the motivation for Šulgi's self-deification was politically oriented.²⁴ One can see from numerous archives that Šulgi had gained almost absolute control over most of the country at that time, but this control still had some defects. Therefore, Šulgi had to resort to the power of religion to stabilize his political power. The strategy of divine kingship was undoubtedly effective and successful, allowing the kings of the Ur III Dynasty to take the moral and cultural high ground to more justifiably wage foreign wars, as well as to interiorly assert firmer control.²⁵ This new identity also gave the kings a more reasonable status, enabling them to intervene in religious affairs and especially in economic activities

²² Minna L. Silver, "Climate Change, the Mardu Wall, and the Fall of Ur", in Olga Drewnowska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Warsaw, 21-25 July 2014*, RAI 60, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 271-295.

²³ Benjamin R. Foster, *The Age of Agade: Inventing Empire in Ancient Mesopotamia*, London, New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 13, p. 140. For a discussion of divine kingship in ancient Mesopotamia, see recently Piotr Michalowski, "The Mortal Kings of Ur: A Short Century of Divine Rule in Ancient Mesopotamia," in Nicole Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, OIS 4, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008, pp. 33-45; Nicole Brisch, "Of Gods and Kings: Divine Kingship in Ancient Mesopotamia", *Religion Compass*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2013), pp. 37-46.

²⁴ Piotr Steinkeller, *History, Texts and Art in Early Babylonia*, SANER 15, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017, pp. 129-135.

²⁵ Ludek Vacin, "Tradition and Innovation in Šulgi's Concept of Divine Kingship", in Alfonso Archi (ed.), *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome, 4-8 July 2011*, RAI 57, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015, pp. 179-192.

related to the temples. This is important, as it is well-known that the temples of ancient Mesopotamia had accumulated a great deal of wealth, but the king had no right to intervene.²⁶ On the one hand, by agreement with the priestly order of Nippur, Šulgi used Enlil's position as king of the gods to impose a bala tribute on the cities, in order to reduce local power.²⁷ On the other hand, Šulgi's wives and daughters acquired the religious title *lukur*, which enabled them to help the king get involved in the administration of tributes,²⁸ including bala. In the 38th year of his rule, Šulgi established Puzriš-Dagan (modern Drehem) near Nippur, as a main distribution center controlled directly by the central government. From Puzriš-Dagan, grain, livestock and other supplies were redistributed throughout the country.²⁹ In the era of Šulgi, the costs of foreign wars were so great that it was necessary to set up such a central administration hub close to the bread-producing areas, to ensure the supply of military provisions. That may be one of the main reasons why this institution was set up. These two measures in the Šulgi era complemented each other and laid a solid foundation for the prosperity and stability of the Ur III Dynasty. Šulgi's other supplementary, which could also be beneficial to fighting wars, included the standardization of weights, measures and the writing system, as well as the calendar and year name in the places where his political power could exert influence.³⁰ Although these measures were not completely successful, they could ensure the unity of the state and prevent a number of potential threats to a certain extent.

The last three kings of the Ur III Dynasty, Amar-Suen (ca. 2046-2038 BCE),

²⁶ Richard E. Averbeck, "The Third Millennium Temple War and Peace in History and Religion", in Hans Neumann, Reinhard Dittmann, Susanne Paulus, Georg Neumann and Anais Schuster-Brandis (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden im Alten Vorderasien. 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Münster, 17-21, Juli 2006*, AOAT 401. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp. 41-67.

²⁷ For studies on bala, see William W. Hallo, "A Sumerian Amphictyony", *JCS*, vol.14, no.3 (1960), pp. 88-114; Tohru Maeda, "Bal-ensí in the Drehem Texts", *ASJ*, vol. 16 (1994), pp. 115-164; Tonia M. Sharlach, *Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State*, CM 26, Leiden, Boston: Brill and Styx, 2004.

²⁸ Tonia M. Sharlach, "Priestesses, Concubines, and the Daughters of Men: Disentangling the Meaning of the Word *lukur* in Ur III Times," in Piotr Michalowski (ed.), *On the Third Dynasty of Ur: Studies in Honor of Marcel Sigrist*, JCSSS 1, Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2008, pp. 177-183.

²⁹ For studies on Drehem, see Marcel Sigrist, *Drehem*, Bethesda: CDL Press, 1992; Christina Tsouparopoulou, "A Reconstruction of the Puzriš-Dagan Central Livestock Agency", *CDLJ*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (2 June 2013), pp. 1-15.

³⁰ For a general discussion of Šulgi's reforms, see J. N. Postgate, "Royal Ideology and State Administration in Sumer and Akkad", in Jack M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, CANE 1, New York: Charles Scribners' Son, 1995, pp. 401-402; Walther Sallaberger, "Ur III-Zeit", 1999, p. 148; for Ur III calendar, see Magnus Widell, "The Calendar of Neo-Sumerian Ur and Its Political Significance." *CDLJ*, vol. 2004, no. 2 (14 May 2004), pp. 1-7; for equivalencies and prices, see Eric L. Cripps, "The Structure of Prices in the Neo-Sumerian Economy (I): Barley Silver Price Ratios", *CDLJ*, vol. 2017, no. 2 (26 December 2017), pp. 1-44.

Šu-Suen (ca. 2037-2029 BCE) and Ibbi-Suen (ca. 2028-2004 BCE), were all brothers, as revealed by new materials from Garšana.³¹ The relationship between the three brothers has led Assyriologists to argue over the succession to the throne of Ur III, and to speculate on various palace coup stories.³² It is possible that the succession to the throne during this period was based on the principle of succession by adult princes only. This is because the king needed to have handling abilities and enough authority to rule on political and military affairs.³³ Mainly reflected in year names, the combination of the reigns of the three successive kings did not exceed that of Šulgi; there was also a marked decrease in the frequency of foreign conquests, compared with Šulgi. The reduction in the number of wars may reflect the declining of the state's power, but the possibility also exists that frequent foreign wars were no longer necessary, or they were unworthy to have a year name. For whatever reason, it seems likely that Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen oversaw a period of stability and turned their attention back to domestic political affairs. The result of this policy is also clear. After one rebellion after another on the part of local officers, Ibbi-Suen, the last monarch of the Ur III Dynasty, held on to power for more than a decade, even in the face of internal division.³⁴ This has to do, not only with the trade goods mentioned above, but also with the legitimacy of the dynastic regime. The divine rule of the state guaranteed the political ethics, whereby the dynasty would not be attacked by local forces, even if the dynasty was in decline situation. Ultimately, therefore, the Ur III

³¹ On seals of three subordinates, the princess Simat-Ištaran is described as “sister (nin9)” of both Šu-Suen and Ibbi-Suen, see Rudolf H. Mayr, & David I. Owen, “The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III period”, in Hartmut Waetzoldt & Giovanni Pettinato (eds.), *Von Sumer nach Ebla und zurück: Festschrift für Giovanni Pettinato zum 27. September 1999 gewidmet von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*, HSAO 9, Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 2004, p. 155, n. 53. Piotr Michalowski, “Of Bears and Men: Thoughts about the End of Šulgi’s Reign and the Ensuing Succession”, in D. S. Vanderhooft and A. Winitzer (eds.), *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature, Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013, pp. 285-319.

³² For the coup speculation surrounding the death of Šulgi and two of his queens, see Piotr Michalowski, “The Death of Šulgi”, *OrNS*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1977), pp. 220-225; for Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen’s competition for the throne, see Jacob L. Dahl, “The Quest for Eternity: Studies in Neo-Sumerian Systems of Succession”, in J. G. Dercksen (ed.), *Assyrian and Beyond, Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, PIHANS 100, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004, p. 131. See also Tonia M. Sharlach, “The Remembrance of Kings Past: The Persona of King Ibbi-Sin”, in D. S. Vanderhooft and A. Winitzer (eds.), *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature, Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013, pp. 426-432.

³³ This argument follows the “senior successive pattern” proposed by Jacob L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, pp. 7-12.

³⁴ Thorkild Jacobsen, “The Reign of Ibbi-Suen”, *JCS*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1953), pp. 36-47.

Dynasty was destroyed by foreigners, namely the Elamites. However, the collapse of the Ur III Dynasty was, without doubt, inevitable under the reign of Ibbi-Suen.³⁵ The powerful local rulers' rebellion led to the crumbling of the empire, and Ibbi-Suen had no effective way to restrain such behavior.³⁶ Although the process of disintegration was a long-drawn-out affair, no event can be compared with Išbi-Erra's betrayal, which had the most profound impact.³⁷ This is a very interesting topic and deserves to be discussed in depth and will therefore be highlighted in the following section dealing with the conflicts during the reign of Ibbi-Suen.

I.2) Geography and Environment

While giving a brief overview of the historical background, a brief introduction should be given with regard to several aspects related to the war, such as geographical location, climate, trade routes, science and technology.

The region under the political authority of Ur III rulers was changing all the time, in line with warfare and socioeconomic development. The state of Ur III in its heyday had a larger territory than that of Akkadian Dynasty. However, the core region of the kingdom, which was managed effectively, had not changed a lot during this period. To the south of the core region is the Persian Gulf, which was very different from today; the west was mainly the desert region of the Arabian Peninsula, so there were no powerful enemies in either direction that threatened the security of the kingdom. In the east, the kingdom had been battling the Elamites for control of the Zagros Mountains region. The mountain, sea and desert, as natural barriers, protected the kingdom and roughly defined the borders of the country in three directions, so the wars of Ur III mainly took place in the north and northeast.³⁸ Given the difficulty

³⁵ Tohru Ozaki, "On the Critical Economic Situation at Ur Early in the Reign of Ibbisin", *JCS*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Autumn 1984), pp. 211-242. More recently, see Eric L. Cripps, "The Structure of Prices in the Ur III Economy: Cults and Prices at the Collapse of the Ur III State", *JCS*, vol. 71 (2019), pp. 53-76.

³⁶ Walther Sallaberger, "Ur III-Zeit", in *OBO 160/3*, pp. 174-178.

³⁷ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur, An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 433-439.

³⁸ For an overview of the wars waged in north and northeast regions of Ur III, see Bertrand Lafont, "On the Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence", *CDLI*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), pp. 1-3; Liu Changyu, "Eastward Warfare and Westward Peace: the 'One-Sided' Foreign Policy of the Ur III Dynasty (2112-2004 BC)", *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 53-54.

with defining the northern border, the Martu Wall is a useful reference for demarcating the northern border. This is the general geographic scope of the Ur III Dynasty's core area. However, it is uncertain whether the dynasty also had maritime rights, so, for the time being, the Persian Gulf is not included. In general, the region under the authority of the Ur III Dynasty was bigger than any prior government in ancient Mesopotamia. Meanwhile, the core region of the kingdom was limited to the south of modern Iraq.³⁹

To attain a holistic picture of the rise and fall of the Ur III Dynasty, environmental and topographical factors should also be taken into consideration. The Mesopotamian plain experienced a long period of drought during the second half of the fourth millennium BC.⁴⁰ Over the next few hundred years, as the annual floods that regularly covered large tracts of the southern land were largely contained, many swamps and marshes gradually silted up, and new, fertile land became available for farming.⁴¹ Although the reduced level of rainfall that fell in southern Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC would not be able to sustain agriculture, the urbanization brought about a concentration of labor and the construction of large-scale irrigation systems. This made it possible to develop an essential biannual fallow regime.⁴² However, the narrowness of the alluvial plain and the mismanagement of irrigation systems made the arable land vulnerable to salinization.⁴³ In fact, the

³⁹ J. N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*, London, New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 3-21.

⁴⁰ Frank Hole, "Environmental Instabilities and Urban Origins", in Gil Stein and Mitchell S. Rothman (eds.) *Chiefdoms and Early States in the Near East: The Organizational Dynamics of Complexity*, Monographs in World Archaeology 18, Madison: Prehistory Press, 1994, pp. 127-131; see also Karl Butzer, "Environmental Change in the Near East and Human Impact on the Land", in Jack Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, CANE 1, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995, pp. 131-137; D. T. Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization: The Material Foundations*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, pp. 4-5.

⁴¹ Galina S. Morozova, "A Review of Holocene Avulsions of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and Possible Effects on the Evolution of Civilizations in Lower Mesopotamia", *Geoarchaeology: An International Journal*, vol. 20, no. 4 (2005), pp.401-423.

⁴² Piotr Steinkeller, "Land-Tenure Conditions in Third-Millennium Babylonia: The Problem of Regional Variation", in Michael Hudson and Baruch A. Levine (eds.), *Urbanization and Land Ownership in the Ancient Near East*. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1999, p. 302. For the development of the construction technology of agricultural irrigation system during this period, see Piotr Steinkeller, "Notes on the Irrigation System in Third Millennium Southern Babylonia", *BSA*, vol. 4, Irrigation and Cultivation in Mesopotamia Part I (1988), pp. 73-92. For urban revolution, cut a long story short, it is the inevitable result of political and economic development and environmental changes, see Mario Liverani, *Uruk: the First City*, London, Oakville: Equinox, 2006, pp. 5-7.

⁴³ M. B. Rowton, "Autonomy and Nomadism in Western Asia", *OrNS*, vol. 42 (1973), pp. 247-258; M. Gibson, "Violation of Fallow and Engineered Disaster in Mesopotamian Civilization", in T. E. Downing and M. Gibson (eds.), *Irrigation's Impact on Society*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974, pp. 7-19.

salinization theory was used by some scholars to explain the fall of the Sumerian civilization,⁴⁴ but this idea has been criticized in more recent studies.⁴⁵ In addition to salinization, a longer period of drought started from ca. 2300 BC and continued for 600 years, to ca. 1700 BC.⁴⁶ It has been suggested that drought quickens salinization, and the two factors together dominantly diminished agricultural productivity during the end of the third millennium BC.⁴⁷ The warfare may have also played a role in the fall of agricultural ratios, by turning farmers into soldiers and fields into battlefields. Therefore, the fall of the Ur III Dynasty and the Sumerian civilization may have had a background in environmental changes. The climatic and environmental changes were likely to work as trajectories for the attacks of the Amorite, the build of the Martu Wall and the final collapse of Ur III.⁴⁸

Southern Mesopotamia lacks many natural resources. The struggle for water resources and grain fields, the plunder of populations and the protection of trade routes were the main objectives of the war from Utu-hegal to Ibbi-Suen. As such, trade was another important component of the Ur III Dynasty.⁴⁹ The kingdom held in its hands trade routes from the Persian Gulf (south), Syria (west) and Afghanistan (east), and imposed its authority over the entire ancient Mesopotamia region.⁵⁰ This is how the Ur III Dynasty was able to control ancient Mesopotamia. As a trading post,

⁴⁴ Thorkild Jacobsen and Robert M. Adams, "Salt and Silt in Ancient Mesopotamian Agriculture: Progressive changes in soil salinity and sedimentation contributed to the breakup of past civilizations", *Science*, vol. 128, no. 3334 (21 November 1958), pp. 1251-1258.

⁴⁵ See for example, Marvin A. Powell, "Salt, Seed and Yields in Sumerian Agriculture: A Critique of the Theory of Progressive Salinization", *ZA*, vol. 75, no.1 (1985), pp.7-38; M. Altaweel, "Simulating the Effects of Salinization on Irrigation Agriculture in Southern Mesopotamia", in T. J. Wilkinson, M. Gibson and M. Widell (eds.), *Models of Mesopotamian Landscapes: How small-scale processes contributed to the growth of early civilizations*, BARIS 2552, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013, pp. 239-254.

⁴⁶ G. Fiorentino, "Palaeoprecipitation Trends and Cultural Changes in Syrian Protohistoric Communities: the Contribution of $\delta^{13}C$ in Ancient and Modern Vegetation", in G. Fiorentino, J. Kneisel, W. Kirleis, M. Dal Corso, N. Taylor and V. Tiedtke (eds.), *Collapse or Continuity? Environment and Development of Bronze Age Human Landscapes*, Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie 205. Bonn: Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2012, pp. 17-33; H. Weiss, "The Northern Levant during the Intermediate Bronze Age: Altered Trajectories", in M. L. Steiner and A. E. Killebrew (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant, c. 8000-332 b.c.e.*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 367-387.

⁴⁷ Minna L. Silver, "Climate Change, the Mardu Wall, and the Fall of Ur", in Olga Drewnowska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Warsaw, 21-25 July 2014*, RAI 60, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 276.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 287-288.

⁴⁹ Douglas R. Frayne, "The Zagros Campaigns of the Ur III Kings", *CSMS Journal*, vol. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 33-56.

⁵⁰ Steffen Laursen and Piotr Steinkeller, *Babylonia, the Gulf Region, and the Indus: Archaeological and Textual Evidence for Contact in the Third and Early Second Millennium B.C.*, MC 21, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 54-60.

the Ur III Dynasty still existed more than a decade after losing control of the northern east-west trade line at the end of the dynasty. For this reason, there were some irreplaceable necessities in the goods from the Persian Gulf, and these most likely included daily necessities. Therefore, even local officials had rebelled, and the Ur III Dynasty suffered a serious decline in power; no regime risked losing goods to fight for the dynasty. One of the goods was copper; almost all the copper ore in Mesopotamia came from Magan, which was a major trading partner in the Persian Gulf region during the Ur III Dynasty.⁵¹ The city of Ur was the capital and main city in the far south of the dynasty; Ur firmly controlled the coastline and trade routes of the Persian Gulf and monopolized all important resources from that direction. As the most important strategic resource in the Early Bronze Age, copper gave Ur III an absolute advantage over the northern and western kingdoms. This was one of the reasons why the dynasty failed but was not destroyed by political power in the north, in the reign of Ibbi-Suen. However, the dynasty had no such strategic deterrent advantage over the copper-rich and tin-rich Elamites; Ur III was ultimately destroyed by the Elamites.⁵² Thus, one can see that, since ancient Mesopotamia had difficulties in being self-sufficient in many aspects, especially metals and woods, trade had a huge impact on the situation in the region.

Science and technology were greatly developed in such frequent trade and exchange settings, but what should be noted is that the science and technology here was comparatively primitive and quite different from our current understanding of the concept. Several factors had a fundamental impact on the Ur III state's geopolitical policies, including metallurgy, architecture and agriculture. Among them, the development of metallurgy improved the equipment used in wars, including weapons, chariots and armor, all of which would likely affect the intensity and effectiveness of the war.⁵³ The progress in terms of construction technology greatly promoted the

⁵¹ Claudio Giardino, *Magan – The Land of Copper: Prehistoric Metallurgy of Oman*, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019, pp. 23-25.

⁵² About the distribution of copper and tin in this period, see Toby C. Wilkinson, *Tying the Threads of Eurasia: Trans-regional Routes and Material Flows in Transcaucasia, eastern Anatolia and western Central Asia, c.3000-1500 BC*, Leiden: Sidestone Press Dissertations, 2014, pp.158-164.

⁵³ William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 141-144.

establishment of fortresses, city moats and protective walls.⁵⁴ In addition, the development of agricultural techniques provided not only the necessary supplies for the war,⁵⁵ but also donkeys for chariots and munitions transport, and dogs that acted as guards in the army.⁵⁶ Given that any aspect of this progress can be studied independently and in depth, they will not be covered here;⁵⁷ only the necessary background information and discussion will be provided when related topics are covered in the following chapters.

The above is only a very brief historical background. Since the topic of this dissertation is conflict and war, this brief historical background is also much closer to the war than are other works. Some details and other necessary background information will be explained in detail in the following chapters as required.

I.3) Previous Research on Conflict and Warfare in the Ur III Dynasty

According to the different research object and method, military history research can be divided into the Old Military History and the New Military History. In contrast to Old Military History's top-down approach with emphasis of the careers and perspectives of kings and generals, New Military History sought to investigate the interaction of warfare and sectors of civilization including the economy, culture and society, and embraced a bottom-up approach that aims to expand research fields to ordinary class.⁵⁸ It is not uncommon to study the military history of ancient Mesopotamia by using the New Military History methodology, but the limitation of materials is still an obstacle to further research.

Many scholars have noted that the Babylonians in the third millennium did not

⁵⁴ Piotr Steinkeller, "Corvée labor in Ur III times", in Steven J. Garfinkle and Manuel Molina (eds.), *From the 21st Century B.C. to the 21st Century A.D.: Proceedings of the International Conference on Neo-Sumerian Studies Held in Madrid, 22-24, July 2010*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013, pp. 347-424.

⁵⁵ Magnus Widell, "Sumerian Agriculture and Land Management", in Harriet Crawford (ed.), *The Sumerian World*, London, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 55-67.

⁵⁶ For donkeys and dogs used in the battle field, see respectively William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 129-132; Christina Tsouparopoulou, "The 'K-9 Corps' of the Third Dynasty of Ur: The Dog Handlers at Drehem and the Army", *ZA*, vol. 102, no. 1 (May 2012), pp. 1-16.

⁵⁷ Other aspects, see for example P. B. Adamson, "The Military Surgeon: His Place in History", *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, vol. 128, no. 1 (January 1982), pp. 43-50.

⁵⁸ Lee L. Bruce & Jennifer T. Roberts, "Introduction", in Lee L. Bruce & Jennifer T. Roberts (eds.), *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World*, Claremont: Regina Books, 2011, pp. 1-10.

produce any broad historical narrative; nor did they create any genres of annals and chronicles, which are essential for the reconstruction of political and military history.⁵⁹ Therefore, studies of ancient Mesopotamian military forces have focused on the late-second and early-first millennia,⁶⁰ although some materials from the Old Babylonian period, especially the literary letters are likely to be an apocryphal corpus.⁶¹ There has been relatively rarer research on armies and military organizations in the third and early-second millennia. Military research is usually not the main subject of, but an adjunct to, other research. One exception is a general overview given by Y. Yadin, who conflates the archaeological data of these periods, overlooking administrative documents.⁶²

The general lack of traditional historical texts and the scattered information in various types of literature make studying the military and warfare of the Ur III Dynasty rather difficult. Until now, there were almost no comprehensive articles or books on the warfare of Ur III; the aspects of warfare also always make up only a small part of the content in the Ur III Dynasty studies. D. R. Frayne has undertaken significant work on royal inscriptions; this has involved the studies of historical geography on toponyms, military campaigns taken by certain kings and periphery regions.⁶³ The royal correspondence of Ur III kings has been systematically examined by P. Michalowski. The content of that correspondence dealt with many aspects of the military history of Ur III, including the construction of fortifications, the generals, the hostile Amorites and the fall of the state.⁶⁴ It should be pointed out

⁵⁹ See for example, Walther Sallaberger, "Stillstellung von Geschichte in den Texten des Herrschers im frühen Mesopotamien", *ArOr*, vol. 70, no. 2 (2002), pp. 117-124; Piotr Steinkeller, *History, Texts and Art in Early Babylonia*, SANER 15, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017, pp. 39-45.

⁶⁰ See for example, Robert Drews, *The End of the Bronze Age: Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe ca. 1200 B.C.*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

⁶¹ Fabienne Huber, "La Correspondance Royale d'Ur, un corpus apocryphe", *ZA*, vol. 91, no.2 (2001), pp. 169-206.

⁶² Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands: In the light of Archaeological Study*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963.

⁶³ Douglas R. Frayne, "On the Location of Simurrum", in Gordon D. Young et al (eds.), *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons: Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour on his 80th Birthday*, Bethesda: CDL Press, 1997, pp. 243-269; *Ur III Period (2112-2004 BC)*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997; "The Zagros Campaigns of Shulgi and Amar-Suena," in David I. Owen and Gernot Wilhelm (eds.), *Nuzi at Seventy-Five*, SCCNH 10, Bethesda: CDL Press, 1999, pp. 141-202.

⁶⁴ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur. An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011. See also Fabienne Huber, "La Correspondance Royale d'Ur, un corpus apocryphe", *ZA*, vol. 91, no.2 (2001), pp. 169-206.

that literary letters can hardly be counted as historical materials, and they provide very limited reliable information that can help us reconstruct history. Therefore, literary texts will be used sparingly and with great restraint in the following discussions.

However, since the beginning of the 21st century, investigations pertaining to the Ur III military have increased; an increasing number of scholars now regard Ur III warfare as a subject for independent study. Thus, the literature review may contain fewer studies from before the 21st century, and most of them deal with certain aspects of warfare in the Ur III period.⁶⁵

For the political organization of the Ur III state, P. Steinkeller proposed that Ur III consisted of the core and the periphery areas, with two kinds of tribute systems performed, respectively.⁶⁶ This argument has been recognized by many scholars and has made a significant impact in terms of explaining the territorial management and administrative system of the Ur III Dynasty. However, T. Maeda gave a reexamination of the *gu₂-na ma-da* tribute, which Steinkeller used as the main evidence in his discussion of the tribute paid by the defense zone.⁶⁷ In the form of four questions limited to political aspects, Maeda casts doubts on Steinkeller's arguments regarding the so-called defense zone in the Ur III Dynasty and gives his own explanation. As for the first key point of the relationship between "*gu₂-na*" and "*gu₂-na ma-da*" and the tendency to merge them in the Drehem texts, Maeda points out that only a few cases can be found. These few cases, he argues, are not enough to support the conclusion. Based on this, Maeda indicated that many geographical names appeared in Drehem texts that cannot be identified with the vassal states given by Steinkeller. Maeda also clears up a list of vassal states; that list sharply different from the defense zone on which the *gu₂-na ma-da* tribute was levied. In addition, Maeda pays close attention to two key figures named Zariq who was the ruler of Susa and the military governor of Assur; Selush-Dagan who was the ruler of Simurum. Maeda used them to identify the relationship between the kings of Ur and the defense zone. Maeda finally drew the

⁶⁵ For some early works, see mainly Albrecht Goetze, "The Šakkanakkus of the Ur III Empire", *JCS*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1963), pp. 1-31; William W. Hallo, "Simurum and the Hurrian Frontier", *RHA*, vol. 36 (1978), pp. 71-83.

⁶⁶ Piotr Steinkeller, "The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery", in *SAOC* 46, pp. 18-33.

⁶⁷ Tohru Maeda, "The Defense Zone during the Rule of the Ur III Dynasty", *ASJ*, vol. 14 (1992), pp. 135-172.

conclusion that, due to certain historical environments, the defensive areas may have had the characteristics of military buffer zones.

The monograph of W. J. Hamblin aimed to analyze the complete history of warfare in the ancient Near East, starting from the very beginning, right up to 1600 BCE. In addition, some special research directions, such as “war-carts and chariots” and “Mesopotamian siege craft”, are proposed in this book.⁶⁸ Hamblin uses pictures to visually show the development of Sumerian war-carts from 2700 to 2000 BCE, as well as the shape of siege craft in early Mesopotamia. These items were rarely mentioned by previous researchers. It is also worth mentioning that Hamblin’s usage of the comprehensive method of taking both sides in the war into account in one book, namely, the Ur III Dynasty and its enemies or allies, was really a good idea for studying wars. His approach will no doubt expand the field of research and inspire future discussion.

For military campaign purposes, Frayne pointed out that the primary aim of Ur III imperialism was to give Babylon direct access to natural resources that were not available locally. This was achieved by extending trade routes along the Great Khurasan Road.⁶⁹ Frayne’s study focuses mainly on the campaigns around Dēr during the reigns of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi, but also uses some materials from the Old Akkadian Period and even modern tools, including maps, lexical evidence and other relevant materials. Frayne concluded that the territory in the periphery of Ur III was “northeast, up the Diyālā River, as far as the headwaters of the Sirwān River and further inland to the area of modern Lake Zeribor”. This topic was also discussed in the same year by Steinkeller, at the 54th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. Steinkeller proposed that the major thrust of Ur III was “up the Diyālā River, to its headwaters in the Zagros foothills”. The aim was to restore an ancient trade route which had been used in late Early Dynastic periods by Kish kings.⁷⁰ One can see that the two agreed on the purpose of the war, but differed on the scope of the periphery

⁶⁸ William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006.

⁶⁹ Douglas R. Frayne, “The Zagros Campaigns of the Ur III Kings”, *CSMS Journal*, vol. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 33-56.

⁷⁰ Piotr Steinkeller, “The Grand Strategy of the Ur III Empire: Exquisite Design, Perfect Failure”, Paper delivered at the 54th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Würzburg, Germany, July 21st, 2008.

areas.⁷¹

As for the army, a study by B. Lafont presents an overview of the textual evidence of the armies of Ur III; this is a subject worthy of intensive study.⁷² The identification of some characteristic military vocabulary recorded in the administrative documents constitutes one of the important contents of Lafont's article. Although not a lot of characteristic military terminology is given by Lafont, some key points are presented that justify the study of Ur III Dynasty armies in the future. The main part of this article pertains to the troops, regular army and different types of soldiers, information which is very useful for studying the military system of that time. In addition, Lafont also conducted an extensive study about the garrisons in occupied lands; such garrisons were a significant component of military and economic aspects during that period. Although Lafont did not write much about the chain of command, or the weapons and equipment used in the war, his article provides a large number of key words that can be used to study Ur III Dynasty warfare. However, the content of this study is only 25 pages, which does not include enough space to present a detailed study.⁷³

For some specific battles, G. Marchesi argued that Ur-Nammu had defeated Susa before the capture of Susa by Šulgi. This argument was very different from traditional views.⁷⁴ Marchesi used CBS 14934 and CBS 14935 to speculate that these two fragments belonged to Ur-Nammu when he defeated Susa and took booty back to Ur. In addition, Marchesi proposed that the translation of 𒀭UL as "to destroy" was not suitable, as a city cannot be destroyed several times within a few years. Thus, Marchesi suggested that words such as "to smite, strike (mortally)" or "to annihilate"

⁷¹ Other studies on neighbouring foreign groups or geographical entity and their interaction with Ur III, see Piotr Michalowski, "Observations on 'Elamites' and 'Elam' in Ur III Times", in Piotr Michalowski (ed.), *On the Third Dynasty of Ur: Studies in Honor of Marcel Sigrist*, JCSSS1, Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2008, pp. 109-124; Piotr Steinkeller, "New Light on Šimaški and its Rulers", *ZA*, vol. 97, no. 2 (2007), pp. 215-232; "On the Dynasty of Šimaški: Twenty Years (or so) After", in Michael Kozuh et al. (eds.), *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper*, SAOC 68, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014, pp. 287-296.

⁷² Bertrand Lafont, "The Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence", *CDLI*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), pp. 1-25.

⁷³ For an addition to army research utilizing archives from Garšana, see Bertrand Lafont, "The Garšana Soldiers", in David I. Owen (ed.), *Garšana Studies*, CUSAS 6, Bethesda: CDL Press, 2011, pp. 213-220.

⁷⁴ Gianni Marchesi, "Ur-Nammā(k)'s Conquest of Susa", in Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier (eds.), *Susa and Elam: Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives (Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. 285-291.

should be used instead of 𒄨UL in translating Ur III texts.

Based on BM 12411 and year names of Šulgi, P. Michalowski speculated that Mari may have been defeated one time in the 45th year of Šulgi's reign, but this was not a victory for Ur over its Syrian ally.⁷⁵ Given the constant flow of messengers between Syrian cities and Ur, as well as the absence of any sign of hostilities between the two, Mari should not have been destroyed. Michalowski pointed out that, if Ur had actually defeated Mari, the home armies' reports of victories should have been presented as "wonderful news" (a₂-aĝ₂-ĝa₂ sig₅) instead of just 'news'. As far as Michalowski is concerned, translating the Sumerian verb 𒄨UL as "destroyed" is an exaggerated expression that can refer to any kind of military defeat, including sometimes at a lower level and sometimes at a more profound level. Similar views were proposed by Michalowski in 2011.⁷⁶ Other arguments for the use of "destroy" in year names were made by M. Widell some 20 years ago. Widell argued that the frequent declaration of the repeated destruction of cities does not prove, or even imply, that they were in fact incorporated into Ur III states.⁷⁷

In terms of labor and work force, A. Garcia-Ventura argued that a kind of "bio-politics" existed in the Ur III Dynasty, to balance the relationship between warfare and work force management.⁷⁸ In addition to the year names, other materials are used to help define the wars that took place during the Ur III Dynasty, with more attention paid to the capture of prisoners during military campaigns. These prisoners were used to increase the work force for the ongoing institutional production. There were fewer men captives than women, who were seen as a main kind of booty that could be used to effectively replenish the labor force.

For comparative studies, S. J. Garfinkle recently compared the Ur III Dynasty with the Roman Republic and attempted to understand the relationship between booty

⁷⁵ Piotr Michalowski, "News of a Mari Defeat from the Time of King Šulgi", *N.A.B.U.*, no.2 (2013), pp. 36-41.

⁷⁶ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur. An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁷ Magnus Widell, "Reconstructing the Early History of the Ur III State: Some Methodological Considerations of the Use of Year Formulae", *JAC*, vol. 17 (2002), pp. 99-111.

⁷⁸ Agnès Garcia-Ventura, "Ur III Biopolitics: Reflections on the Relationship between War and Work Force Management", in Davide Nadali and Jordi Vidal (eds.), *The Other Face of the Battle: The Impact of War on Civilians in the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 413, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp. 7-23.

and warfare in Ur III.⁷⁹ Garfinkle suggested that it was the social-economic concerns of domestic elites, rather than strategic concerns at the state level, that drove war decisions. However, his over-referencing of the Roman Republic causes the study of booty in the Ur III Dynasty to become fragmented. Compared with some other studies, Garfinkle came to the conclusion that the incessant wars during the Ur III period were more economically- than strategically-oriented. This was likely to have been the result of the development of a “prestige economy”. Garfinkle’s article provides a new dimension for military studies, stimulating studies of the motivation and aim of warfare in the Ur III Dynasty from the economic perspective.

L. Hebenstreit presented information found in the booty text from three different perspectives. Firstly, Hebenstreit compared year names of the Ur III Dynasty with the texts about booty to confirm the warfare that took place at that time. Secondly, most of the texts recorded the geographical origins of the spoils, and the largest source of booty was found to have come from the Amorite land. Thirdly, although animals were the main object accounted for as the spoils of war, the nature of trophies changed from animals to slaves during the Amar-Suen reign. Three graphs were created by Hebenstreit to show the varying trends of booty and warfare, which is a good way to explain his viewpoints in this article.⁸⁰

S. Fink listed all year names that contain wars in the Ur III Dynasty and groups these year names into five types. This helps us to understand the different reasons for using different types of year names.⁸¹ By comparing the descriptions of battles in royal inscriptions, Fink found that the information provided by year names can serve as being only supplementary for some battles, based solely on inscriptions. Since war was not the main theme of Ur III’s royal inscriptions, the absence of any mention of

⁷⁹ Steven J. Garfinkle, “The Economy of Warfare in Southern Iraq at the End of the Third Millennium BC”, in Hans Neumann, Reinhard Dittmann, Susanne Paulus, Georg Neumann and Anais Schuster-Brandis (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden im Alten Vorderasien: 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Münster, 17.–21. Juli 2006*, AOAT 401, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp. 353-362.

⁸⁰ Laurent Hebenstreit, “The Sumerian Spoils of War During Ur III”, in Hans Neumann, Reinhard Dittmann, Susanne Paulus, Georg Neumann and Anais Schuster-Brandis (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden im Alten Vorderasien: 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Münster, 17.–21. Juli 2006*, AOAT 401, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp.373-380.

⁸¹ Sebastian Fink, “Battle and War in the Royal Self-Representation of the Ur III Period”, in Thomas R. Kämmerer, Mait Kōv and Vladimir Sazonov (eds.), *Kings, Gods and People: Establishing Monarchies in the Ancient World*, AOAT 390/4, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016, pp.109-134.

war in royal inscriptions does not simply mean that wars were not waged during the king's reign. At least in part, Fink picked up some literary texts about battles from the Ur III Dynasty, such as "*The Curse of Akkad*", to try to describe the wars during Ur III.

D. Patterson's 2018 comprehensive doctoral dissertation, "Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military", is divided into three main sections: the framework of the Ur III military history, troop designations and the garrison system. In addition, military terms are attested in the messenger texts.⁸² In the first section, though Patterson provides a detailed analysis of the difficulties caused by the dearth of historiographic texts and archaeological remains, the possibility of still reaching a relatively detailed understanding of the Ur III military is proposed. The methodology of mining the previously overlooked administrative corpus (especially the messenger texts) for insights into the military terminology, organization and activities, is also highlighted in this chapter. After a detailed examination of administrative texts and the identification of new garrison settlements in the second section, Patterson was able to demonstrate that waystations in different provinces were likely to have had different "jurisdictions," although there was some overlap. In addition, these provincial waystations were used by a large number of foreign visitors traveling to and from southern Mesopotamia. The third section mainly focuses on the martial terminology found in messenger texts, which is used to distinguish between the titles of occupation, rank and function.

S. J. Garfinkle suggested that the Ur III Dynasty was a failed example, which relied on the king's charisma at home and on the royal authority abroad to "extract tribute and booty from the people who lived along its frontiers and from outlying communities beyond the boundaries of southern Mesopotamia."⁸³ This article is based on this assumption, but the needed evidence to support that assumption is severely lacking. The source of this hypothesis is likely the same as was used in

⁸² Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018.

⁸³ Steven J. Garfinkle, "The Kingdom as Sheepfold: Frontier Strategy under the Third Dynasty of Ur; a View from the Center", in Grant Frame, Joshua Jeffers and Holly Pittman (eds.), *Ur in the Twenty-First Century CE: Proceedings of the 62nd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Philadelphia, July 11–15, 2016*, RAI 62, University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021, pp. 245-251.

Garfinkle's paper in 2014, which drew on the political and economic patterns of ancient Rome. The main body of that article involves some speculation but lacks necessary argumentation and evidence. For example, the author does not have a clear definition of the concept of frontier and boundary, which can be taken from the political geography in ancient Mesopotamia during the Ur III Dynasty. Rather, Garfinkle directly uses the walls of Šulgi and Šu-Suen as the content of national boundaries and sees these as 'common sense evidence'. The control of frontier areas was not only for grazing, but also for maintaining control of mineral resources, water resources, etc. Animal husbandry should not be regarded as the only important content, because the kings were called shepherds in religious literature.

Overall, the military and war history of the Ur III Dynasty has been studied more and more recently, so this is really a good time to find a suitable methodology to create a framework for these studies.

I.4) Methodology and Sources

The textual sources of military research in the Ur III period mainly consist of year names, royal inscriptions, administrative documents. One of the most frequently used sources of Ur III political history is the year formulae, which were used as a method of dating the tens of thousands of administrative texts. These year names are made up of major political or religious events, such as a king's accession to the throne, wars, diplomatic marriages, cultic constructions, and appointments of the great priest. The information contained in year names can help to provide a framework for political history reconstruction, offering important information pertaining to certain aspects of warfare, military policy and political relationship.⁸⁴ It should be noted, however, that military achievements recorded in the names of years could be exaggerated or may even be fictional. In fact, many scholars have argued that the nature of the Ur III year formulae is a kind of propaganda, which should be

⁸⁴ Marcos Such-Gutiérrez, "Year Names as Source for Military Campaigns in the Third Millennium BC", in Johanna Luggin and Sebastian Fink (eds.), *Battle Descriptions as Literary Texts: A Comparative Approach*, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020, pp. 9-29.

considered more as royal inscriptions or even a literary sub-genre.⁸⁵ These concerns and objections are undoubtedly valid and apply equally to royal inscriptions. The specific details recorded in two genres can only be accepted as historical fact if those details are corroborated by other less-biased sources, like administrative texts.⁸⁶ Therefore, year names and royal inscriptions are cautiously used in this thesis. The aim here is to examine the possible state policy and military ambitions indicated by these concerted propaganda efforts.

Among these corpora, the administrative and economic texts are by far the most important and reliable sources. They offer numerous references to various aspects of war, including goods and materials, weapons and equipment, the spoils of war, and even clues to the military relationships with foreign neighbors. Compared to other genres, the majority of the administrative documents contain information pertaining to location and date, thereby endowing the information contained therein with a certain amount of definitiveness. In addition, the archives offer a faithful and accurate record of economic activities, without regard to rhetoric or ideology, and can thus be considered more objective and credible.⁸⁷ Finally, in relation to the topic of Ur III warfare, the category of the so-called “messenger texts” recorded in administrative archives provide us with the main concentration of information on military affairs.⁸⁸ Although these administrative texts had temporal and geographic biases, there is still a wealth of data on military affairs in Ur III to be mined.⁸⁹ Accessing the corpora created during Ur III has now become possible with digital versions such as: *The Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*, *The Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts*

⁸⁵ See, for example, Magnus Widell, “Reconstructing the Early History of the Ur III State: Some Methodological Considerations of the Use of Year Formulae”, *JAC*, vol. 17 (2002), pp. 101-102; Karen Radner, *Die Macht des Names. Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung*. SANTAG 8, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005, p. 112.

⁸⁶ Liu Changyu, “Eastward Warfare and Westward Peace: the “One-Sided” Foreign Policy of the Ur III Dynasty (2112–2004 BC)”, *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 53-54.

⁸⁷ Piotr Steinkeller, “Archival Practices at Babylonia in the Third Millennium”, in M. Brosius (ed.), *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 37-58; Christina Tsouparopoulou, “Counter-Archaeology: Putting the Ur III Drehem Archives Back in the Ground”, in Y. Heffron, A. Stone and M. Worthington (eds.), *At the Dawn of History Ancient Near Eastern Studies, in Honour of J. N. Postgate*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 611-630.

⁸⁸ Robert Clayton McNeil, *The ‘Messenger Texts’ of the Third Dynasty*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1971.

⁸⁹ As noted by Lafont, it is theoretically possible to reconstruct the king’s main activities, including military affairs based on the archives recorded by time. See Bertrand Lafont, “The Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence”, *CDLI*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), p. 17.

(BDTNS), *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (ETCSL).⁹⁰

In stark contrast to the extensive documentation of the Ur III period, there is an noticeable lack of evidence on armies or military organizations in general. As pointed out by B. Lafont, even with this vast number of texts, we are still unable to thoroughly understand the whole process of soldiers from being recruited, supplied, maintained, equipped, armed, organized, trained, to put into combat.⁹¹ Therefore, in addition to archives, it is necessary to assemble scattered evidence from the multitude of available sources such as royal inscriptions and literary texts. Some literary texts will also be taken into consideration in this thesis, especially in the genre of royal hymns and correspondence, which is well-represented and very informative in terms of military affairs. Considering the ongoing debate on the authenticity of the relevant literary texts, the use of them will be very restrained and cautious. Literary materials are often used in the service of ideological and political propaganda; they are frequently unclear or exaggerated. As such, they can provide unreliable or even fictional content, and thus will not be used in any historical reconstruction.⁹²

In addition to corpus-based approaches, archaeological data will also be used in this study. It is always beneficial to cross-check texts with available archaeological and iconographic evidence. The role of archaeological evidence is mainly reflected in three aspects. The first is to supplement the contents that cannot be described in the archives and literature, such as the location, planning and architecture of the city, the soldiers' weapons and equipment, and so on. It is sometimes necessary to make use of the carved contents to study unearthed objects, even though the carved contents often have deliberately exaggerated parts. Second, archaeological data can provide information about ancient geographic and environmental changes, which historically had a great impact on human beings in the early stages of civilization. One example is the influence of changes in rainfall on the power of the Ur III Dynasty. Third, archaeological data can provide information on ancient war-related technological

⁹⁰ CDLI: <https://cdli.ucla.edu/>; BDTNS: <http://bdtms.filol.csic.es/>; ETCSL: <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk>.

⁹¹ Bertrand Lafont, "The Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence", *CDLJ*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), p. 4.

⁹² P. S. Vermaak, "The Relevance of Administrative Documents for Writing Ancient Mesopotamian History", *Journal of Semitics*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1991), pp. 85-104.

developments, such as metallurgy. However, archaeological remains of weapons from the late-third millennium remained virtually unfound, and the artistic repertoire for the Ur III period is quite limited. Though a number of seals and seal impressions of Ur III have been recovered, nearly all of them bear the theme of a presentation scene, depicting the seal holder standing before a seated god or king.⁹³

It should be noted that, due to the lack of both textual and archaeological materials, this study will have to use some materials from other periods for evidence, in particular materials related to Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian. The Ur III Dynasty was not much different from the preceding and following periods; it is also clear that a large part of the state was based on old Sumerian and Akkadian traditions, previously established in Mesopotamia. Many military practices introduced by the Akkadian army were most likely inherited or imitated by Ur III rulers, and many such elements survived well into the period of Old Babylonian. While military technology and tactics may have developed over time, in general, they remained relatively conservative. The investigation of comparative data from earlier or later periods will help to further illuminate the warfare practices of the Ur III Dynasty. Since the other periods are not included in the subject matter of this article, references to those periods will be rather sketchy.

I.5) Chapter Organization

This thesis is comprised of five chapters, each of which contains several sections. The opening chapter gives a brief overview of the dynastic history, the geography and the environment of the Ur III Dynasty, thus providing the backdrop before which the other elements occur. The main materials used in this research are also discussed, as well as those materials' advantages and disadvantages. The second chapter provides a detailed analysis of the various aspects involved in warfare, including armaments, logistics, military ceremonies, booty, military buildings, and hostile forces, both at home and abroad. By doing so, not only pre-war preparations and post-war tallying

⁹³ Judith A. Franke, "Presentation Seals of the Ur III/Isin-Larsa Period", in McGuire Gibson and Robert D. Biggs (eds.), *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, BM VI, Malibu: Undena Publications Press, 1977, pp. 61-65.

can be better understood, but battlefield situations and military relationships can also be taken into consideration. The third chapter provides an overview analysis of the wars conducted during the reign of every king, thus investigating the focus and transformation of the military strategies of the Ur III Dynasty in different stages. Chapter Four is concerned with the influence of Ur III warfare from the perspectives of the economic model, political administration, culture, religion, diplomacy. An attempt is made to explain the two-sided effects of the war, up and down the country. The last chapter of this thesis examines how the economic system, political model and religious culture of the Ur III Dynasty developed and improved under the catalyst of war, before finally going out of control. To some extent, how did these factors combine together to shape the relatively unified culture.

Chapter II: Aspects of Warfare in the Ur III Dynasty

II.1) Armament

Warfare in the third millennium Mesopotamia was well-organised, complex and involved distinct specialised elements. The constitution and organization of the Ur III royal army inherited a framework from the Old Akkadian Dynasty and would continue to be used in Mesopotamia until the end of the Old Babylonian period. Based on numerous sources, the hierarchical organization of Ur III army can be clearly reconstructed. Above the basic soldier (aga₃-us₂), there are three main ranks of officers naming the “general” (šagina), the “captain” (nu-banda₃) and the “lieutenant” (ugula).⁹⁴ Even with this command chain, we can hardly fathom the number of army, the dispatch of troops, as well as how soldiers were recruited, disciplined and launched into battle. Therefore, it is the armament rather than the army that will be discussed in this chapter.

It is worth noting that although the weapons used by those involved in wars were all fairly similar, the materials used in the weapons of senior generals differed from those used in the weapons of ordinary soldiers. The weapons of kings and generals were made of gold, silver, and bronze, whereas the weapons of ordinary soldiers were mostly made of wood, stone, and copper. Furthermore, the soldiers would also often hold sickles, axes, and hoes, which were used in agriculture. However, while the king would symbolically hold gold agricultural tools, he would never carry them into battle. The most obvious function of military equipment was to kill or injure enemies. However, military equipment could also be used in military training and hunting exercises or in situations that were similar to military training. There were also some less common uses of weapons, many of which were connected with the king. The king used weapons in important religious rituals, but it is unclear how the weapons

⁹⁴ Bertrand Lafont, “The Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence”, *CDLJ*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), p. 14.

functioned in these rituals. To make sure that there were no problems with the weapons used by the king on these occasions, the king would usually have two sets of equipment to ensure everything was safe.⁹⁵ As TIM 06, 34 from Š 45 demonstrates, the king could also present his governors, generals, and soldiers with elaborate weapons inlaid with bronze (zabar) and silver (ku₃-babbar). Another example of this practice outside the military realm can be seen in MVN 11, 191 from AS 4, in which Amar-Suen is described as offering (possibly ceremonial) axes, with two edges inlaid with silver, to two cattle herders for killing cattle.⁹⁶

Two literary texts provide a general picture of the weapons used in Ur III. In the Šulgi Hymn D, Šulgi describes in detail the range of weapons he would use and specifies the effects they would have on the enemies.⁹⁷ Main of these are offensive weapons including the spear (geš-gid₂-da, line 177), the quiver (e₂-mar-uru₅, line 179) the regular bow (gešban, line 180), arrows (gešti, line 181), the battle axe (geštukul-ḥ₂-zi-in, line 191), and the complex bow(?) (GEŠ.ŠUB=illuru).⁹⁸ Another literary text *The Lamentation over the destruction of Sumer and Ur* alludes to weapons and their use to fight:⁹⁹

(382) uri₅^{ki}-ma uruda₁ḥa-zi-in gal-gal-e igi-bi-še₃ u₃-sar i₃-ak-e

(383) geš-gid₂-da a₂ me₃-ke₄ si ib₂-sa₂-sa₂-e-ne

(384) geš^{ban} gal-gal geš^{illuru} kuš^e-ib₂-ur₃-ra teš₂ im-da-gu₇-e

(385) geš^{ti}-zu₂-ke₄ muru₉ šeg₃-ga₂-gin₇ bar-ba mi-ni-in-si

(386) na₄ gal-gal-e ni₂-bi-a pu-ud-pa-ad im-mi-ni-ib-za

(382) Large axes were sharpened in front of Ur.

(383) The spears, the arms of battle, were prepared.

(384) The large bows, throw-sticks and shields gathered together to strike.

(385) The barbed arrows covered its outer side like a raining cloud.

⁹⁵ TIM 06, 37 (1971).

⁹⁶ For more examples, see TIM 06, 36 (1971), TIM 06, 41 (1971), TCL 02, 5488 (1911), Sumer 59, 098 03 (2014).

⁹⁷ See *ETCSL* 2.4.2.04, line 177-196.

⁹⁸ For more on this weapon, see J. N. Postgate, “Pfeil und Bogen”, *RIA*, vol. 10 (2004), pp. 456-458.

⁹⁹ See *ETCSL* 2.2.3, line 382-386.

(386) Large (sling-)stones fell together with great thuds.

The weapons gleaned from the literary texts warrants a systematic search of the archival texts in order to build up appropriate dossiers of them. Protective shields were also used in the battlefield. The following discussion will focus on main offensive weapons including mace, bows and spear, and the other weapons used during the Ur III period like swords, daggers, knives, and other conventional weapons will not be discussed in this study.¹⁰⁰

II.1.1 Offensive Weapons: Mace, Spear and Bow

According to Ur III administrative archives, the mace (^{geš}tukul), the spear (^{geš}ban) and the bow (^{geš}-gid₂) appear with greater frequency, suggesting their usage as the basic weaponry of a soldier.¹⁰¹ In addition, the letter of Lipit-Eštar refers to his sending of troops to Nanna-kiag, composed of 2000 spear-men (lu₂ ^{geš}šukur), 2000 bowmen (lu₂ ^{geš}ban), and 2000 soldiers armed with battle-axes (lu₂ dur₁₀-tab-ba).¹⁰² The total number is unreliable, and it is uncertain if the equal three-party distribution of the troops was general. It can only be observed that the army's offensive weaponry may include mace and spears for close combat, and bows for long-range attack. The year name Š 20 “the citizens of Ur were drafted as spearmen”, may indicated the need for an additional corps of spearmen in the army.¹⁰³ The visual evidence of mace, bow and spear used in battle can be found from an Akkadian stela fragment from Girsu (see Figure 1).

¹⁰⁰ For an overview of weapon used in Mesopotamia, see McGuire Gibson, *The Mace, The Axe, and the Dagger in Ancient Mesopotamia*, MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1964, pp. 35-42; Ingo Schrakamp, “Speer und Lanze”, *RIA*, vol. 12 (2011), pp. 630-633. For the visual expression of dagger, spear, bow and axe in the art of the Presargonic and Sargonic periods, see Joan Aruz, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B. C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003, pp. 21-236. For the limited artistic repertoire of weapon in Ur III, see Eva A. Braun-Holzinger, “Ur III-Zeit, Kunst”, *RIA*, vol. 14 (2015), pp. 385-386.

¹⁰¹ Bertrand Lafont, “The Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence”, *CDLI*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), p. 15.

¹⁰² See *ETCSL* 3.2.4.

¹⁰³ Bertrand Lafont, “The Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence”, *CDLI*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), p. 6.



Figure 1. Mace, Bow and Spear of the Akkadian Period¹⁰⁴

There seem to have been two types of bows that were used during the Ur III period: the triangular bow and the recurve bow. The triangular bow is named after its shape, which resembles a triangle. Most ancient Egyptian and Assyrian depictions of fighters in chariots or on horses show them carrying triangular bows. These bows can also be seen in the Victory Stele of Naramsin from the Akkadian period, in which Naramsin and other soldiers hold triangular bows (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Victory Stele of Naramsin¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Louvre Museum, AO 2876. Ph. Abrahams & L. Battini (eds.), *Les armées du Proche-Orient ancien*. BAR International Series 1855. Oxford: David Brown Book Co, 2008, p. 104.

The recurve bow is similar in appearance to the later Scythian and Persian bows. The upper and lower curves allowed it to do more damage and hit a longer range than the triangular bow. The shape of the bow is seen in a Mari plaque of gypsum or alabaster from the City II period (ED III-b), as shown in Figure 4.¹⁰⁶ The modern names of the two kinds of bows are largely based on their shapes.

The bows can be divided in another way as the self-bow (or monomer bow) and the composite bow. These refer to the materials used to make them. A bow that uses only one kind of material, such as wood or bamboo, is usually called a self-bow. In contrast to the self-bow, the composite bow is fitted with a “horn” made from animal products. The “horn” sits on the stomach, facing the archer, with sinew on the outer side of a wooden core. When the bow is drawn, the sinew (stretched on the outside) and the horn (compressed on the inside) store more energy than a bow of the same length that is made solely of wood. However, composite bows were much more complicated to make than self-bows, so it is unlikely that all the archers of the Ur III period would have used composite bows. It may be that only kings, senior generals, and soldiers who rode in chariots used composite bows.

The bow in Sumerian texts is always written as “^{giš}ban”, but the king’s bow is usually written as “^{giš}ban gal”, which means “great bow” in Sumerian literary texts. The great bow was probably one of the two composite bows mentioned above because it is found in a text that describes the king’s bow, in which it is said to comprise a bow body (^{giš}ban), bow-string (sa ^{giš}ban), and a pair of bow-horns (^{kuš}sag-e₃ ^{giš}ban e₂-ba-an).¹⁰⁷ Sometimes royal bows were also gilded with copper or other metals.¹⁰⁸ The royal family also had a private forest farm that provided the king and other members of the royal family with the wood for bows during the Ur III

¹⁰⁵ Silvana Di Paolo, “Visualizing War in the Old Babylonian Period: Drama and Canon”, in Laura Battini (ed.), *Making Pictures of War: Realia et Imaginaria in the Iconology of the Ancient Near East*, AANE 1, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016, p. 34.

¹⁰⁶ B éatrice Muller, “Elements of War Iconography at Mari”, in Laura Battini (ed.), *Making Pictures of War: Realia et Imaginaria in the Iconology of the Ancient Near East*, AANE 1, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ TIM 06, 37 (1971).

¹⁰⁸ In SAT 02, 39 (2000), Š 31/vii, Ur, “1 bow was gilded with cooper.” (1 ^{giš}ban uruda gar-ra) and “for palace” (é-gal-kam) can be found in first and fourth line.

period.¹⁰⁹ Apart from making their own bows, the other main source of royal bows was tributes from ministers. This seems to have been a way for the local governors to show their loyalty and ingratiate themselves with the king.¹¹⁰ Other bows may have been captured as trophies by military commanders in warfare.¹¹¹

When the king used a bow, he usually wore a pair of armguards (^{gis}da-ak-si e₂-ba-an) and an arrow quiver (^{kuš}e₂-mar-uru₅). Moreover, to ensure that there would be no problem with the bow and accessories used by the king on important occasions like religious ceremonies, two sets of equipment were generally provided to ensure everything was safe.¹¹² Based on the current information available, even if the bows used by the soldiers were transferred from the royal arsenal to ordinary soldiers, there were differences. Some soldiers were given composite bows, and some were given self-bows.¹¹³ The cause of this phenomenon is not known, but it may have been due to operational requirements.

The general use of arrows in the Ur III period will also be discussed in chapter II.1.5 of šu-lugal weapon, where the similarities and differences of the arrowheads, javelin heads, and spearheads will be emphasized. The heads of these three weapons may have been very similar in appearance and may have only differed in size for operational reasons. The below image (Figure 3) is an intuitive illustration of the similarities and differences between these weapon heads.

¹⁰⁹ In SAT 02, 765 (2000), AS 3/iii, Umma, “small boards for 6 bows” (6 ^{gis}ban mi-r íza), “from the grove of Kamari” (^{gis}kiri₆ Ka-ma-r í¹-ta) and “were delivered into the palace” (é-gal ku₄?-ra) can be found in first and fifth line of obverse and first line of reverse.

¹¹⁰ TRU 384 (1912).

¹¹¹ TCL 02, 5488 (1911).

¹¹² TIM 06, 37 (1971).

¹¹³ TIM 06, 34 (1971), TIM 06, 36 (1971).

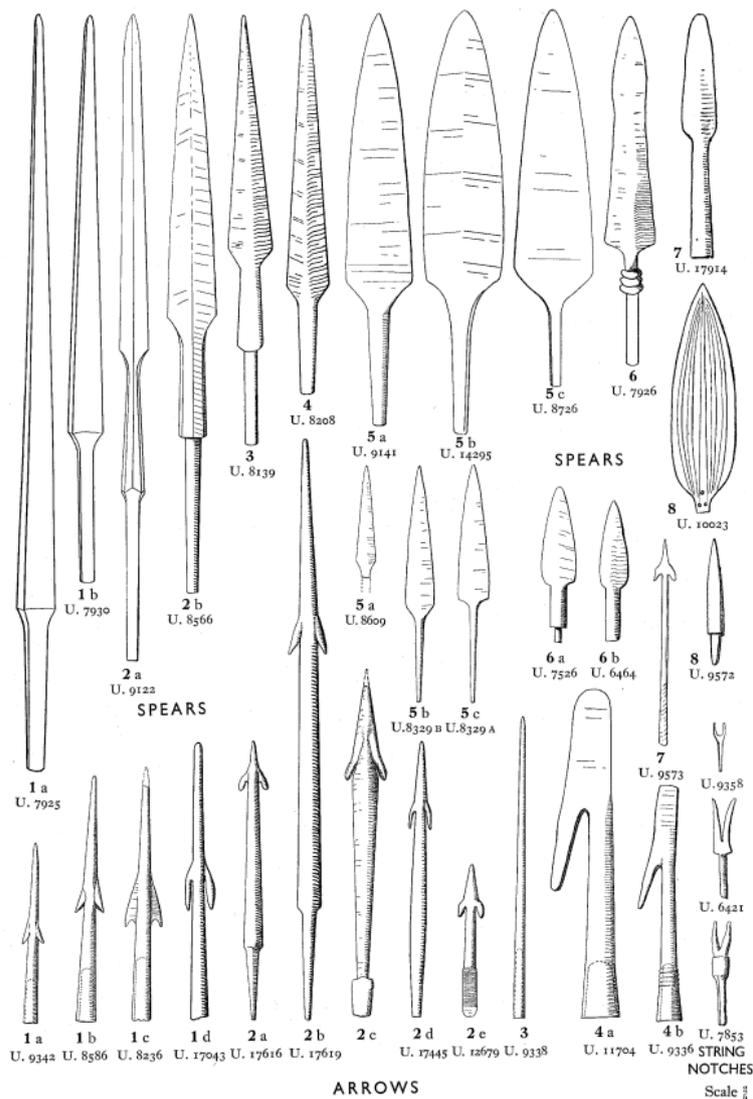


Figure 3. Arrowheads, javelin heads, spearheads, and nocks from the Royal Cemetery in Ur¹¹⁴

II.1.2 Protective Equipment: Helmets and Shields

The kinds of protective equipment used were mainly armor, helmets, and shields. Usually, the king and senior generals wore a heavy fabric that covered the left shoulder and left the right shoulder bare, making it easier to use weapons in battle or drive a chariot (see Figure 9).¹¹⁵ Compared to offensive weapons, the archival texts relating to defensive weapons are very few. Weapon remains are virtually unattested

¹¹⁴ Leonard Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931 (Plates)*, UE II, Oxford, Philadelphia: Published by the trustees of the two museums (the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), 1934, p. 227.

¹¹⁵ Silvana Di Paolo, "Visualizing War in the Old Babylonian Period: Drama and Canon", in Laura Battini (ed.), *Making Pictures of War: Realia et Imaginaria in the Iconology of the Ancient Near East*, AANE 1, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016, p. 29.

for the late third millennium, military artifacts found in the royal tombs of Ur in the ED period (ca. 2550–2450 BC) provide us with valuable information. There are special helmets found in royal burials, made of gold or other precious metals with a very special hairstyle outlined on the helmet. How they differ from the actual helmets used on the battlefield is unknown, but their actual protection would have been limited.¹¹⁶ The special design might indicate that the king and the senior generals used to groom their hair to show their status in battle.¹¹⁷ Metal helmets were only used by elite military officials, non-royal graves unearthed no metal helmets. The ordinary soldier may use leather helmets and their protection consisted of cloaks sewn with metal discs and close-fitting fabrics.¹¹⁸

Rectangular shields were used by soldiers in infantry formations, and they were typically studded with metal rivets to reinforce them. Another type of siege-shield resembling the Neo-Assyrian long top-curved shield would be used in Sumerian siege warfare.¹¹⁹ The pictorial representation of the siege-shield can be found on an incised stone plaque from Mari dated to the late Early Dynastic period (see Figure 4). It has been argued by Y. Yadin that the slab depicts a siege assault upon the enemy's fortress rather than an infantry combat in the open field.¹²⁰ From the plaque scene, it can be seen that in siege warfare, the Sumerian soldier would hold a large, top-curved shield that was higher than the height of a man, allowing them to prevent attacks from above. The Sumerian soldier would hold in the meantime a long spear-like weapon in his left hand. Behind him stands another soldier holding a bow in an upward position.

¹¹⁶ William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 48-49.

¹¹⁷ Leonard Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931 (Plates)*, UE II, Oxford, Philadelphia: Published by the trustees of the two museums (the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), 1934, p. 150.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹¹⁹ Barry L. Eichler, "Of Slings and Shields, Throw-Sticks and Javelins", *JAOS*, vol. 103, no. 1 (1983), pp. 95-100.

¹²⁰ Yigael Yadin, "The earliest representation of a siege scene and a 'Scythian bow' from Mari", *IEJ*, vol. 22 (1972), pp. 89-94.



Figure 4. Plaque of gypsum or alabaster M. 4989-5029-5045 from room 46 of pseudo-Palace (Mari, City II)¹²¹

II.1.3 Chariots and Warships

The chariots of this period either had four wheels or two wheels, but all of the traction they needed was provided by four donkeys. This number of donkeys was required because the wheels were made of solid wood, and the chariots were excessively heavy. The four-wheeled chariot was the first to be designed, and it was used by ordinary soldiers, often with two soldiers on each chariot. Due to defects in the early chariots' gearing, the chariot was not easy to control. However, the Sumerians improved the gearing of the chariot and created a two-wheeled, high-speed chariot that a single driver could use in combat during the Ur III period.¹²² The king and the senior generals used these two-wheeled chariots, which made it easy for them to conduct operations quickly on the battlefield. The chariots used by the king usually had expensive decorations, and when they were used in non-war situations such as religious rituals, they may have been pulled by oxen. All chariots were equipped with a javelin quiver-box at the front. The javelin was the main weapon used by the chariot

¹²¹ B éatrice Muller, "Elements of War Iconography at Mari", in Laura Battini (ed.), *Making Pictures of War: Realia et Imaginaria in the Iconology of the Ancient Near East*, AANE 1, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016, p. 15.

¹²² William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 133.

soldiers, including the king and generals. The chariot riders also carried short weapons such as axes for melee combat, but there is no evidence that the charioteers of this period used bows and arrows as weapons.¹²³ This may have something to do with the use of chariots in the Ur III period. During this period, the heavy weight of the chariots meant that they were mainly used to impact the enemy infantry phalanx and to distribute troops rapidly. All in all, the chariot was one of the great inventions of the Sumerians and became an important weapon that helped them defeat their enemies.

The ships of the Ur III period were mainly made of wood and reeds. Sumerians used a lot of bitumen to waterproof their ships.¹²⁴ Most ships were shaped like a crescent (see Figure 5), and this kind of ship was probably used in warfare, but it is hard to know which ships were warships and which were for everyday use. What is certain is that most of the small- and medium-sized ships were used for navigation on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as well as canals, and for much of the Ur III Dynasty, these ships were mainly used to transport soldiers and provisions. The Sumerians could build small- and medium-sized inland ships for inland waterways, but they probably did not have the technology to build large ships that could have sailed into the Persian Gulf. The shipbuilders (ma₂-gin₂) from Magan were often administrators in the Ur III period.¹²⁵ These Magan shipbuilders were key personnel and were assisted by unskilled laborers in dockyards (mar-sa). They used wood, rushes, reeds, and oils coated with bitumen to construct ships of varying tonnage. The heaviest may have weighed up to 100 tons. Based on the information available, they probably had a special shipbuilding center in which they constructed and maintained special ships capable of traveling into the Persian Gulf to Magan and beyond. The location was probably near Girsu and Lagaš.¹²⁶ Unfortunately, there is currently no evidence of

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 137-138.

¹²⁴ Magnus Widell, "Schiff Und Boot (Ship and Boat). A. in Sumerischen Quellen", in Michael Streck (ed.), *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* Band 12 1/2 Lieferung, RIA 12, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, pp. 158-160.

¹²⁵ SANTAG 07, 182 (2002); CTPSM 01, 147 (2014).

¹²⁶ Juris Zarins, "Magan Shipbuilders at the Ur III Lagash State Dockyards (2062-2025 B.C.)", in Eric Olijdam and Richard H. Spoor (eds.), *Intercultural Relations between South and Southwest Asia: Studies in commemoration of E.C.L. During Caspers (1934-1996)*, BARIS 1826, Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2008, p. 220.

warships dedicated entirely to combat in this period, but ships could have been used to support war efforts by transporting soldiers and supplies.

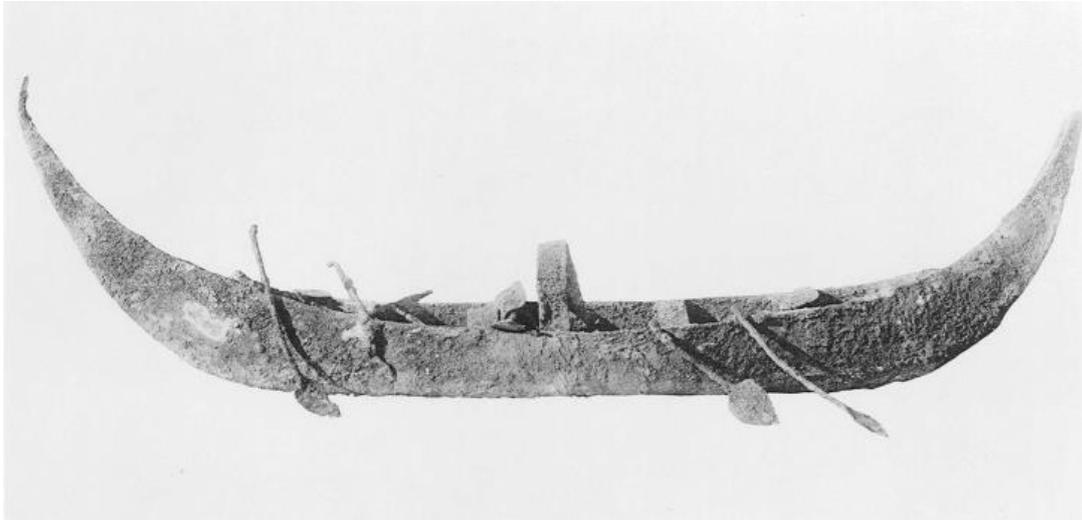


Figure 5. Silver model of a boat from the royal cemetery in Ur¹²⁷

II.1.4 Siegecraft

According to various materials left over before the Ur III period, it can be inferred that siege techniques were relatively developed at this time. In addition to ladders, which were the most basic siege weapons, and the heavy shields used by soldiers in siege warfare mentioned above, the Sumerians also used three types of siege equipment: siege towers, battering rams, and slings. These siege weapons were commonly used in siege warfare before the introduction of gunpowder in warfare. In the designs of cylinder seals that date from the Akkadian period, there are images of siege towers and battering rams.¹²⁸ Their appearance and function are almost indistinguishable from those used by humans a thousand years later. The main purpose of a siege tower was to send soldiers to the enemy's walls quickly while risking as few men as possible. The battering ram was used to break down gates or

¹²⁷ Leonard Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931 (Plates)*, UE II, Oxford, Philadelphia: Published by the trustees of the two museums (the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), 1934, p. 169.

¹²⁸ William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 219.

walls. Although their functions differed, they both had to be operated under heavy enemy attacks, so they required a large number of soldiers to ensure that they reached the walls of the enemy city. By contrast, slings were relatively safe to operate. They could destroy buildings and kill enemies with minimal risk. Unfortunately, there are no images of slings from this period. W. Hamblin suggests that slings may have been used as early as the fourth century BCE in the ancient Near East.¹²⁹ However, the Mari plaque of late Early Dynastic mentioned before (Figure 4), depicting the earliest representation of a siege scene in ancient Mesopotamian art, and the Sumerian term for sling (^{kuš}da-lu-uš₂-a) is attested in some texts from the Ur III period. In the poems that praise him, Šulgi is described as using several slings to destroy walls and kill enemies by slinging stones (Šulgi B, D, O, and X).¹³⁰ These texts also show that the sling stones he used were made of clay due to the lack of stone available in ancient southern Mesopotamia.

Due to the high cost of siege warfare, ancient generals tended to resort to encircling the city, forcing the enemy to struggle with attrition and leading to surrender or defeat. For this reason, weapons could have been used in siege warfare in ways other than those mentioned above. For example, fortified military camps may have been built to besiege enemy cities, and these could also be considered siege weapons. Other techniques to bring down cities may have been used, such as using the power of nature to flood the city, using diplomacy to induce surrender, cutting off the enemy's supplies and economic lifelines. In theory, any means by which a city can be captured should be considered a siege weapon.

II.1.5 “Šu-lugal” Weapons

As the king was the political and military leader of the country, it was understandable that he had his own arsenal of weapons and special officials to take charge of weapons.¹³¹ This kind of weaponry that belonged to a high-ranking

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 236.

¹³⁰ See ETCSL.

¹³¹ For a recent overview of Ur III kingship, see Paola Paoletti, *Der König und sein Kreis: Das Staatliche Schatzarchiv der III. Dynastie von Ur*, BPOA 10, Madrid: CSIC Press, 2012.

individual was usually described using the postpositive attributive “šu-lugal”,¹³² the basic meaning of which is “(in) the hand (of) the king”. It probably referred to a weapon that belonged to the king. An alternative interpretation would be “(for the) royal hand”, meaning that it was independent of the actual weapon. This would probably mean that it was a measurement of “royal” quality. Both interpretations would mean that the weapon was associated with the king, either as something the king used or owned or something that was made to his specifications. There are so far only eight archival documents that contain this postpositive modifier to represent the king’s weapons explicitly. They are used to refer to two categories of weapons, namely arrowhead (gag) and spearhead (šukur).¹³³ They provide us with the following forms:

1. gag-si-sa₂ šu-lugal
2. gag-si-sa₂ ĝeš^{cs}nu-ha-an-ni šu-lugal
3. gag-su-um im-ba šu-lugal
4. gag-su-um im-ba ĝeš^{cs}nu-ha-an-ni šu-lugal
5. gag zu₂ zabar šu-lugal
6. šukur zabar 15 še šu-lugal

Based on an analysis of the existing texts, it seems likely that some of the weapons listed above would have been associated with the king, even when not followed by the term “šu-lugal.”

The original meaning of “gag” in Sumerian is “nail”, which is well reflected in its triangular shape in cuneiform writing. It also has the meaning of arrowhead in certain contexts. The complete written form of arrows used in combat is “giš^{cs}gag-ti”, in which the determinative “wood” (giš) indicates the raw material and modifies the “shaft” (ti). This was a word that occasionally appeared in literary works and was

¹³² Note here giš-ŠU.LUGAL = MIN(ni-mit-tu₂) ša₂ šar-ru (MSL 06, 127). For the meaning of *nemettu* as (among other things) some type of (divine/ritual) staff, see CAD N², p. 164.

¹³³ These eight archives are as follows: PDT 01, 0635 (1954); AUCT 01, 321 (1984); AUCT 01, 696 (1984); TIM 06, 35 (1971); TIM 06, 37 (1971); TIM 06, 40 (1971); TIM 06, 42 (1971); TIM 06, 43 (1971).

written without “ti” in several archival documents.¹³⁴ Therefore, when the word “gag” appears alone in texts, there is good reason to believe that it refers to an arrowhead without a wooden pole. The situation is the same for “šukur” (spear/spearhead). When it appears without the determinatives metal (urud) or wooden (giš), which would refer to the material used for the body of the lance, “šukur” means spearhead. Although there is only one archival reference to spearheads, there are numerous references to the variety, quantity, production, and shape of arrowheads, as well as the officials responsible for them. These will be discussed in detail below.

To distinguish between different kinds of arrowheads, two systems of classification were introduced in the Ur III period. One distinguished them by the material used to make them, and the other distinguished them by their specific purpose. The former was likely to be the most common way of naming arrowheads. It was well attested among the military personnel of different ranks. The latter, meanwhile, was used exclusively by the king. Thus, in the absence of a specific distinction, I refer to the former type as a “normal arrowhead” (gag zu₂). The materials used to make them were commonly bronze (zabar), copper (uruda), or stone (na₄), among which only the bronze one (gag-zu₂^{zabar}) was used to refer to weapons connected to the king.¹³⁵ This certainly does not mean that the “normal arrowheads” used by the king were all made of bronze or that bronze was the only raw material. Given the special and noble nature of the king, the possibility of adding precious metals (such as silver and gold) cannot be ruled out. This would have distinguished them from the ordinary bronze arrowheads used by generals or soldiers. However, such speculation cannot yet be proved using the available materials. When it comes to arrowheads being distinguished by their purpose or use, we can identify three kinds of arrowhead that were exclusively used by the king: the “standard arrowhead” (gag-si-sa₂), “arrowheads with stings in the appearance” (gag-su-um im-ba), and both of these when defined by Nuhanni wooden pole (giš^{nu}-ha-an-ni). The translation of the first type as “standard arrowhead” seems justifiable because the meaning of “si-sa₂” is

¹³⁴ See for example *The death of Ur-Namma (Ur-Namma A)*, a version from Susa, Segment C, line 21, ETCSL.

¹³⁵ In PDT 01, 0635 (1954), Š 36/xii, Puzriš-Dagan, “180 bronze normal arrowheads of the king” (3 geš₂ gag zu₂ zabar šu lugal) can be found in the first line.

“right, legal”. The other justifications for this translation will be discussed below. However, the translation of the second type is disputed since the word means “arrowheads with defects in their appearance”. Since it seems unlikely that the king would have used a defective weapon, I intend to analyze archaeological findings that suggest that the literal meaning is “arrowheads with stings in the appearance”. The weapon may look like U1361 (53×13 mm), which is described by Woolley as a “bronze implement (this word may be misspelled; this might be the word “implement”) like a nail with two barbs or flanges”.¹³⁶



Figure 6. The photo of U1361¹³⁷

It is an arrowhead with a hole at the end that can be directly mounted onto a wooden pole. For this reason, I am inclined to translate the second type as “arrowheads with stings in the appearance”. When it comes to the third type, which uses a special kind of Nuhanni wooden pole, little is known about its exact meaning and usage. There is no other extant document that contains the term Nuhanni.¹³⁸

Based on the evidence available, the “standard arrowheads” and “arrowheads with stings in the appearance”, mentioned above, are probably the king’s customized weapons, even though they sometimes appear without the suffix “šu-lugal”. They do not seem to have been used by top-ranking generals or rank-and-file soldiers. This is also supported by the fact that there are many references to the materials and

¹³⁶ All the archaeological relics of Ur city and Woolley’s Catalog Cards involved in this study can be searched on the Ur online website according to the “U+number” given, <http://www.ur-online.org>.

¹³⁷ From Ur online website: <http://www.ur-online.org/subject/1418/>.

¹³⁸ In a previous study “gis^{is}nu-ha-an-ni” was rewritten as “ges^{is}pana ha-an-ni”, see Paola Paoletti, *Der König und sein Kreis: Das staatliche Schatzarchiv der III. Dynastie von Ur*, BPOA 10, Madrid: CSIC Press, 2012, p. 157.

manufacturing methods used to create the “standard arrowheads”. There are references to “standard arrowheads” cast from copper (^{uruda}gag-si-sa₂) or copper alloys/bronze (^{uruda}gag-si-sa₂ zabar). This is demonstrated by a tablet that mentions the delivery of copper-made “standard arrowheads” in Š 47, as well as by two tablets that record the transfer of copper alloys between officials in the time of IS15.¹³⁹ The former may be regarded as a “copper standard arrowhead”, while the latter corresponds to a “bronze standard arrowhead”, which is likely to be an upgraded version of the normal bronze arrowhead.

Though Sumerians and Akkadians used different terms to distinguish between different qualities of copper, they cannot be identified with any precision just by looking at the archaeological records.¹⁴⁰ Textual information regarding the copper and bronze industries became more widespread from the Ur III period onwards. However, the written evidence from this period is almost entirely limited to the city of Ur and the end of Ibbi-Suen’s reign.¹⁴¹ Direct, detailed records of the bronze smelting process during the Ur III period are rare. Therefore, any records offering insights into the production of bronze objects are very important.

Three texts from Ur, all dated to Ibbi-Suen’s 15th year as king, record the process used to produce one kind of weapon that may be classified as “šu-lugal.” The weapon is referred to as “^{uruda}gag-si-sa₂ zabar” in these texts, which we may translate as “standard bronze spearhead.” In this study, “gag-si-sa₂” is translated as “standard arrowheads”. However, given the considerable weight of this weapon (see below), the translation “standard spearhead” may be more appropriate in our context. To facilitate the discussion, the original texts are quoted as follows:

¹³⁹ See respectively TIM 06, 39 (1971); UET 03, 450 (1937); UET 03, 451 (1937).

¹⁴⁰ Karin Reiter, *Die Metalle im Alten Orient, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung altbabylonischer Quellen*, AOAT 249, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997, pp. 149-204, 288-343.

¹⁴¹ In addition to bronze-making, the texts from archives in Ur offer detailed information on various (precious) metals and metal objects, as well as the overall administrative structure of the craft industry in Ur III period (see in particular Henri Limet, *Le Travail du métal au pays de Sumer: au temps de la IIIe dynastie d'Ur*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1960; Darlene M. Loding, *A Craft Archive from Ur*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1974; Hans Neumann, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien, Untersuchungen zu seiner Organisation in der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987; for the two archives in Ur during Ibbi-Suen, see also Magnus Widell, *The Administrative and Economic Ur III Texts from the City of Ur*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003, pp. 98-101).

1.	4(diš) ma-na 5(diš) gin ₂ uruda	4 mina (and) 5 gin ₂ copper, (= 2,042 grams) ¹⁴²
2.	urudašen sumun kal-kal-ge-de ₃	is fully melted in a copper vessel,
3.	4(diš) gin ₂ igi-3(diš)-gal ₂ nagga	4 (and) 1/3 gin ₂ tin, (= 36 grams)
4.	mu ^{uruda} gag-si-sa ₂ zabar-še ₃	for the sake of the standard bronze spearhead.
5.	ki dingir-su-ra-bi ₂ -ta	From DINGIR-su-ra-bi,
6.	a-hu-wa-qar	Ahu-waqar,
7.	šu ba-ti	received.

(IS 15/05/01, UET 03, 486)

It is possible that copper smelting occurred in crucibles in Ur and other southern Mesopotamian sites. A significant number of crucibles have been unearthed in many sites across Iran dating from the fourth and third millennia BC.¹⁴³ The copper vessel recorded in the second line of our text may be one such crucible.

The copper to tin ratio mentioned in the text is about 56.5 to 1, which would mean that the bronze contained roughly 1.7% tin. The use of bronze with this copper-to-tin ratio for forging weapons might seem confusing, as the amount of tin is too low to have had any meaningful impact on the alloy. Modern bronze typically has a copper-to-tin ratio of 9:1, but in antiquity, the proportions varied. This is possibly due to the difficulties involved in controlling the exact ratio.¹⁴⁴ According to P. R. S. Moorey, “both with tin and arsenic the lower limits for an international alloy are arbitrarily set, usually at about 2 or 3 percent for tin (though much lower figures may reasonably be argued).”¹⁴⁵ Other scholars have suggested that tin concentration can range from low (~2 wt. %) to high (> 10 wt. %).¹⁴⁶ As demonstrated by H. Limet, the tin levels in the bronze found in an archive at Ur ranged from 9% up to 17%.¹⁴⁷ On

¹⁴² 1 ma-na=60 gin₂≈500 grams.

¹⁴³ For more on the crucible, see Ronald F. Tylecote, *A History of Metallurgy*, London: Institute of Materials, 1992, pp. 20-21; see also P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 243, with further references.

¹⁴⁴ P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 251.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.242; see also P. R. S. Moorey, “Copper and Copper Alloys in Ancient Iraq, Syria and Palestine: Some New Analyses”, *Archaeometry*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1972), pp. 177-198 and P. R. S. Moorey, “The Archaeological Evidence for Metallurgy and Related Technologies in Mesopotamia, c. 5500-2100 B.C.” *Iraq*, vol. 44 (1982), pp. 13-38.

¹⁴⁶ Ivan De Ryck, Annemie Adriaens and Freddy Adams, “An Overview of Mesopotamian Bronze Metallurgy during the 3rd Millennium BC”, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 6 (2005), p. 267.

¹⁴⁷ Henri Limet, *Le Travail du métal au pays de Sumer: au temps de la IIIe dynastie d’Ur*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1960, p. 58.

the other hand, laboratory testing of two bronze chisels from the Ur III period has revealed very low levels of tin (1.7% and 0.3%).¹⁴⁸

The low amounts of tin in the copper, reported in the textual documents, can perhaps be explained by the fact that the products were often manufactured from scrap metal that already contained tin.¹⁴⁹ However, it is still true that the low levels of tin in the bronze reported in our text would have produced weapons of very low quality. This can be compared to another text from Ur that also dates from Ibbi-Suen's 15th year. This records the production of a bronze knife for killing sheep (gir₂-udu-uš₂). It had a copper-tin ratio of 7 to 1.¹⁵⁰ Thus, it may be that the weapon listed in UET 03, 486 was not intended for use at all; perhaps it had a ceremonial or cultic role.¹⁵¹

The production of bronze as raw material and the manufacturing of weapons are two separate processes. It is very rare to find evidence of commercial transactions related to bronze as a raw material in the texts. Therefore, it seems that bronze was often prepared on the spot from copper and tin by craftsmen, before being distributed by court officials to palace artisans for the production of tools and weapons.¹⁵² Our textual record of the manufacturing process of a "standard bronze spearhead" offers some interesting information in this regard:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | 1(u) 2(diš) 2/3(diš) ma-na 5(diš) gin ₂
zabar | 12 2/3 mina (and) 5 gin ₂ bronze, (= 6,375 grams) |
| 2. | ^{uruda} gag-si-sa ₂ 3(diš) ma-na | 3 mina (for) standard bronze spearhead, (= 1,500 grams) |
| 3. | a-la ₂ -bi 1(diš) ma-na bar-bi 5/6(diš)
ma-na | 1 mina (for) its handle, 5/6 mina (for) its "tail/butt", (= 500 grams / 417 grams) |

¹⁴⁸ Martin Levey and J. E. Burke, "A Study of Ancient Mesopotamian Bronze." *Chymia*, vol. 5 (1959), pp. 37-50; Martin Levey, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Amsterdam, London, New York, Princeton: Elsevier, 1959, pp. 196-211.

¹⁴⁹ For a more thorough discussion on this topic, see Ronald F. Tylecote, *A History of Metallurgy*, London: Institute of Materials, 1992, p. 18.

¹⁵⁰ UET 3, 429 (1937).

¹⁵¹ Note TIM 06, 37 (1971) from the reign of Šulgi, where 14 gag-si-sa₂ šu-lugal are listed with various other objects as nig₂ pi-lu₅-da, indicating a cultic function of the weapons (Walther Sallaberger, "Eine reiche Bestattung im neusumerischen Ur", *JCS*, vol. 47 (1995), p. 20; for an edition of the text, see Paola Paoletti, *Der König und sein Kreis: Das staatliche Schatzarchiv der III. Dynastie von Ur*, BPOA 10, Madrid: CSIC Press, 2012, p. 527).

¹⁵² P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 245, with additional references.

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 4. | $uruda$ gag-si-sa ₂ 2(diš) 1/2(diš) ma-na
a-la ₂ -bi | 2 1/2 mina (for) bronze standard spearhead, its
handle, (= 1,250 grams) |
| 5. | 5/6(diš) ma-na bar-bi 2/3(diš) ^{ša} 1(diš) | (is) 5/6 mina, 2/3 mina(for) its “tail/butt” for 1
(object), (= 417 grams / 333 grams) |
| 6. | u_3 $uruda$ <gag>-si-sa ₂ 2(diš) ma-na
a-la ₂ -bi | and 2 mina (for) the standard bronze spearhead,
its handle, (= 1,000 grams) |
| 7. | 2/3(diš) ^{ša} bar-bi 1/2(diš) ma-na
1(diš)-še ₃ | (is) 2/3 mina, 1/2 mina for its “tail/butt” for 1
(object). (= 333 grams / 250 grams) |
| 8. | ki ur-gu ₂ -edin-na-ta | From Ur-guedinna, |
| 9. | a-hu-wa-qar | Ahu-waqar, |
| 10. | šu ba-ti | received. |

(IS 15/03/07, UET 03, 447;

IS 15/03/17, UET 03, 759)

One tentative interpretation of this text would be to understand “a-la₂-bi” as “its handle,” and “bar-bi” as “its tail/butt.” This interpretation is arguably supported by the recovered spearheads and the reconstruction of the complete spear from the Royal Cemetery of Ur (see Figure 7). The spear’s “head” and “tail/butt” were made of metal, and metal was also used for reinforcement and decoration on the surface of the wooden rod, the “handle.”¹⁵³



Figure 7. Reconstruction of a spear from the Royal Cemetery of Ur (ca. 2600 BC)

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It is interesting to note that the ratio between the head and the handle is three to one, but the “tail” (bar-bi) is equal to the weight of the handle minus 10 gin₂. This

¹⁵³ For the archaeological report of the cemetery, see Leonard Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonic Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931 (Plates)*, UE II, Oxford, Philadelphia: Published by the trustees of the two museums (the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), 1934.

seems to indicate that fixed technical standards were applied in the forging of these weapons. These fixed technical standards suggest that the Sumerians may have practiced some degree of standardization in metal smelting and forging during the Ur III period.

Table 2. Weight of Metal Parts in UET 03, 447/759

UET 03, 447/759	Head (weight)	Handle (weight)	“Tail” (weight)
Lines 2-3	180 gin ₂	60 gin ₂	50 gin ₂
Lines 4-5	150 gin ₂	50 gin ₂	40 gin ₂
Lines 6-7	120 gin ₂	40 gin ₂	30 gin ₂

Finally, if we compare the weight of the raw material with the weight of the forged weapons, we can see that the bronze listed as a raw material in the first line weighs 765 gin₂, (6,375 grams), whereas the total weight of the different parts added together (lines 2-3, 4-5, 6-7) is 720 gin₂ (6,000 grams). In other words, 45 gin₂ (375 grams) of bronze disappeared during the production process. This may have happened during the heat treatment since a certain amount of weight is lost when metals are smelted. This can be caused by various factors, such as vaporization or residual metal on the smelting vessel. According to our calculations based on this text, the raw material lost in the forging process was about 5.9% of the total.

The final point of concern is the weight of these weapons. These weapons were so heavy that they could never have been fired from a bow. This is why “*uruda*gag-si-sa₂ zabar” is translated as “standard bronze spearhead” rather than “standard bronze arrowhead”.¹⁵⁴

Our final text, UET 03, 450 appears to reference the process of recycling bronze scrap to make new weapons.¹⁵⁵ This text records the recycled slag used for the

¹⁵⁴ For other contexts where the translation of gag as “arrowhead” may be more appropriate, see Paola Paoletti, *Der König und sein Kreis: Das staatliche Schatzarchiv der III. Dynastie von Ur*, BPOA 10, Madrid: CSIC Press, 2012, p. 157.

¹⁵⁵ Considering that UET 3, 450 and UET 3, 759 are dated to the same day (IS 15/iii/17), it is possible that the

spearheads, but it does not mention any new raw materials being added during the production process. As a relatively complete and routine metallurgical process, there is significant documentation of the process of re-manufacturing metals during the Ur III period.¹⁵⁶ Evidence of the recycling of tin bronze during the third millennium BC has also been found at several sites in Mesopotamia: the low concentration of tin in the copper arsenic alloys of Tell Beydar (ED III); at Susa, the tin concentration in the copper arsenic alloys grows with the increased use of tin in bronze.¹⁵⁷

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | 3(diš) gin ₂ su ₃ -he ₂ | 3 gin ₂ bronze slag, (= 25 grams) |
| 2. | mu zabar ^{uruda} gag-si-sa ₂ 3(diš)-še ₃ | for the sake of 3 standard bronze spearheads. |
| 3. | ki dingir-su-ra-bi ₂ -ta | From DINGIR-su-ra-bi, |
| 4. | a-hu-wa-qar | Ahu-waqar, |
| 5. | šu ba-ti | received. |

(IS 15/03/17, UET 03, 450)

As for the three officials mentioned in these texts, Ahu-waqar, whose title is “šabra” was the well-known overseer of the institution. He acted as a supervisor for every phase of the operation.¹⁵⁸ There is no mention of DINGIR-su-ra-bi (IS 15/ii-IS 16/viii) or Ur-guedinna (IS 15/i-IS 23/xii) in the lists of workers in the overall bureaucratic system. They may have just operated as suppliers of raw materials.¹⁵⁹

The above discussion suggests that the Sumerians of the Ur III period had relatively mature and standardized technologies, as well as a sophisticated management system for smelting the raw materials used in bronze, forging bronze weapons, and recycling bronze fragments. Moreover, the Sumerians of this period kept the parts of different materials in a modular and specialized form of preservation.

bronze fragments recorded in UET 3, 450 came from the forging activity recorded in text UET 3, 759. If this is the case, then the weight of metal lost during forging is 42 gin₂, the raw material lost in the forging process was about 5.5% of the total.

¹⁵⁶ Henri Limet, *Le Travail du métal au pays de Sumer: au temps de la IIIe dynastie d'Ur*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1960, pp. 45, 145.

¹⁵⁷ Ivan De Ryck, Annemie Adriaens and Freddy Adams, “An Overview of Mesopotamian Bronze Metallurgy during the 3rd Millennium BC”, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 6 (2005), p. 267.

¹⁵⁸ Darlene M. Loding, *A Craft Archive from Ur*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1974, p. 18.

¹⁵⁹ For the worker lists in Ur, see *ibid.*, pp. 20-26, 197-225; for the organization and administration of craft in Ur, see *ibid.*, pp. 17-20; Hans Neumann, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien, Untersuchungen zu seiner Organisation in der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987, pp. 75-86.

Overall, the above research provides a deeper understanding of Sumerian metallurgical technology and weapon manufacturing during the Ur III period.¹⁶⁰



Figure 8. Arrows and javelins from the royal cemetery in Ur¹⁶¹

As far as the overweight “standard arrowheads” are concerned, the king may have used this weapon when driving his chariot, just like many other senior generals with a chariot did. In other words, these “standard arrowheads” were probably short javelins thrown from chariots. As shown in Figure 8, the arrow and the short javelin are almost identical except for their size. Similar usage scenarios can be seen in some Sumerian sculptures, such as the Victory Stele of Eannatum (see Figure 9).

¹⁶⁰ Xiaobo Dong, “The King’s Spear: A Note on Bronze Weapons and Weapons Manufacturing in the Ur III Period,” *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 95-103.

¹⁶¹ Leonard Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931 (Plates)*, UE II, Oxford, Philadelphia: Published by the trustees of the two museums (the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), 1934, p. 153.



Figure 9. Victory Stele of Eannatum¹⁶²

There is another important text on the king's weapons that may support the above idea of the short javelin. The transliteration and translation of the text are as follows:¹⁶³

obv.

1. 8(geš₂) 5(u) 5(diš) gag zu₂^{zabar},
2. 3(geš₂) 1(u) 7(diš) gag zu₂^{zabar} ku₅ 2-ta,
3. 3(u) 3(diš) gag zu₂^{zabar} tur,
4. 4(geš₂) gag zu₂^{zabar} giš^{nu}-ha-an-ni,
5. 7(geš₂) 3(u) 3(diš) gag zu₂^{zabar} 15 še-ta,
6. 5(u) 7(diš) gag zu₂^{zabar} 15 še-ta giš^{nu}-ha-an-ni,
7. 1(geš₂'u) 7(geš₂) 1(u) la₂ 1(diš) gag-si-sa₂ šu-lugal,
8. 2(geš₂) 4(u) 7(diš) gag-si-sa₂ giš^{nu}-ha-an-ni šu-lugal,

rev.

1. 2(geš₂) 4(u) 6(diš) gag-su-dih₂ im-ba šu-lugal

¹⁶² Silvana Di Paolo, "Visualizing War in the Old Babylonian Period: Drama and Canon", in Laura Battini (ed.), *Making Pictures of War: Realia et Imaginaria in the Iconology of the Ancient Near East*, AANE 1, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016, p. 29.

¹⁶³ AUCT 01, 321 (1984).

2. 3(u) 4(diš) gag-su-dih₂ im-ba ^{giš}nu-ha-an-ni šu-lugal
3. 1(geš₂) gag zu₂^{na4}
4. 1(geš₂'u) 3(geš₂) 1(u) 2(diš) gag-si-sa₂ šu-lugal mu šukur-bi mu-tum₂ gag-si-sa₂-bi
5. ba-zi-ir-ra-še₃
6. šunigin 2 (geš'u) [gag] zu₂ [x] hi-a
7. šunigin 3 (geš'u) [...] gag-si-sa₂ [šu]-lugal hi-a
8. la₂-ia₃ ki hu-ba

obv.

1. 535 bronze normal arrowheads,
2. 197 bronze arrowheads which were cut off into two parts,
3. 33 small bronze normal arrowheads,
4. 240 bronze normal arrowheads with Nuhanni wooden pole,
5. 453 bronze normal arrowheads which are 15 še long,
6. 57 bronze normal arrowheads which are 15 še long with Nuhanni wooden pole,
7. 1029 standard arrowheads of the king,
8. 167 standard arrowheads with Nuhanni wooden pole of the king,

rev.

1. 166 arrowheads with stings in the appearance of the king,
2. 34 arrowheads with stings in the appearance with Nuhanni wooden pole of the king,
3. 60 stone normal arrowheads,
4. 792 standard arrowheads for king use which were delivered as spearhead (before),
5. (These spearheads) were polished as (the standard arrowheads of the king),¹⁶⁴
6. In total: 1200 [X] normal arrowheads,
7. In total: 1800+ [...] standard arrowheads of the king,
8. Deficit, from Huba.

¹⁶⁴ In previous studies “ba-zi-ir-ra” was translated into “be broken” and I agree with it, but it may be more suitable for translating into “be polished” in this text. See Walther Sallaberger, “Ur III-Zeit”, in OBO 160/3, 1999, pp. 242-243; however, I do not agree with the view that translates “mu šukur-bi mu-túm gag-si-s á-bi ba-zi-ir-ra-šè” into “weil die dazugehörigen Lanzen gebracht wurden, aber ihre geraden Spitzen zerbrochen waren”, see Paola Paoletti, BPOA 10, 2012, p. 58.

The fourth line of the reverse side of the text records “792 standard arrowheads for the king’s use which were delivered as spearheads (before)”. This indicates that the 792 “standard arrowheads” intended for the king's use were previously delivered and recorded as spearheads when they were sent to the storeroom. This suggests that either the “standard arrowhead” and the spearhead shared a common standard or the spearhead could be used as a “standard arrowhead” if it was slightly modified. Given the evidence provided so far, I prefer the latter interpretation. Moreover, given that the king seems to have required such a large number of these weapons, it seems likely that it was a disposable weapon. Thus, the term “standard arrowhead” would be a reasonable way of describing a short javelin that was intended to be thrown. At the same time, I also hold the view that this kind of javelin head might have looked like the arrowhead or javelin head on the left side of the picture above (see Figure 3), both of which resemble a normal spearhead. We could even speculate that the term “standard arrowhead” simply indicated the object’s shape, and it was possible to use it as an arrowhead, javelin head, or spearhead simply by adjusting its size and weight.

The rest of this text is also worth examining here. 1) The number of weapons recorded in the text is very large, especially when it comes to the king’s weapons; they exceed the king’s practical needs, or rather they were for the king’s troops, named after the king. In total, the number of various weapons mentioned in the archives is 3763, 2188 of which are referred to as the king’s. This is a very unusual number. Not only would it not be possible for a normal human to use that many arrowheads or javelins in a single battle, but in the other texts that mention the king’s weapons, the number of javelins required is fewer than 60. Another interesting detail is that there is a deficit in the text. The contents of the archive show that during this transfer, 1200 normal arrowheads and 1200 “standard arrowheads” for the king’s use were missing. These figures suggest that this handover was unusual, given that there was a deficit of this magnitude. The ratio of the material deficit is roughly 67%. Why did the people need so many weapons for the king that they had to turn their spearheads into “standard arrowheads” for the king’s use? And why were they so pressed for time that they faced a deficit of up to 67% and did not have enough time

to prepare for them? One possible reason may be that these weapons were needed as funerary objects for the king. In other words, this text may be a list of items that were buried with a king who died during the Ur III Dynasty. Based on the names of Huba which appear in this text and in association with the weapon administrator, Dayyānu-mišar, in Puzriš-Dagan from the Šulgi 45th year to the Amar-Suen third year, I suspect that these weapons were probably buried with Šulgi.

2) When it comes to the spearhead, there is only one bronze spearhead (šukur^{zabar} 15 še) that is recorded as being 15 “še” in length. It is attested in the third year of Amar-Suen.¹⁶⁵ The term “še” was both the smallest unit of weight and the smallest unit of length in the daily life of ancient Mesopotamia. It would be almost impossible for a spearhead or arrowhead made of bronze to weigh 15 “še” (just 0.75g) as this would be too light for a weapon. Thus, it seems likely that the term “še” referred to the length. According to the current standards, the length of 15 “še” was about 42 mm. The copper arrowhead and copper spearhead found in Ur, U1361 and U6159, were both between 40 and 50mm in length. They confirm the existence of a weapon head of that size. Therefore, these weapon heads were likely 15 “še” in length, but this is speculative and the reason for why their lengths were noted has not been appreciated until now.

So far, some analysis has been provided of the king’s weapons that bear the term “šu-lugal”. A summary of the above discussion is needed. Only four different weapons (three kinds of arrowheads and one kind of spearhead) have been found with the term “šu-lugal” connected to them. All of them are made of a copper alloy that is mostly bronze. There is no term “giš” before the names of these weapons in the text, so the texts are referring only to the heads of the weapons. It is likely that the different natural properties and preservation conditions of metal and wood meant that they were stored separately. There is a very interesting possibility that the weapons other than the normal bronze arrowheads, which were shot with a bow, were hand-thrown weapons like javelins. This suggests that the original meaning of “šu-lugal” was probably “(in) the hands (of) the king”.

¹⁶⁵ TIM 06, 42 (1971).

II.2) Logistics

II.2.1 Dayyānu-mišar and Arsenals

The name of an official Dayyānu-mišar (di-ku₅-mi-šar) often appears in the archives on the receipt and expenditure of weapons.¹⁶⁶ There are 27 references to Dayyānu-mišar, mainly from Puzriš-Dagan (seldom from Ur, Ebaga and Uruk), dating from Š 45/v-AS 9/iii. Although there was no cylinder seal to show his position, Dayyānu-mišar was likely to be the official in charge of the royal arsenals. The texts of his receipt and expenditure of weapons and metal materials can be seen from the table below:

Table 3. The Texts of Dayyānu-mišar

Text	Date	Contents
AUCT 1, 696	Š 45/v	Withdraw 30 arrows for king use, Ahan-šibu received, via Huba
TIM 06, 33	Š 45/v	Withdraw 3 bronze arrowhead, Ahan-šibu received
TIM 06, 34	Š 45/xi/2	Withdraw 1200 bows, 1200 pair of bow-horns, for soldiers, 1 bronze musical praise instrument, its wood inlaid with silver, given to Anbahu, the Amorite, the soldier of Abuni; brought by Bur-Mama, general of Sippar and Zukukum
Sumer 59, 094 01	Š 45/xi/17	Withdraw 2 lance inlaid with silver, given to Ni-deda, the Amorite, sent by Šu-Šulgi, via Lugal-inim-gina
TIM 06, 35	Š 45/xii	Withdraw 1 bronze arrowhead, 12 arrows for king use, Ahan-šibu received, via Huba
TIM 06, 36	Š 46/iii	Withdraw 90 bows for soldiers, 1 bright silver encrusted with gold, Lu-Nanna, general of Nagsu, received
TCL 02, 5488	Š 46/iv	Receive 1 bronze musical instrument, general <i>Hašip-atal</i> sent, via Šu-Enlil, guard of Ea-ili, 1 Elam bow, delivery of Lu-Nanna, general of Nagsu
RA 008, 184 02	Š 46/viii	Receive 3 bronze daggers on the waist, 3 leather sheath of daggers and 1

¹⁶⁶ For the link of Dayyānu-mišar with the delivery of weapons, see Miguel Civil, "Of Bows and Arrows", *JCS*, vol.55 (2003), p. 53, n. 19.

		small box, delivery from Puzur- <i>ili</i>
TIM 06, 37	Š 47/i	Withdraw 2 bows, 2 bow-strings, 2 pair of bow-horns, 14 old arrows for king use, 1 pair of saddle hook, 1 pair of old saddle hook, objects for rituals, Kur-ginir received
AUCT 2, 384	Š 47/v	Receive [1+arrow]head, ... silver ..., bronze-smith..., deliveries of [Dug]-gakazi, man of Urbilum, via general Igi-rumah
TIM 06, 39	Š 47/xii	Receive 2 copper arrows, delivery of Ur-lal
BJRL 64, 111 68	AS 1/xii	Withdraw 1..., 1 wood maš-dag, 40 arrows, via Huba
TIM 06, 40	AS 2/i	Withdraw 30 arrows with defect in the appearance, for king use, Huba received
TIM 06, 41	AS 2/vi	Receive 1 bronze ax, delivery of Ur-Ningal, smith of Ningal
AUCT 2, 178	AS 2/vi	Withdraw 7 pair of ..., bronze...urgudu objects, 7 pair of daksi objects, for Inanna of Uruk, gift of the king
TIM 06, 38	AS 2/xi	Receive 11 lances, delivery of Huba
Sumer 59, 099 04	AS 2/--/15	Withdraw ... silver
TIM 06, 42	AS 3	Receive 1 lance, for king use, delivery from Huba, via A-...
TIM 06, 43	AS 3/iii	Withdraw 30 arrows, with defect in the appearance, 20 arrows for king use, Huba received
AUCT 2, 133	AS 3/ix	Withdraw 1 har-lum, encrusted with..., for Awan, Amorite, brought by Z anum, messenger of the king, (via) grand vizier Arad-Nanna
TCL 02, 5565	AS 3/xi	Withdraw 2 whips with leather-handle, via vizier Lugal-kagina and grand vizier Arad-Nanna
MVN 11, 191	AS 4/i	Withdraw 2 ax with two edges inlaid with silver, to herdmen Lu-bala-saga and [Lu-kašmu]
Nisaba 33, 0643	AS 4/vii	Withdraw ...
CST 372	AS 8/i	Withdraw 2 bronze arrowhead, small harness, Abuni received, via Ur-Baba
Sumer 59, 097 02	AS 9/iii	Receive 1 a bronze musical instrument, 1 whip, delivery of <i>Nihelu</i> , the Amorite, and Ur-šuišan
Sumer 59, 098 03	AS 9/iii	Receive 1 bronze ax, delivery of <i>Arip-hupi</i> , a smith from Talmuš, via Zizu

AUCT 1, 437	--/--/--	Receive 1 bronze..., booty of ..., via Lu-dingira
Sumer 59, 100 05	--/--/--	Receive 1 alabaster container for banquet, delivery of Gudea, a merchant from Nippur

It is difficult to determine the weapon management system employed in this period simply by analyzing his texts. However, his texts are rich in information. They show that the king's arsenals stored not only weapons but also all kinds of valuables such as bronze musical instruments.¹⁶⁷ These non-military valuables were usually gifts from emissaries from other countries or gifts to be given to people from other countries.¹⁶⁸ Sometimes, the king would choose gifts for the gods from them.¹⁶⁹ The non-military valuables were even sometimes given to generals.¹⁷⁰

The royal armory was spread over several areas including Ur, Egaba, and Uruk, but it was concentrated in Puzriš-Dagan.¹⁷¹ The aim was probably to make it easier for members of the royal family to access valuable weapons and non-weapons. A city with a royal arsenal suggests that it was under direct royal jurisdiction.¹⁷² In other cities like Umma, where the ruling family was stronger, some arsenals only offered weapons to ordinary soldiers when the king needed them.¹⁷³ Weapons from different arsenals were probably used by different subordinate units. While weapons from royal arsenals were probably used by soldiers who belonged to the royal army, it is uncertain weapons from local arsenals were used by an army positioned in a province, or under the control of a local elite official. This may also indicate that the Ur III Dynasty did not have complete control over some areas.

II.2.2 Animals in the Army

Animals played three main roles in the army. Some animals, such as donkeys and

¹⁶⁷ TCL 02, 5488 (1911), TIM 06, 34 (1971).

¹⁶⁸ TCL 02, 5568 (1911), AUCT 02, 133 (1988).

¹⁶⁹ AUCT 02, 178 (1988).

¹⁷⁰ In TIM 06, 36 (1971), the general of Nagsu, Lu-Nanna, received 90 bows for soldiers and some valuables; at the next month, an Elam bow was presented to the king from him, in TCL 02, 5488 (1911).

¹⁷¹ In Ur, see AUCT 02, 384 (1988); in Egaba, see TIM 06, 39 (1971), in Uruk, see AUCT 02, 178 (1988).

¹⁷² Laura E. Culbertson, *Dispute Resolution in the Provincial Courts of the Third Dynasty of Ur*, PhD. Thesis, University of Michigan, 2009.

¹⁷³ MVN 16, 792 (1994).

cattle, would be used as traction for chariots or wagons carrying supplies. This was mentioned in the previous chapter. Some animals were also food for the army. One text records animals that were assigned to the kitchen (e₂-muhaldim) and used as food by small groups of soldiers on various missions.¹⁷⁴ The expression “mu aga₃-us₂-e-ne-še₃” was used in Sumerian texts to refer to “on account of the soldier”. The main animals that the soldiers ate as food were cattle and sheep that had died (ba-uš₂) or of low grade (šu-gid₂, usually a type of offering).¹⁷⁵ In some cases, however, the soldiers did not have to eat dead or low grade animals. One example was soldiers on royal duty. One text describes these soldiers on a mission to protect the queens and, as such, eating meat from high-quality cattle and sheep.¹⁷⁶ Another example of this was when some soldiers had to work as part of important religious events, such as the religious rites for Enlil and Ninlil held at Nippur.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, sometimes, soldiers and other categories of people, mainly the men of ration (lu₂-šuku-ra-ke₄-ne), would use good-quality animals for their food.¹⁷⁸ Generally, they ate the meat of dead animals. And then finally, the other example is the soldiers who performed a special ceremony, the lustration rite. A kind of soldiers entered the gate of the Palace (mu aga₃-us₂ a-tu₅-a ka e₂-gal-la ku₄-ra-ne-še₃, literally means “on account of, or instead of, the soldiers of the ? who entered the gate of the palace”) and received the meat of good-quality cattle and sheep.¹⁷⁹

The last kind of animal that was used in the army was a dog, and its role was to help with fighting or policing.¹⁸⁰ There was a very professional system for managing dogs in the Ur III Dynasty. In part, this was because dogs were the pet and symbol of the medical goddess, Gula. Therefore, the Sumerians kept many dogs in the temple of

¹⁷⁴ Lance Allred, *Cooks and Kitchens: Centralized Food Production in Late Third Millennium Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2006.

¹⁷⁵ Christina Tsouparopoulou, “A Reconstruction of the Puzriš-Dagan Central Livestock Agency”, *CDLI*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (2 June 2013), pp. 1-15. Magnus Widell, “Destined for Slaughter: Identifying Seasonal Breeding Patterns in Sheep and Goats in Early Babylonia”, *JNES*, vol. 79, no. 2 (2020), pp. 209-223.

¹⁷⁶ AUCT 01, 399 (1984).

¹⁷⁷ AUCT 03, 88 (1988).

¹⁷⁸ NMS A.1927.425.

¹⁷⁹ NMS A.1927.476.

¹⁸⁰ Christina Tsouparopoulou, “The ‘K-9 Corps’ of the Third Dynasty of Ur: The Dog Handlers at Drehem and the Army”, *ZA*, vol. 102, no. 1 (May 2012), pp.1-16; David I. Owen, “Of Dogs and (Kennel) Men”, *CDLB*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (26 September 2013), pp. 1-7.

the Gula.¹⁸¹ To ensure the survival of the dogs in the Gula temples throughout the country, kennel men were set up in Puzriš-Dagan to manage the livestock that the dogs ate.¹⁸² They also provided food for the royal hounds, the king's pet dogs, and military dogs. For a twenty-five-year period during the reign of Šulgi and the early reign of Amar-Suen, these tasks were mainly undertaken by a kennel man (sipa-ur-ra/sipa-ur-gi₇-ra) named Ilumbani (Illum-ba-ni).¹⁸³ There were some changes in the management of dogs and kennel men during the reigns of Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen. There was usually a leader who was in charge of several kennel men, and the leader tended to have something to do with the military. Most of them were local generals or had local leadership responsibilities, so they did not have a lot of time to manage specific matters concerning the dogs. These leaders, therefore, needed their kennel men to assist them with the management. The texts that have been found so far from this period make very little mention of the food that the temple dogs received. For this reason, and because most of the leaders of the kennel men in this period were local military commanders, we believe that dogs became an integral part of the military. Also, the army took over the management of dogs throughout the country, indirectly reflecting some of the administrative changes during this period. During the reign of Ibbi-Suen, and especially after the closure of Puzriš-Dagan, a new title emerged for the dog managers: the captain of dogs (nu-banda₃ ur-gi₇).¹⁸⁴ The new title is likely to have been granted after a person had spent many years as a military administrator. After the "captain of dogs" title appeared, the title "kennel man" was rarely used again. This series of changes in the management of dogs may reflect the deeper exploration of the military value and potential of dogs in the Ur III Dynasty.

The omnivorous nature of dogs caused managers to provide a wide variety of dog food. Dog food typically consisted of live or dead cattle, sheep, and donkeys, but

¹⁸¹ Christina Tsouparopoulou, "The Healing Goddess, Her Dogs and Physicians in Late Third Millennium BC Mesopotamia", *ZA*, vol. 110, no. 1 (July 2020), pp. 14-24.

¹⁸² For study of texts from Iri-saġrig document the care and feeding of palace dogs by dog handlers/kennelmen, see David I. Owen, *Cuneiform Texts Primarily from Iri-Saġrig/Āl-Šarrākī and the History of the Ur III Period*, Nisaba

15. Bethesda: CDL Press, 2013.

¹⁸³ David I. Owen, "Of Dogs and (Kennel) Men", *CDLB*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (26 September 2013), p. 2; Liu Changyu, *Organization, Administrative Practices and Written Documentation in Mesopotamia during the Ur III Period (c. 2112-2004 BC)*, KEF 3, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2017, p. 20.

¹⁸⁴ UET 03, 1253 (1937), UET 03, 1254 (1937).

sometimes bread was also used as food for dogs.¹⁸⁵ However, the animals given to dogs were not always used as food. The Sumerians would send some old donkeys that might have been used to pull chariots and taken out of the army into the dog kennels to help train the dogs.¹⁸⁶ Current evidence suggests that bears may have occasionally been used to train dogs in how to hunt with coordination. In most cases, donkeys seem to have been used to improve the dogs' ability to attack other large animals on the battlefield.¹⁸⁷ Another very interesting question relating to dogs is whether there was a hierarchy at the time. A previous study has suggested that the Ur III Dynasty divided dogs into ordinary dogs (ur-ra) and superior dogs (ur-gi7-ra).¹⁸⁸ However, other scholars prefer to view ur-gi7-ra as a general identification of a native breed or “mastiff”; there is no consensus regarding the breed.¹⁸⁹ It also seems likely that “ur-ra” was just shorthand for “ur-gi7-ra” and a product of the different writing habits of different scribes. Given that the title of kennel man was used in the Šulgi period, there does not seem to have been a national hierarchy of dogs during the Ur III period. Overall, the dog had a very prominent position in the military system of the Ur III Dynasty.

II.2.3 Army Provisions

There are two main sources of army provisions in the Ur III period. 1) Rations assigned to soldiers for some tasks, including the food for soldiers (mu aga3-us2-e-ne-šè) mentioned above, the rations for messengers, and more. 2) Rations allocated to the army for combat (these could be very costly during large-scale

¹⁸⁵ For expenditure of dead animals (fed) to the dogs recorded in the administrative texts from Puzriš-Dagan, see most recently Christina Tsouparopoulou, “The ‘K-9 Corps’ of the Third Dynasty of Ur: The Dog Handlers at Drehem and the Army”, *ZA*, vol. 102, no. 1 (May 2012), pp.1-16; for other feeding of dogs including bread, flour, grapes, cooked fish and generic fodder, see David I. Owen, “Of Dogs and (Kennel) Men”, *CDLB*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (26 September 2013), p. 5.

¹⁸⁶ Trouville 56 (1911).

¹⁸⁷ For study of lions occur frequently in Iri-Sağrig texts, see David I. Owen, “A Thirteen Month Summary Account from Ur”, in Marvin A. Powell jr. and Ronald H. Sack (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones*, AOAT 203, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1979, p. 63; David I. Owen, *Nisaba* 15.

¹⁸⁸ Tom B. Jones and John W. Snyder, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Third Ur Dynasty*, SET, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961, pp. 226-227.

¹⁸⁹ Piotr Steinkeller, “Early Political Development in Mesopotamia and the Origins of the Sargonic Empire”, in M. Liverani (ed.), *Akkad, the first World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, HANE/S 5, Padova: Sargon srl, 1993, p. 129; Pietro Mander, *An Archive of Kennelmen and Other Workers in Ur III Lagash*, IUOA 54, suppl. 80, Naples: Istituto universitario orientale, 1994, p. 314; David I. Owen, “Of Dogs and (Kennel) Men”, *CDLB*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (26 September 2013), p. 5.

military operations).

The first form of rations, distributed to soldiers on small missions, was dealt with in detail in the previous chapter. In short, the more important the task was, the better kinds of food were assigned to soldiers. The content is based on an analysis of the administrative texts between Puzriš-Dagan and the kitchen (e₂-muhaldim).¹⁹⁰ They represent a small number of soldiers on more senior missions related to the royal family or the central government. However, in terms of the daily tasks and daily rations of lower-order soldiers, we can resort to another type of document known as messenger texts. Messenger texts are one of the most distinctive and largest categories among all the administrative documents from the Ur III periods. These documents record the rations allotted to large numbers of minor officials of different ranks and to messengers traveling between cities. There are approximately 6,500 texts in this category that have been attested in the Ur III period. These come from three provinces: Girsu (3,500), Umma (2,670), and Iri-Saġrig (about 300). Of these, over 4,000 messenger texts have been published in autographs and/or transliterations. About half of these are from Umma.¹⁹¹

The structure and classification of Umma messenger texts have been studied in detail. The messenger texts from Umma are generally assignments of six goods: beer (kaš), bread (ninda), oil (i₃), onion (sum), alkali-plant (naga), and fish (ku₆). These cover the requirements for a trip of one or more days. It is easy to identify differences in content and form in these texts. N. Schneider proposed a typology of nine groups when he examined this category of texts for the first time, but his classification was incomplete due to the scarcity of texts.¹⁹² A more detailed classification system was developed by R. C. McNeil in his 1970 doctoral dissertation.¹⁹³ This was based on internal criteria such as the quantity and quality of the rations allotted. McNeil

¹⁹⁰ For an overview study of kitchens in Ur III, see Lance Allred, *Cooks and Kitchens: Centralized Food Production in Late Third Millennium Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2006.

¹⁹¹ Numbers are according to the *Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts (BDTNS)* at <http://bdtns.filol.csic.es>, accessed on May 10, 2020.

¹⁹² Nikolaus Schneider, *Die Drehem und Djoġa Urkunden der Strassburger Universitts- und Landesbibliothek*, AnOr 1, Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1931.

¹⁹³ Robert Clayton McNeil, *The "Messenger Texts" of the Third Ur Dynasty*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1970.

categorizes 527 Umma messenger texts into 13 groups (from A to M). This laid the foundation for further research and became the necessary reference point for all the future editors of this category of texts. A new classification system proposed by F. Pomponio offered a simplification of the groups identified by McNeil.¹⁹⁴ Pomponio chose the chronological sequence within different groups as his classification criterion, and he consolidated McNeil's 13 groups into three main groups (I–III). Pomponio's revised classification system will likely shed new light on archival practices and provide additional clues regarding the provenience of individual tablets. However, it will not replace the more detailed system devised by McNeil. McNeil's scheme can be applied to almost all the texts of this genre, and it is still very helpful for editing new texts. This is especially true when it comes to recognizing possible variations. As well as investigating the collection and publication of original tablets, Patterson has examined the background and context of this specific genre of text. He has also examined the texts' military terminology. He has found that provincial way stations were complex administrative and productive units, ready to supply provisions for officials when they were traveling for tasks within or outside the province. A conclusion has been reached that these three different provinces dealt with different peripheral regions, from which foreign groups traveled in greater numbers and more frequently than was previously assumed.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, although messenger texts are quite formulaic and monotonous, they contain valuable historical information for studying the militaristic and political aspects of the Ur III Dynasty. This suggests that more thorough and detailed studies will be required in the future.¹⁹⁶

The rations for large-scale military activities can be discussed from two

¹⁹⁴ Francesco Pomponio, "The Ur III Administration: Workers, Messengers, and Sons", in Steven J. Garfinkle and Manuel Molina (eds.), *From the 21st Century B.C. to the 21st Century A.D., Proceedings of the International Conference on Sumerian Studies Held in Madrid 22-24 July 2010*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013, pp. 223-227. For texts from Iri-Saĝrig, see David I. Owen, *Cuneiform Texts Primarily from Iri-Saĝrig / Al-Sarrākī and the History of the Ur III Period*, Nisaba 15, Bethesda: CDL Press, 2013; Marcel Sigrist & Tohru Ozaki, *Tablets from the Isisaĝrig Archive* (2 vols.), CUSAS 40, Pennsylvania, 2019.

¹⁹⁵ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 390-563.

¹⁹⁶ Xiaobo Dong, Xueting Chao, "Five Umma Messenger Texts from the National Museums Liverpool (World Museum Liverpool)", in Sven Günther, Wayne Horowitz and Magnus Widell (eds.), *Of Rabid Dogs, Hunchbacked Oxen, and Infertile Goats in Ancient Babylonia: Studies Presented to Wu Yuhong on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, Journal of Ancient Civilizations, Supplement Series 7, Changchun: Northeast Normal University Press, 2021, pp. 67-69.

perspectives. First, we can consider the seasonal, large-scale feeding of animals that might have been used for warfare, such as donkeys and mules. This might have corresponded with seasonal military activity.¹⁹⁷ The texts which record the cost of feeding these animals partly support this view. Secondly, we can consider the fact that the government used to collect grain from many different barns, particularly barns near battle sites. Two texts from the sixth year of Amar-Suen's reign record the actions of Puzriš-Dagan officials in the requisition of grain stored in the barn. In the sixth and 12th months of that year, the officials collected a total of six years' grain from the barns of Tummal and Nipur, respectively.¹⁹⁸ The name of the seventh year of Amar-Suen's reign records that "Amar-Suen, the king, destroyed Bitum-rabium, Jabru, their territories, and Huhnuri". The name of this year also confirms that in the sixth year of Amar-Suen's reign, there were indeed several large-scale battles. In sum, the relatively mature grain storage system used during the Ur III Dynasty provided the necessary guarantee in case the country needed to wage war.

II.3) Military Ceremony

II.3.1 Expedition Ceremonies

There are no references of the concrete operation of military ceremonies in Ur III Dynasty, our discussion of this section has to rely on some later literature compositions. Some useful information about expedition ceremonies during the Ur III period can be found in *The Victory of Utu-hegal*.¹⁹⁹ Before going to war, the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty may have announced, like Utu-hegal, that they had received a commission from Enlil, the king of all the lands. They also may have justified the war by describing the enemy as evil. Then, a ceremony would have been held to pray to the most important goddess of war, Inanna, for victory. This was very important, and it can be found in *The Death of Ur-Namma*. The reason for Ur-Namma's death was

¹⁹⁷ Hannah Johnson, *Feeding the People: the Social and Economic Role of the Granary in Ur III Umma*, PhD. Thesis, University of Liverpool, 2017, pp. 99-100.

¹⁹⁸ MVN 03, 234 (1975); PDT 01, 552 (1954).

¹⁹⁹ W. H.Ph. Römer, "Zur Siegesinschrift des Königs Utuḫegal von Unug (± 2116-2110 v. Chr.)", *OrNS*, vol. 54, no. 1-2 (1985), pp. 274-288.

that Enlil sent Inanna to another place so that she could not protect Ur-Namma, who died in a defeat.²⁰⁰ They may also need to claim that they receive the help of ancestral gods such as Gilgamesh and Dumuzi. At the same time, the kings may have prayed for the help of powerful gods like Iškur and Utu. If we consider this series of activities as the military expedition ceremony, then it is likely that the kings would have gone to the temple for religious activities under the orders of Enlil, Inanna, the ancestral gods, and other relatively powerful gods. However, things may have changed after Šulgi deified himself. Through a series of hymns, he became one of the more powerful Sumerian gods. In some hymns, he defines Utu and Gilgamesh as his brothers and Inanna as his lover. This means that it would have been reasonable for him to be sheltered by these gods. It might mean that it was only necessary to sacrifice Enlil to show his authority before each battle. Given that there were frequent wars during the Ur III period, such a simplified expedition probably helped the army's rapid movement.

II.3.2 Triumphant Ceremonies

Compared to the texts that record the army's expedition ceremony, there are fewer records of the army's triumphal ceremony. If the king defeated the leader of the opponent, then they would capture their wife and children. Then, the king would put them in shackles and blindfold them. They would then be taken to the temple of the god that the king believed provided the most help in this battle. They would be placed at the king's feet. The king would put his foot on their necks and kill them in this religious ceremony as a gift to god. This triumphal ceremony did not change much from Sargon to Utu-hegal and Šulgi.²⁰¹ In contrast, the act of Gilgamesh capturing and releasing Agga only exists in literary works.²⁰² Furthermore, it has been argued that the cause of Amar-Suen's death (from shoe attacks) was caused by a wound

²⁰⁰ "My people whom I used to command (?) sing like lamentation and dirge singers because of her (?). While I was so treated, foremost Inana, the warlike lady, was not present at my verdict. Enlil had sent her as a messenger to all the foreign lands concerning very important matters", See *The death of Ur-Namma (Ur-Namma A)*, a version from Nibru, Translation, line 187-197, ETCSL.

²⁰¹ D. J. Wiseman, "Murder in Mesopotamia", *Iraq*, vol. 36, no. 1/2 (1974), p. 255.

²⁰² Willem H.Ph. Römer, *Das sumerische Kurzepos "Gilgamesh and Akka"*, AOAT 209/1, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980.

infection, but is there any possibility that his neck could have been broken like the defeated monarchs? Until now no evidence has emerged to prove such a view. There may have been other types of celebrations in the triumphal ceremony. Unfortunately, we lack the textual records to confirm this.

II.4) Booty

“Nam-ra-ak” is a term used to describe booty in Sumerian texts. This booty was usually livestock, grain, and people. The texts that record the booty usually only indicate that the material came from a particular area, but they do not record if the booty came from a particular battle or conflict. One reason for this might be that the booty was controlled and consumed by the army. There were special circumstances in which a portion of the booty had to be handed over to the royal family. This led to the discovery of such content in the texts of Puzriš-Dagan.²⁰³ This has led to the unconfirmed proposition that the booty was from some minor fight or that it was the residual booty from past battles when the years do not record any warfare. So far, this problem remains unexplained. From the current textual records referring to the booty, it is clear that there was a change regarding booty from the Šulgi reign to the Ibbi-Suen reign.²⁰⁴ Livestock and silver were the bulk of the booty during the reign of Šulgi. However, the demand for grain and population as part of the booty increased during the Amar-Suen reign. By the reign of Ibbi-Suen, the plunder of population and grain had become a more pressing objective of the war. This was possibly related to the deterioration of the environment in southern Mesopotamia during this period, as described in Chapter I of this study.

The Sumerians, who lived mainly in southern Mesopotamia, were likely to face declining populations and livestock as a result of reduced food production due to

²⁰³ Laurent Hebenstreit, “The Sumerian Spoils of War During Ur III”, in Hans Neumann, Reinhard Dittmann, Susanne Paulus, Georg Neumann and Anais Schuster-Brandis (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden im Alten Vorderasien: 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Münster, 17.–21. Juli 2006*, AOAT 401, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp.379.

²⁰⁴ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 594-596.

environmental degradation.²⁰⁵ In the northern part of the territory of the Ur III Dynasty, the area around Nippur was probably an important base for food production. There may have been many small villages like Du-Enlila that were engaged in the production of grain. They were under the management of the high officials of the Ur III Dynasty who had been sent to Nippur. There is a text that records people as booty being placed near Nippur. Possibly, they may have been sent to produce food during the reign of Šu-Suen.²⁰⁶ Also, there were other methods of labor-management used for prisoners of war in the Ur III period. This will be discussed in detail later in the relevant chapter. In summary, the acquisition of booty in war was not only a way for a country to obtain resources; it also, to some extent, reflected the economy in different periods. It is worth noting that the statues of gods were carried away by the enemy as booty when the Ur III Dynasty was destroyed. Afterward, the statues of gods were seen as an important form of booty in ancient Mesopotamia. Divine statues were sometimes removed by conquering enemies.²⁰⁷

II.5) Military Buildings

During the Ur III period, there may have been special military fortresses and cities. In some places during this period, the chief administrative officer was a general. In this case, these areas were probably military fortresses or cities. However, the evidence for this is lacking.

Also, the city wall used for defense in buildings directly related to the military has been recognized through archaeological excavation.²⁰⁸ The most representative of these is the city wall of Ur, which was the capital of the Ur III Dynasty. The Ur city

²⁰⁵ Minna Silver, "Climate Change, the Mardu Wall, and the Fall of Ur", in Olga Drewnowska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 60th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Warsaw 21-25 July 2014*, RAI 60, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 271-295.

²⁰⁶ Benjamin Studevent-Hickman, *Sumerian Texts from Ancient Iraq: From Ur III to 9/11*, JCSSS 5, Atlanta, Georgia: Lockwood Press, 2018, pp. 45-52.

²⁰⁷ Erika D. Johnson, "Time and Again: Marduk's Travels", in L. Feliu, J. Llop, A. Millet Albà and J. Sanmartín (eds.), *Time and History in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 56th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Barcelona 26-30 July 2010*, RAI 56, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013, p. 113.

²⁰⁸ For city walls in the third millennium, see Pascal Butterlin, "Limites urbaines et enceintes fortifiées. Eléments de topologie urbaine au Proche-Orient ancien au III^e millénaire avant notre ère", *Cahier des thèses transversales ArScAn*, vol. 11, (2013), pp. 255-262.

wall encircled the core area of Ur in an oval shape. Like other major cities of Mesopotamia at that time, Ur was also located near the great river. The city was surrounded by tall walls, and the moat was like a ribbon around the outside of the walls. The moat outside the city wall was protective and part of the city's shipping route. There were two harbors on the north and southwest sides of the wall for receiving and transporting supplies and people.

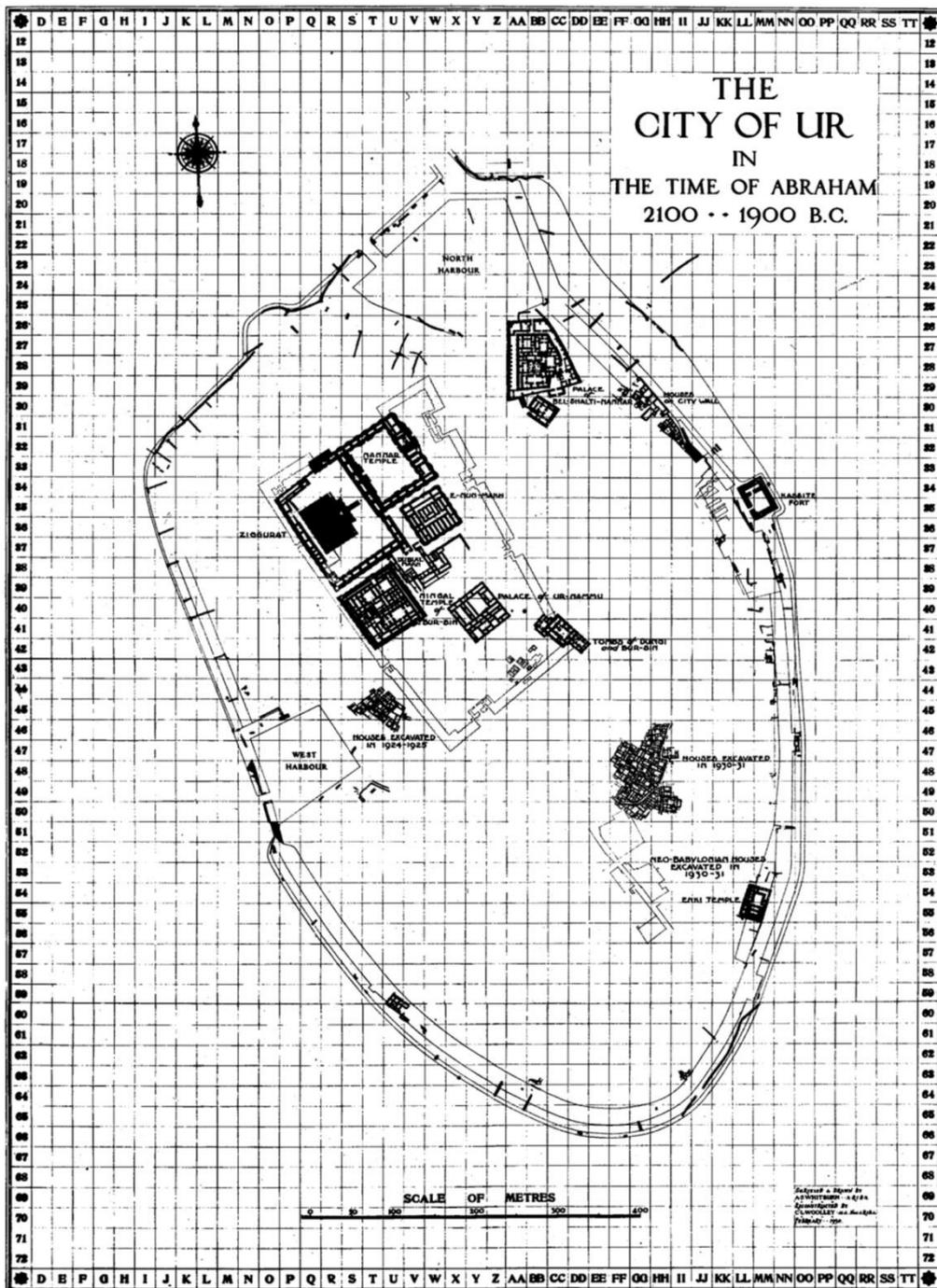


Figure 10. The city of Ur showing the principal buildings excavated²⁰⁹

According to Woolley's archaeological record, no gate was found in the wall in the excavation of Ur. So, it's not clear how people were able to get in and out of the city. There is also the possibility that the city was connected to the outside world only by water to improve its defenses. Unfortunately, it may never be possible to test these plausible assumptions. To defend the city, some houses close to the walls were stocked with bricks for repairing the walls and ammunition for fighting the enemy.²¹⁰

Ur was the capital of the Ur III Dynasty, and its wall was probably the highest city wall at that time. However, the most remarkable military building of this period was the Martu Wall. According to the names of the years of the Ur III Dynasty, the Martu Wall was completed during the fourth year of Šu-Suen's reign. This year was named: "Šu-Suen, the king of Ur, built the Martu Wall (called) holding back the Tidānum" (mu ^dšu-^dsuen lugal uri₂^{ki}-ma-ke₄ bad₃ mar-tu mu-ri-iq ti-id-ni-im mu-du₃). However, the Martu Wall was likely one that Šu-Suen renovated and expanded based on the border wall built during Šulgi's reign. During his 37th year in power, Šulgi built a border wall. This year was named: "Nanna and Šulgi, the king, built the wall of the land" (mu ^dnanna u₃ ^dšul-gi lugal-e bad₃ ma-da mu-du₃). The Martu Wall may have been based on the construction of the wall during the Šulgi era, but Šu-Suen officially named it and indicated that it was intended to protect against Amorite invasion. That is why scholars now refer to it as the Martu Wall. As for why the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty built such a border wall, the reasons seem to be those mentioned in the previous chapter of this study: namely, the fact that the core area controlled by the Ur III Dynasty was in the north, and there was no natural barrier or hard border formed by the physical environment. This is very similar to why the rulers of ancient China built the Great Wall, but the rulers of ancient China benefited from a much better geographical boundary than the Ur III Dynasty rulers. Geographically, the ancient Chinese empire faced the Pacific Ocean to the east and south, a plateau to the

²⁰⁹ Leonard Woolley, *The Buildings of the Third Dynasty*, UE VI, Oxford, Philadelphia: Published by the trustees of the two museums (the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), 1974, PLATE 61.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-74.

west, and mountains to the north, where the Great Wall was built. The Martu Wall, by contrast, was located in a plain without any mountains or highlands to cling to.

Scholars have speculated on the possible location and length of the Martu Wall.²¹¹ So far, however, not much archaeological evidence has been found for the Martu Wall. There are two possible reasons for this. 1) The reason may be that ancient southern Mesopotamia was starved of stone. Thus, the Martu Wall may have been built using the same mud bricks as the city walls. At the same time, objectively speaking, four thousand years ago, the technology for human construction was immature. Although scholars estimate that the Martu Wall was about 63 kilometers long, it's possible location and the materials used to build it mean that it is probably lost forever. In China, by contrast, parts of the Great Wall that have not been maintained for more than two thousand years can still be found. The reasons for this are obvious. First, a large amount of stone was used as a building material, and human construction techniques have been developed on the basis of the Ur III period for two thousand years. Secondly, these Great Wall sites are generally located in inaccessible mountains. Finally, the Great Wall was much longer than the Martu Wall.

The objective conditions under which these Great Wall sites are lacking when it comes to the Martu Wall. 2) The limitations with building materials and techniques led to staggering construction and maintenance costs for this large construction project. Given this enormous investment, did the Martu Wall do what it was supposed to do and keep out the Amorites? The answer to this question is obviously, "No". Therefore, later rulers felt it was pointless to build a very costly wall. The Amorites, against whom the Martu Wall was built, under the leadership of Hammurabi, united ancient Mesopotamia and established the Old Babylonian Dynasty. Thus, as the rulers of ancient Mesopotamia extended their empire to the north, there was no need to rebuild the Martu Wall. Thus, overall, it is unlikely that the mud wall, which existed for only a short time roughly 4,000 years ago, will be found unless it was rebuilt by

²¹¹ Minna Silver, "Climate Change, the Mardu Wall, and the Fall of Ur", in Olga Drewnowska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 60th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Warsaw 21–25 July 2014*, RAI 60, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 271-295.

later kings.

In addition, three literary royal letters from Šu-Suen's reign refer to the construction of the Martu Wall.²¹² However, because these literary letters were Old Babylonian copies made as scribal exercises for educational purposes, their authenticity is debated; they may have been subjected to unknown amounts of redaction or they may have been invented.²¹³ The point of mentioning them here is not to examine whether these royal correspondences were made up of narratives that included real historical events but to look at the possible circumstances and difficulties surrounding the construction of the Martu Wall. Only a brief overview of their contents will be given here.²¹⁴ The first letter was from Šarrum-bani to Šu-Suen. Šarrum-bani was ordered to rebuild the Martu Wall to keep out the Amorites, but the Amorites attacked him as he built it. He and Lu-Nanna, who was the governor of Zimudar, discussed how to solve the problem, but they could not find a solution. So, Šarrum-bani wrote to king Šu-Suen for help. The second letter was the reply from Šu-Suen to Šarrum-bani. Šu-Suen's letter made it clear that Šarrum-bani's core mission was to build the Martu Wall. Šu-Suen not only gave him clear orders but also offered to send Lu-Nanna and Babati to help him. Finally, Šu-Suen asked Šarrum-bani to report daily on the progress of the Martu Wall. The third letter was from Šu-Suen to Lu-Nanna and Šarrum-bani. Unfortunately, the contents of this letter have been completely destroyed. This letter may have been the letter to Lu-Nanna that was mentioned by Šu-Suen in the second letter, but we may never know. Generally speaking, the level of military engineering in the Ur III Dynasty was quite advanced compared to the rest of the world.

II.6) Hostile Forces

²¹² For complete contents of these correspondences, see Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 398-415.

²¹³ Cécile Michel, "Cuneiform Fakes: A Long History from Antiquity to the Present Day", in Cécile Michel and Michael Friedrich (eds.), *Fakes and Forgeries of Written Artefacts from Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern China*, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020, pp. 28-30.

²¹⁴ For more details, see Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 398-415.

II.6.1 Gutians, Amorites, and Elamites

The external threat to the Sumerians in the Ur III period came mainly from the Gutians, Amorites, and Elamites. According to the contents of *The Sumerian King List* and *The Victory of Utu-hegal*, the revival of the Sumerian civilization (or the so-called Neo-Sumerian period) came about following the expulsion of the Gutians.²¹⁵ In the end, Utu-hegal and Ur-Nammu led the Sumerians in driving out the Gutians and capturing their leader alive.²¹⁶ Thenceforth, Utu-hegal established the Uruk V Dynasty. After Utu-hegal's death, Ur-Nammu inherited his power and established the Ur III Dynasty to begin the reign of Sumer. Many of these details will be discussed in the following chapter, which looks at war during the reign of Ur-Nammu. It will explore questions like: what did Ur-Nammu do in the expulsion of the Gutians? How did the expulsion of the Gutians lay the foundation for the establishment of the Ur III Dynasty?

After the expulsion of the Gutians, the Amorites became the greatest threat to the northern frontiers of the Ur III Dynasty. The first relatively comprehensive study of the Amorites during the Ur III period was provided by G. Buccellati. He tried to approach the topic from six angles: 1) the language of the Amorites; 2) the provenience of the Amorites; 3) the Amorites' politics; 4) the Amorites' religion; 5) the Amorites' social structure and 6) the terminology to be used.²¹⁷ Using these six topics, Buccellati divided his research into two main parts. The first part was linguistic affiliation and the second part was historical reconstruction. His speculation about the origins of the Amorites and his discussion of their existence within the jurisdiction of the Ur III Dynasty are of interest to this study. Buccellati speculated

²¹⁵ For a critical edition of the Sumerian King List, see Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, AS 11, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1939. A more recent version can be found in Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, WAW 19, Atlanta: SBL Press, 2004. For the Victory of Utu-hegal, see Rykle Borger, Walther Hinz and W. H.Ph. Römer, *Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden Historisch-chronologische Texte I*, TUAT 1/4, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1984, pp. 316-319; W. H.Ph. Römer, "Zur Siegesinschrift des Königs Utuhegal von Unug (± 2116-2110 v. Chr.)", *OrNS*, vol. 54, no. 1-2 (1985), pp. 274-288.

²¹⁶ Peeter Espak, "The Establishment of Ur III Dynasty. From the Gutians to the Formation of the Neo-Sumerian Imperial Ideology and Pantheon," in Thomas R. Kämmerer, Mait Kõiv and Vladimir Sazonov (eds.), *Kings, Gods and People, Establishing Monarchies in the Ancient World*, AOAT 390/4, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016, pp. 77-108.

²¹⁷ Giorgio Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, Pubblicazioni del Seminario di Semitistica, Ricerche I. Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1966, p. 4.

that the origin of the Amorites had an important connection with the western part of ancient Mesopotamia. At the same time, the origin of the Amorites may have had some connection with the eastern and southern regions.²¹⁸ He enumerated and analyzed the texts of the Ur III period from Drehem, Ur, and other cities, making reference to the Amorite elements. He also studied the status of the Amorites as foreigners and residents during the Ur III Dynasty. Buccellati made a significant effort to historically reconstruct the Amorites, but unfortunately, there is so little textual material available that his study provides few clear answers. 30 years later, he briefly summed up his view of the Amorites who were active during the Ur III Dynasty. Although his study expanded the geographical area (including Mesopotamia, Syria, etc.) and time range (from 2500 BCE to the Late Bronze Age) related to the Amorites, it did not provide any new information.²¹⁹ Until now, we have known very little about the Amorites in the Ur III Dynasty. Even before the reign of Hammurabi, little is known about the history and culture of the Amorites.²²⁰ We do know, however, that the kings of the Ur III Dynasty were not consistently tough on the Amorites. In other words, the Kings may have used different strategies for managing the Amorites in different situations and at different times. Some of the Amorites lived under the direct control of the Ur III Dynasty, and their sources were complex. They may have been brought back as the spoils of war, traded, and stayed temporarily, or they may have voluntarily left the Amorite tribes and settled in the Sumerian territory. Most of the Amorites who lived outside the borders of the Ur III Dynasty were peaceful or at war with the Ur kings. There is no doubt that such behavior increased the national expenditure on the military and the cost of governing the border areas. Although it seems that the Amorites were always causing trouble for the Ur kings, they were not a threat. Surprisingly, these troublemakers, led by Hammurabi, unified ancient Mesopotamia hundreds of years later and became the rulers of Sumer.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 235-252. For the origin of the Amorites, see also Walther Sallaberger, "From urban culture to nomadism: A history of Upper Mesopotamia in the late third millennium", *Publications de l'Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes*, vol 19, no.1, (2007), pp. 417-456.

²¹⁹ Giorgio Buccellati, "Amorites", in Eric M. Meyers (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 107-110.

²²⁰ Riens de Boer, *Amorites in the Early Old Babylonian Period*, PhD. Thesis, Leiden University, 2014, pp. 22-26.

The relationship between the Elamites and the Sumerians at this time was somewhat different from the relationship between the Amorites and the Sumerians. First, the Ur III Dynasty relied heavily on maritime trade and northern trade routes. However, they clashed repeatedly with the Elamites in the east and northeast, abandoning the possibility of peaceful commerce and instead engaging in costly plundering. This plundering was a means of destroying Elam's economy, for it is difficult to see what reward was expected from plundering the same city several times a year. Ancient Mesopotamia had very little variety in terms of the resources that needed to be imported, so this was the first foreign place where the Sumerians imported goods that were originally from Elam, Magan, and other places. However, they did not trade directly with the Elamites on the border.²²¹ Another point worth mentioning is the political marriage between the Ur III Dynasty and Anšan during the Šulgi period.²²² According to the title given to the 30th year of his reign, Šulgi sent his daughter to Anšan for a political marriage that year; the year was named: "The governor of Anšan took the king's daughter into marriage" (mu dumu-munus lugal ensi₂ an-ša-an^{ki}-ke₄ ba-an-tuku/du). However, this political marriage lasted only four years, before Šulgi's army destroyed Anšan. The 34th year of his reign was named: "Anšan was destroyed" (mu an-ša-an^{ki} ba-hul). A text from the 44th year of Šulgi's reign records the goods given to the king's daughter who lived in Anšan (dumu-munus lugal an-ša-an^{ki}-še₃).²²³ This suggests that Šulgi probably placed the land of Anšan under his management during this period so that his daughter could still live there after Anšan's defeat. This brings us to the third strange fact. Though the Ur III Dynasty had managed the region of Elam more effectively than the Amorite region, it was the Elamites, not the Amorites, who struck the final blow to the Ur. The king of the Ur III Dynasty controlled Susa and a large part of Elam from the time of Ur-Nammu onwards. Elam was under the rule of the dynasty of Šimaški at this

²²¹ D. T. Potts, "Patterns of Trade in Third-Millennium BC Mesopotamia and Iran", *World Archaeology*, vol. 24, no. 3 (February 1993), pp. 379-402.

²²² Audrey Pitts, *The Cult of the Deified King in Ur III Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Harvard University, 2015, pp. 133-138.

²²³ BCT 02, 166 (1993).

time.²²⁴ However, the dynasty of Šimaški was more like a loose political alliance that had to be forged in response to a powerful common enemy. The conflict between Elam and Ur emerged as a clash between two very different political forms. The “tribalized”, segmentary state of Elam was never really a match for the hyper-centralized, unitary state par excellence of Ur. Anšan, which was part of Elam, was very backward in comparison with Ur (according to the archaeological evidence). Anšan was a standard rural town compared to the big cities of Ur and Susa, according to D. T. Potts.²²⁵ It is hard to imagine that their army could have destroyed the capital city of Ur and caught the last king Ibbi-Suen after a long march to Ur. They even dragged the big statue of the moon god, Nanna, which was in Ur’s Ziggurat back to Anšan. It was evident that the troops of Anšan were marching, fighting, and retreating with ease. They would have been annihilated in the course of the march and would not have been able to locate Ur without the help of other forces.

In summary, the Amorites often caused military trouble for the kings of Ur, and the Elamites eventually destroyed the capital city of Ur. However, neither of them was a major factor in the destruction of the Ur III Dynasty. The following chapters will discuss how the Ur III Dynasty, which was the strongest in the region at the time, was defeated from within.

II.6.2 Local Rulers

According to *The Victory of Utu-hegal* and some royal inscriptions from the Ur III period, the military campaign against the Gutians led by Utu-hegal had little support from any of the other Sumerian city-states, except for the city Ur, which was under Ur-Nammu’s control. Utu-hegal became the great king of the Sumerians and had authority over the land of Sumer after he drove out the Gutians. The king’s title of Utu-hegal was changed from the “king of Kiš” to the “king of the four quarters”

²²⁴ Matthew W. Stolper, “On the Dynasty of Šimaški and Early Sikkalmahs”, *ZA*, vol. 72, no. 1 (1982), pp. 42-67; Piotr Steinkeller, “New Light on Šimaški and Its Rulers”, *ZA*, vol. 97, no. 2 (2007), pp. 215-232.

²²⁵ D. T. Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 130-159.

(lugal an-ub-da limmu-ba). The Akkadian king Naram-Sin created this title.²²⁶ However, Utu-hegal's power did not increase very much in comparison to the former great kings who had possessed the title of the "king of Kiš". Also, he remained unable to deal with the internal affairs of many of the cities that he did not directly govern. This was directly reflected in the dispute between Ur and Lagaš during the Uruk V Dynasty,²²⁷ but it is important to show some useful information about the city-state of Lagaš at that time before going into detail.

Lagaš was perhaps the strongest city-state in the Sumerian region, especially in economic and militaristic terms.²²⁸ Though Lagaš was well equipped to defeat the Gutians and liberate the cities of Sumer from bondage, it chose not to. Lagaš offered no help in the fight between Utu-hegal and the Gutians. Then, there was an armed conflict between Lagaš and Ur during Utu-hegal's reign in the Uruk V Dynasty.²²⁹ The man from Ur won the military conflict. Utu-hegal, like the "king of Kiš" before him, drew the boundaries of both sides. The only difference was that Lagaš gained territory because it won the war between Lagaš and Umma. This time, Lagaš lost territory because it lost the military conflict. Utu-hegal's meticulous efforts to protect the fragile Sumerian union meant that he had to compromise with local forces.

All of these indications suggest that Sumerian kingship, in the traditional sense, was very limited. The expansion of the power that Sumerian kingship represented began when the man from Ur took over his authority from Utu-hegal. Soon after he had captured Sumer, Ur-Nammu attacked Lagaš in great force. In this battle, Ur-Nammu not only defeated Lagaš but also captured its rulers. Although Ur-Nammu eventually allowed the rulers of Lagaš to return and continue their rulership, administrative texts from the Ur III Dynasty show that he had de facto control over

²²⁶ William W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles: A Philologic and Historical Analysis*, AOS 43, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society Press, 1957, pp. 49-76. See also, Tohru Maeda, "'King of the Four Regions' in the Dynasty of Akkade", *Oriental*, vol. 20 (1984), pp. 67-82.

²²⁷ Douglas Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*, RIME 2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 281.

²²⁸ Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty*, RIME 3/1, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

²²⁹ Douglas Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*, RIME 2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 281.

the city-state by the end of the war.²³⁰ It follows from this that Ur-Nammu, in the early stages of his reign, may have used force to suppress the Sumerian city-states that refused to surrender completely.

Ur-Nammu's successors struggled to develop a unified central authority that could combat local, hostile secession. As mentioned in the first chapter, the essence of the Šulgi reform was to encircle and suppress local forces politically, economically, militarily, and culturally.²³¹ Šulgi siphoned off property from the temples of other cities and gave them to Ur. The aim was to reduce the political influence of local rulers by reducing the influence of local gods. He also spared no efforts in improving the status of gods like Enlil and Ninlil in Nippur, making Nippur the national religious center and weakening the influence of the local gods, thereby forming a unified national ideology.²³² Šulgi also made sacrifices to Enlil and Ninlil uniformly by levying the bala tax.²³³ The kings of the Ur III Dynasty used their armies abroad for years for the same purpose. All of these measures above were Šulgi's efforts to increase centralization and weaken local rulers. Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen largely continued these policies during their reign. It is worth noting that there were some changes in these policies during the reign of Šu-Suen. This is probably because some of the local powers were very helpful in his succession to the throne, so he compromised with them after taking the throne of the Ur III Dynasty. The most typical example of this is Umma. Another possibility is that Šu-Suen was so confident in his ability to control these cities that he was able to delegate some power to local rulers.²³⁴ Under the reign of the Ur III Dynasty kings, although some of the local ruling families may have been dissatisfied, they were all completely subordinate to the kings of Ur. For some reason, the Sumerian local rulers had developed a distrust

²³⁰ William W. Hallo, "The Coronation of Ur-Nammu", *JCS*, vol. 20, no. 3/4 (1966), pp. 133-141.

²³¹ Ludek Vacin, "Tradition and Innovation in Šulgi's Concept of Divine Kingship", in Alfonso Archi (ed.), *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome, 4-8 July 2011*, RAI 57, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015, pp. 179-192.

²³² Tonia M. Sharlach, "Innovation in Religion in the Third Dynasty of Ur: Contemporary Evidence and Later Reflections", in Uri Gabbay and Jean Jacques P érenn ès (eds.), *Des Polyth éismes Aux Monoth éismes: M éanges d'assyriologie Offerts à Marcel Sigrist*, Leuven, Paris, Bristol: Peeters, 2020, pp. 437-450.

²³³ Tonia M. Sharlach, *Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State*, CM 26, Leiden, Boston: Brill and Styx, 2004; Tohru Maeda, "Bal-ensí in the Drehem Texts", *ASJ* 16, (1994), pp. 115-164.

²³⁴ Jacob Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, pp. 134-135.

of Ibbi-Suen, who was the last king of the Ur III Dynasty. Much of this distrust may have come from his terrible skills as a military commander during the early years of his reign, particularly in response to the military threat of the Amorites. In the end, Išbi-Erra's rebellion sounded the death knell for the troubled Ur III Dynasty. According to the royal letters that record this event, Išbi-Erra had swindled a large sum of money from Ibbi-Suen. He also had gathered grain from many Sumerian cities in Ibbi-Suen's name without paying money to these cities. At the same time, he did not transport anything to the city of Ur and Ur troops, which were fighting with the enemy, were in need of food.²³⁵ Ibbi-Suen's poor military and political skills made him unable to deal with such a rebellion. As a result, all the cities fell out of the control of the Ur III Dynasty. Yet strangely, as in the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history, local rulers fought each other fiercely, without any local ruler being able to give the fragile central government a final blow. This echoes the fact that some of the local rulers lured the Elamites to give Ibbi-Suen a final blow and offered a great deal of help, thereby alleviating the moral burden of becoming the king of Sumer. A later section of this study will address why the local rulers didn't send their troops to destroy Ur.

II.7) Conclusion

There have been six parts to this chapter. The first part focused on the armament of the Ur III period and looked at "šu-lugal" weapons, bows and arrows, other weapons and protective equipment, chariots and warships, siegecraft, and the use of armaments. Of these six elements, the one that was discussed in the most detail and that is most important for this study is the "šu-lugal" weapons. Since "šu-lugal" weapons have rarely been studied in the past, this study needed to carry out a detailed analysis of some important aspects of them. In the few relevant texts, we were able to find some content recording the manufacture of bronze weapons, as well as some

²³⁵ Complete contents of these correspondences, see Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 416-482.

detail about the ratio of copper and tin in bronze smelting. This is certainly exciting content for archaeologists studying the bronze of the Ur III period. Archaeologists have long been able to obtain detailed compositions by examining bronzes from this period, but without direct textual evidence it has been difficult to prove whether these proportions were a standard for making bronze at the time. But there are also some problems with the new discovery, notably the inability to identify the “šu-lugal” weapons. It is not possible to know what needs to be tested even if it is possible to test it in a lab. This regret is also reflected in Woolley’s report on the excavation of Ur. In that excavation report, Woolley made a composition analysis of the copper products from the Ur III period, but he did not perform an analysis of the composition of the bronzes. Fortunately, an analysis of the composition of the Ur III bronze weapons has been performed, and one of them has a very close copper-tin ratio to the one mentioned in the text.²³⁶ Nevertheless, the low-tin bronzes we find seem rare case rather than standard practice, which could have been intentionally smelted that way and may have had a special purpose.

In addition, this chapter has also identified a standardized forging process for “šu-lugal” weapons. One of the texts studied reveals the proportion of the weight of three different parts of one kind of “šu-lugal” weapon when forged. Blacksmiths may have used the proportion of the weight to forge three of the same type of weapon, each of different weight. In short, a lot of interesting information was found in the study of the “šu-lugal” weapons. A further study of the text also revealed that the king of Ur III usually wore a pair of armguards (^{giš}da-ak-si e₂-ba-an) when he used his bow and arrow. The rest of this section provided a brief introduction to content related to the theme.

The second part of this chapter focused on the logistics of the Ur III period, including Dayyānu-mišar and the arsenals, animals in the army, and army provisions. This part of the study depended heavily on texts from Puzriš-Dagan (Drehem). The textual study of Dayyānu-mišar revealed that there was a relatively complete set of

²³⁶ Martin Levey, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Amsterdam, London, New York, Princeton: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1959, pp.196-211.

standards for the preservation of weapons in the Ur III period, at least in the royal arsenal. They would disassemble the stored weapons into parts and store them based on the characteristics of their different materials. When they needed to use these weapons, they would assemble them very quickly, which meant that they had to have a relatively standardized process for producing them. When it comes to animals, animals served the usual functions of food and transportation in the military, but dogs had a very special presence and deserve further study. The government and army managed dogs in a highly specialized way during the Ur III period.²³⁷ The topic of army provisions would also benefit from more detailed discussions in the future.

The third part of the chapter focused on the military ceremonies of the Ur III period, including expedition ceremonies and triumphant ceremonies. Due to limitations in the available textual and iconographic data, the reconstruction of ceremonies is based on literary texts only. It was only possible to demonstrate that the expedition ceremonies and triumphant ceremonies likely both took place during the same period. However, their exact form remains unclear.

The fourth part of the study focused on booty during the Ur III period. This has long been one of the foremost research topics related to the wars of this period.²³⁸ By studying the changes in the variety and quantity of booty over time, we were able to provide a more detailed picture of the development of the Ur III Dynasty as it moved from prosperity to decline.

The fifth part focused on the military buildings of the Ur III period. There were probably many kinds of military buildings at this time. Unfortunately, however, few have been well preserved. The only structures that can be considered militarily relevant are the city walls. However, not much remains of the wall from this period. When excavating the wall of the capital of Ur III, Woolley could not even find the location of the city gate. This section, therefore, focused on the most striking military structure of this period: the Martu Wall. The Martu Wall is reminiscent of the Great

²³⁷ Christina Tsouparopoulou, “The ‘K-9 Corps’ of the Third Dynasty of Ur: The Dog Handlers at Drehem and the Army”, *ZA*, vol. 102, no. 1 (May 2012), pp.1-16; and Christina Tsouparopoulou, “The Healing Goddess, Her Dogs and Physicians in Late Third Millennium BC Mesopotamia”, *ZA*, vol. 110, no. 1 (July 2020), pp. 14-24.

²³⁸ For a catalogue of texts referencing the booty of war, see most recently, Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 594-597.

Wall built by the ancient Chinese, so a brief comparison was made between the Martu Wall and the Great Wall in this section.

Chapter III: Warfare in the Ur III Dynasty

III.1) From Utu-hegal to Ur-Nammu

III.1.1 Victory of Utu-hegal

The Uruk V Dynasty and Utu-hegal would be difficult for any scholar to ignore if they wanted to study part of the Ur III Dynasty. The reasons are obvious. The Sumerians were the founders of ancient Mesopotamian civilization. They were ruled by the Akkadian Dynasty and the Gutian Dynasty for more than two hundred years. They recovered control of the cradle of human civilization under the leadership of Utu-hegal. The victory of Utu-hegal laid the foundation for the revival of the Sumerian civilization and the establishment of the Ur III Dynasty. However, unearthed documents from the early Neo-Sumerian period are extremely rare. Except for *The Victory of Utu-hegal* which may have been created during the Ur III period, at least 30 texts have been identified as coming from Utu-hegal's reign. Two pieces of information contained in these texts are worth noting.²³⁹ The first refers to the military conflict between Ur and Lagaš during Utu-hegal's reign, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. The inscriptions on several clay cones recorded Utu-hegal's restoration of the border of Lagaš.²⁴⁰ The border dispute was raised by Ur-Nammu, and the lands were finally returned to Lagaš under the interference of Utu-hegal. Therefore, Ur-nammu probably cultivated his own power base by encroaching on the lands of its neighbor.²⁴¹ This incident not only underscored the limited authority that Utu-hegal had over local affairs, but it also served as the trigger for Ur-Nammu's political reckoning with Lagaš after the establishment of the Ur III Dynasty. This also showed that the nature of the loosely organized territorial states of Sumer under Utu-hegal's rule had not fundamentally changed.²⁴² Although he

²³⁹ Douglas Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*, RIME 2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 280-296.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 281, 283.

²⁴¹ Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, p. 26.

²⁴² Norman Yoffee, "Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 24 (1995), pp. 290-292; "The Obvious and the Chimerical: City-States in Archaeological Perspective", in D. L. Nichols and T. H. Charlton (eds.), *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross-Cultural Approaches*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997, pp. 255-263.

adopted the royal title of “king of the four quarters” (lugal-an-ubda-limmu₂-ba), the fact was that he did not possess more power than previous Sumerian leaders.²⁴³ These topics were discussed in the previous chapter about local rulers. They will be discussed in more detail later, with a focus on the nature of the state during the Ur III period. The second important piece of information concerns the relatively close relationship between Utu-hegal and Ur-Nammu. In this text, Ur-Nammu is identified as the military governor (šagina) of Ur, the servant of the Ekišnugal and his brother.²⁴⁴ This close relationship was probably why Ur-Nammu supported Utu-hegal both militarily and politically. This also probably explains why Ur-Nammu inherited Utu-hegal’s power and why Uruk was completely under the control of the kings of Ur during the Ur III period. There will be no more discussion of other texts, and the rest of this section focuses on the study of *The Victory of Utu-hegal*.

Only three versions of the original cuneiform texts about *The Victory of Utu-hegal* have been found, the first two of which were published by F. Thureau-Dangin in 1912 and 1913.²⁴⁵ It was not until 1976 that the third edition was discovered and copied by S. N. Kramer.²⁴⁶ Later, W. H. Ph. Römer translated and studied the three versions together, and he produced the relatively complete edition that is used today.²⁴⁷ Of the three existing editions, the first is the best preserved, featuring just a small amount of damage. Although the content of the second and third editions was almost completely destroyed, the remainder provided enriching details about *The Victory of Utu-hegal*.

The text of *The Victory of Utu-hegal* mainly describes the following story. The kings of the Gutians enslaved the Sumerians inhumanely. Utu-hegal had been

²⁴³ For more discussions on the royal title “king of the four quarters”, see William W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles: A Philologic and Historical Analysis*, AOS 43, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society Press, 1957, pp. 49-56; Piotr Steinkeller, *History, Texts and Art in Early Babylonia*, SANER 15, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017, pp. 135-136.

²⁴⁴ Douglas Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*, RIME 2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 295-296.

²⁴⁵ Francois Thureau-Dangin, “La Fin de la Domination Gutienne”, *RA*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1912), pp. 111-120; “Un Double de L’inscription d’Utu-hegal”, *RA*, vol. 10, no. 1/2 (1913), pp. 98-100.

²⁴⁶ Samuel Noah Kramer, *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde bulunan Sumer Edebi tablet ve Parcalari Sumerian Literary Tablets and Fragments in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul II*, ISET 2, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi Press, 1976, p. 124.

²⁴⁷ Rykle Borger, Walther Hinz and W. H. Ph. Römer, *Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden Historisch-chronologische Texte I*, TUAT 1/4, Güttersloh: Güttersloher Verlagshaus, 1984, pp. 316-319; and W. H. Ph. Römer, “Zur Siegesinschrift des Königs Utuḫegal von Unug (± 2116-2110 v. Chr.)”, *OrNS*, vol. 54, no. 1-2 (1985), pp. 274-288.

commissioned by the Sumerian gods to attack the Gutians and free the enslaved Sumerians. Utu-hegal's army marched northward, undaunted. Not only did he refuse the Gutian king's plea for peace, but he also defeated the Gutians' army using military tactics. In the end, Utu-hegal not only drove the Gutians away but also captured their king and royal family as the spoils of war.

In terms of its textual structure, *The Victory of Utu-hegal* (which is a royal inscription describing the war), uses the same narrative structure as the royal inscriptions from the previous era, such as the inscriptions that record the victory of En-Temena over Umma. The content of these texts can be broken down into four parts: 1) detailing the enemy's numerous crimes; 2) the gods commissioning the king to fight; 3) the king winning the war; 4) the results of battle.²⁴⁸ However, *The Victory of Utu-hegal* is filled with lots of details of the war, such as seeking the help of the gods, organizing an army, and describing the route of the march. In terms of its content, the story of *The Victory of Utu-hegal* corresponds to that of Tirigan's defeat by Utu-hegal in *The Sumerian King List*.²⁴⁹

Later in the Ur III Dynasty, there are texts that confirm the war. However, those texts record that Ur-Nammu tamed the Gutians. It is not clear whether this was due to Ur-Nammu's exploits as a military commander of Utu-hegal or as the king of the Ur III Dynasty, but it confirms the existence of the war that drove out the Gutians.²⁵⁰ From this point of view, the story of *The Victory of Utu-hegal* is a credible event in Sumerian history. Two aspects of the text are described in detail: the northward route of Utu-hegal and the military ceremonies of the period (the expedition ceremony and triumphant ceremony).²⁵¹

The text describes Utu-hegal's route in such detail that modern researchers have mapped it (see Figure 11). There are also some other noteworthy details in the text: 1)

²⁴⁸ Francois Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumerischen und akkadischen Königsinschriften Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 1/1*, SAKI/ SAK= VAB 1, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907, pp. 36-38.

²⁴⁹ Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, AS 11, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939, pp. 120-121.

²⁵⁰ William W. Hallo, "The Sumerian Renaissance and the End of the Gutian Domination", in Nach Erich Ebeling and Bruno Meissner (eds.), *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* Band 3, RIA 3, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1971, p. 715; and A. Falkenstein, "Ein Lied auf Šulgi", *Iraq*, vol. 22, Ur in Retrospect. In Memory of Sir C. Leonard Woolley (Spring - Autumn 1960), p. 147.

²⁵¹ Magnus Widell, "Some Considerations on the Meaning of giš bi₂-(in)-DU₃ in the Royal Inscription of Utu-hegal", *JAC*, vol. 15 (2000), pp. 59-68.

Utu-hegal arrested the envoys (kin-gi₄-a) that the Gutians sent to the land of Sumer (see ETCSL lines 38-39). Did such behavior violate the rules of engagement at the time? 2) The text (lines 35-37, 40-50) demonstrates that Utu-hegal defeated the Gutians by making traps (giš mu-na-bar) behind Gutians' troops (eren₂ mu-na lah₅). Was this a method of warfare that was invented by Utu-hegal or a common military tactic at that time? 3) The gods' commission of war is mentioned in many royal inscriptions of this period, including *The Victory of Utu-hegal*.²⁵² The text (lines 24-34) describes Utu-hegal as needing to show that he had been commissioned by the gods to select his elite troops (ka-kešda igi-bar-ra). Does this indicate that the kings of this period needed a just reason to wage war or were simply looking for an excuse? These questions are worth thinking about, but there is no satisfactory answer yet.²⁵³

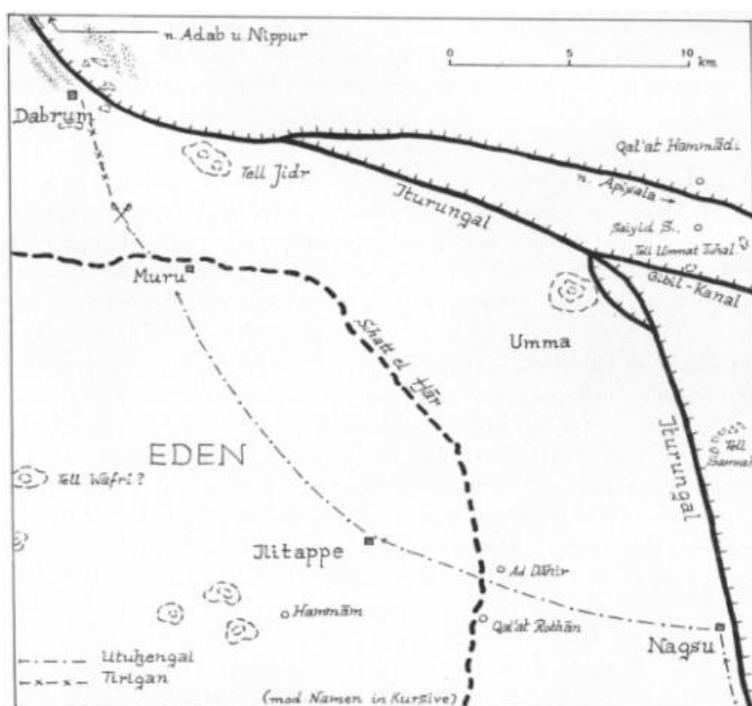


Figure 11. The route of the northward march of Utu-hegal²⁵⁴

²⁵² Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1976, pp. 85-86.

²⁵³ Some scholars believe that there is some relationship between *The Victory of Utu-hegal* and *Gilgamesh and Akka* in content, and it is even considered that *Gilgamesh and Akka* is a re-created literary work based on the content of *The Victory of Utu-hegal*. See Dina Katz, "Gilgamesh and Akka: Was Uruk Ruled by Two Assemblies?", *RA*, vol. 81, no. 2 (1987), pp. 111-114.

²⁵⁴ Herbert Sauren, "Der Feldzug Utuhegals von Uruk gegen Tirigan und das Siedlungsgebiet der Gutäer", *RA*, vol. 61, no. 1 (1967), p. 77.

III.1.2 The Establishment of the Ur III Dynasty

In 2112 BC, with the establishment of the Ur III Dynasty by Ur-Nammu, Utu-hegal ended his reign over ancient Mesopotamia, which lasted about seven years in total. Ur-Nammu not only inherited the titles and authority of Utu-hegal, but he also gained absolute control of the Uruk region, as indicated by his adoption of the title “lord of Uruk” (en unug^{ki}).²⁵⁵ It is unclear from the available sources how Ur-Nammu managed to rise to power and struggle for hegemony, but it seems to have taken a long time.²⁵⁶ It is also not known whether he waged war against Uruk. The records in *The Sumerian King List* provide one explanation: “Uruk was smitten with weapons; its kingship to Ur was carried”.²⁵⁷ The above discussion of the possible kinship between Ur-Nammu and Utu-hegal suggests another possibility: namely that Ur-Nammu may have been a rightful successor or a strong contender for the throne. Indeed, to legitimate his rule, Ur-Nammu adopted a policy of presenting himself as the heir of Uruk.²⁵⁸ All in all, whatever happened to the succession did not affect Ur-Nammu succeeding Utu-hegal as the new ruler of ancient Mesopotamia.

As soon as Ur-Nammu ascended to the throne, he began to centralize power and strengthen himself against local separatists and hostile foreign forces. Politically, economically, or diplomatically, there was no more direct and thorough way of centralizing power than war and military conquest during this period. War was also the most powerful means of shaping a unified society, culture, and national identity. The rest of this section will look at internal unification through war and external expansion through war in this period.

The most obvious way to count the wars of Ur-Nammu’s reign is to study the contents of his year names. The year names of the Ur III Dynasty were mostly

²⁵⁵ Douglas R. Frayne, *Ur III Period (2112-2004 BC)*, RIME 3/2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997, p. 35.

²⁵⁶ Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp. 26-27.

²⁵⁷ Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, AS 11, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939, pp. 122-123.

²⁵⁸ Peeter Espak, “The Establishment of Ur III Dynasty. From the Gutians to the Formation of the Neo-Sumerian Imperial Ideology and Pantheon,” in Thomas R. Kämmerer, Mait Kõiv and Vladimir Sazonov (eds.), *Kings, Gods and People, Establishing Monarchies in the Ancient World*, AOAT 390/4, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016, pp. 77-108.

associated with war and religion.²⁵⁹ This use of important events as a chronology of the Ur III Dynasty provides us with a visual glimpse of the all-important events of the dynasty.²⁶⁰ 17 years are currently attributed to the reign of Ur-Nammu. Unfortunately, apart from the fact that the year that Ur-Nammu became king is the first year, there is no way of ordering the other years' names. Of those names, the following are relevant to the military.²⁶¹

Table 4. Year Names of Ur-Nammu that Contain Military Elements

Transliteration of Year Names	Translation of Year Names
B. mu Ur- ^d Namma lugal-e sig-ta igi-nim-še ₃ giri ₃ si bi ₂ -sa ₂ -a	Year: Ur-Namma, the king, straightened out the road from the south to the north
C. mu Ur- ^d Namma nig ₂ -si-sa ₂ kalam-ma mu-ni-gar	Year: Ur-Namma declared an amnesty (misharum) in the land
E. mu bad ₃ uri ₂ ^{ki} ba-du ₃ -a	Year: The wall of Ur was built
F. mu lugal-e nibru ^{ki} -ta nam-lugal šu ba-ti-a	Year: The king received kingship from Nippur
K. mu gu-ti-um ^{ki} ba-hul	Year: The land of Gutu was destroyed
P. mu ^d lugal-ba-gara ₂ e ₂ -a-na ku ₄ -ra	Year: The god Lugal-bagara was brought into his temple
Q. mu ^d lugal-ba-gara ₂ e ₂ -a ku ₄ -ra us ₂ -sa	Year after: The god Lugal-bagara was brought into the temple

In addition to destroying the Gutu and building the walls of Ur, two year names are replete with military elements. Other year names have elements that might be associated with the military. “Ur-Namma, the king, straightened out the road from the south to the north” can be seen as a symbol of Ur-Nammu’s unification of the

²⁵⁹ Magnus Widell, “Reconstructing the Early History of the Ur III State: Some Methodological Considerations of the Use of Year Formulae”, *JAC*, vol. 17 (2002), pp. 99-111; Jacob L. Dahl, “Naming Ur III Years”, in Alexandra Kleinerman and Jack M. Sasson (eds.), *Why Should Someone Who Knows Something Conceal It? Cuneiform Studies in Honor of David I. Owen on His 70th Birthday*, Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2010, pp. 85-93.

²⁶⁰ Marcos Such-Gutiérrez, “Year Names as Source for Military Campaigns in the Third Millennium BC”, in Johanna Luggin and Sebastian Fink (eds.), *Battle Descriptions as Literary Texts: A Comparative Approach*, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020, pp. 9-29.

²⁶¹ An uppercase letter before the year is just a number and does not represent any order. Any current behavior that treats numbering as a sequence is incorrect, like Christina Tsouparopoulou referred to the year’s name P as the 16th regnal year’s name of Ur-Nammu, although she does express uncertainty in the notes. Christina Tsouparopoulou, “Namine-Hedu, Yet Another Ur III Princess”, *JCS*, vol. 60 (2008), p. 12. In addition, different versions also have different orders of Ur-Nammu’s years’ names. For example, the RIME version and the CDLI version sort differently. The CDLI version is used in this article.

traditional Sumerian territory. He received the kingship from Nippur, and this combined with the fact that in the Ur III period Nippur was under the direct control of the royal family suggests that Ur-Nammu destroyed the local ruling family in some way.²⁶² This was probably through war. While the year name P “The god Lugal-bagara was brought into his temple” appears to have no apparent connection to war, the identity of the god Lugal-bagara demonstrates that there is an implicit link between this incident and the war. The god Lugal-bagara (king of Bagara) is an epithet of the god Ningirsu.²⁶³ Bagara is the name of a temple that belonged to Ningirsu in Lagaš, like the Eninnu temple of Girsu. Thus, the god Lugal-bagara (king of Bagara) is a very clear reference to the god Ningirsu. Ningirsu was the patron deity and king of Lagaš. The Bagara temple was located in the northwest of Lagaš.²⁶⁴ The act of sending the gods back to Lagaš city, which also references the story mentioned in the previous chapter about Ur-Nammu defeating the local rulers of Lagaš, demonstrates that there is clearly a link between this year’s name and Ur-Nammu’s military conquest of Lagaš. This year name was previously thought to be the 12th year name of Šulgi,²⁶⁵ but it now seems more reasonable to think of it as the year name of Ur-Nammu.

The content of year name C, “Ur-Namma declared an amnesty (misharum) in the land,” probably refers to the *Code of Ur-Nammu*. The relationship between this code and war is reflected in the preface of the *Code of Ur-Nammu*.²⁶⁶ The preamble shows that Ur-Nammu had not only driven out foreign rivals from the traditional sphere of Sumerian influence but had also conquered Lagaš and recaptured Magan’s trade authority. He also helped liberate some Sumerian states from the bondage of Anšan at the same time. This indicates that these military conflicts ended before the enactment

²⁶² William W. Hallo, “The House of Ur-Meme”, *JNES*, vol. 31, no. 2 (April 1972), pp. 87-95; more recently, see Yoram Cohen, “Who’s Who in the ‘House of Ur-Meme’. Reconfiguring Old Babylon Literature and Ur III Historical Sources”, *KASKAL*, vol. 17 (2020), pp. 23-52.

²⁶³ Vaughn E. Crawford, “Lagash”, *Iraq*, vol. 36, no. 1/2 (1974), pp. 29-35.

²⁶⁴ Sbastien Rey, *For the Gods of Girsu: City-State Formation in Ancient Sumer*, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016, pp. 15, 25, 41, 46, 56, 66.

²⁶⁵ François Carroué, “Šulgi et le Temple Bagara”, *ZA*, vol. 90, no. 2 (2000), pp. 161-193.

²⁶⁶ J. J. Finkelstein, “The Laws of Ur-Nammu”, *JCS*, vol. 22, no. 3/4 (1968/1969), pp. 66-82. For a recent edition of Laws of Ur-Namma, see Miguel Civil, “The Law Collection of Ur-Namma”, in A. George (ed.), *Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection*, CUSAS 17, Bethesda: CDL Press, 2011, pp. 221-286.

of the code. To some extent, it also provides evidence of military activities related to this period.

From the perspective of their textual content, royal inscriptions and Ur-Nammu's hymns obviously provide more references than the simple historical evidence of year names and the preamble of the *Code of Ur-Nammu*. Among Ur-Nammu's hymns (A-I), hymn B uses considerable space to describe warfare.²⁶⁷ Ur-Nammu's hymn B describes how the gods gave Ur-Nammu weapons to defeat the enemy forces at home and abroad, eventually making the rebels' heads pile up. The text also describes Ur-Nammu's actions in destroying or wiping out the hostile city, which made the hostile forces very afraid of Ur-Nammu's power.

There is not much material about the internal and external wars during the Ur-Nammu period, and the second chapter describes the hostile forces of the Ur III Dynasty in greater detail. To avoid too much repetition of the content, the relevant parts are briefly reviewed here, but some materials will be supplemented in detail later on.

After he took over from Utu-hegal, Ur-Nammu was remarkably quick to stabilize the various political factions within the traditional sphere of Sumerian influence, and he dealt the strongest blow to the rebellious local rulers. However, he also invited the defeated families to maintain their local influence, thereby appeasing the various interest groups.²⁶⁸ At the same time, Ur-Nammu's war against foreign enemies was very successful. Not only did he destroy the remnants of the Gutian, but he also defeated the regime that had entrenched itself in Elam and administered it effectively for a fairly long time. In analyzing fragments of text describing the booty that Ur-Nammu brought back from Susa, G. Marchesi suggested that the Sumerian word "hul" might not have been properly translated as "to destroy" (as it appears in most translations) and might be better translated as a word relating to military defeat, such

²⁶⁷ Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition*, OBO 166, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, pp.196-198.

²⁶⁸ For an overview of Ur-Nammu's policy, see Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp. 27-33.

as “to smite” or “to annihilate”.²⁶⁹ This view is reasonable to a certain extent. Some scholars have also expressed the idea that translating “hul” as “to destroy” may be unsuitable. They believe that the king deliberately exaggerated it as a form of political propaganda.²⁷⁰ In a word, Ur-Nammu’s military conquest laid a solid foundation for the Ur III Dynasty, but it also sounded the death knell for Ur-Nammu himself.

III.1.3 Death of Ur-Nammu

Ur-Nammu hymn A, better known as the *Death of Ur-Nammu*, is a piece of literary text that offers a wealth of information about history, Sumerian customs, and religion. According to the text, Ur-Nammu’s death was sudden and unexpected. Ur-Nammu died in the battlefield. The text reads as follows: “After they had thus abandoned Ur-Namma in the place of treachery as if he were a broken jar”.²⁷¹ The death of a monarch in the middle of a war would have been a catastrophe for the newly stable kingdom. P. Michalowski has pointed out that Ur-Nammu’s death may have shaken the ideological foundations of the kingdom, inspiring the external enemies and local centrifugal forces, which nearly toppled the young state.²⁷² The hymn also describes how the palace where Ur-Nammu’s body lay was attacked and badly damaged by the enemy.²⁷³ This probably indicates that there was a major dispute over the succession after Ur-Nammu’s death. It may even have been that the previously suppressed rebels were set to rebel again. There is still little direct evidence for this, but it is likely that the early days of Šulgi reign would have been difficult for him.

The next part of the hymn details Ur-Nammu’s gift to the gods of the underworld,

²⁶⁹ Gianni Marchesi, “UR-NAMMĀ(K)’S CONQUEST OF SUSĀ”, in Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier (eds.), *Susa and Elam. Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives, Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013, p.287.

²⁷⁰ Magnus Widell, “Reconstructing the Early History of the Ur III State: Some Methodological Considerations of the Use of Year Formulae”, *JAC*, vol. 17 (2002), pp. 99-111.

²⁷¹ Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition*, OBO 166, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, p. 111.

²⁷² Piotr Michalowski, “The Mortal Kings of Ur: A Short Century of Divine Rule in Ancient Mesopotamia”, in Nicole Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, OIS 4, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008, pp. 35-36.

²⁷³ Samuel Noah Kramer, “The Death of Ur-Nammu and His Descent to the Netherworld”, *JCS* 21 (1967), pp. 104-122; Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition*, OBO 166, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, pp. 109-110.

a scene somewhat similar to one found in the *Death of Gilgamesh*.²⁷⁴ This may indicate that the construction of the underworld was relatively clear for the Sumerians of this period.²⁷⁵ The details that need to be focused on are the first and second gods in the underworld to be given gifts by Ur-Nammu. The first god was the traditional Lord of the underworld, Nergal, but in this text he is described as “the Enlil of the netherworld”. The second god is the legendary king of Uruk, Gilgamesh, whose title is “king of the netherworld”. 1) The tribute to Gilgamesh can be seen in part as a manifestation of Ur-Nammu’s successor’s desire to maintain the Uruk tradition. As mentioned earlier in this study, Ur-Nammu and Utu-hegal probably came from the same ruling tribe of Uruk. The rulers of the Ur III Dynasty, however, raised Gilgamesh to the status of king of the underworld through sacrifice, probably to show that their ancestral kingship came from Uruk. It was also a way of demonstrating the legitimacy of the Ur crown. 2) The titles “the Enlil of the netherworld” and “king of the netherworld” reveal more interesting things and may be a counterpoint to real-world ideology.

Since the focus of this section is on Ur-Nammu, and most of the ideological shaping of the Ur III Dynasty began and was completed in the Šulgi period, this section will only discuss this matter briefly. It will be discussed in detail in the next chapter of this study. Both of these titles arguably reflect the centralization of power during the Šulgi reign. Through various means, Šulgi raised Enlil’s position in religion and gradually changed the Sumerian religious belief system.²⁷⁶ At the same time, because Nippur was firmly in the hands of Šulgi, he gained absolute control over the Sumerian interpretation of religion. He also used *bala* to strengthen the influence of Enlil and weaken the influence of the local gods.²⁷⁷ Placing Gilgamesh second place was probably intended to demonstrate that he was king under Enlil. Also,

²⁷⁴ Samuel Noah Kramer, “The Death of Gilgamesh”, *BASOR*, vol. 94 (April 1944), pp. 2-12.

²⁷⁵ Dina Katz, *The Image of the Netherworld in the Sumerian Sources*, Bethesda: CDL Press, 2003.

²⁷⁶ For other measures or reforms taken by Šulgi to strengthen centralization, see Piotr Steinkeller, “The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: The Core and the Periphery”, in *SAOC* 46, 1991, pp. 15-33; more recently, see Ludek Vacin, “Tradition and Innovation in Šulgi’s Concept of Divine Kingship”, in Alfonso Archi (ed.), *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome, 4-8 July 2011*, RAI 57, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015, pp. 179-192.

²⁷⁷ Tonia M. Sharlach, *Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State*, CM 26, Leiden and Boston: E.J. Brill and Styx, 2004.

it shows that, aside from Enlil, the highest ruler in the Ur III Dynasty was the king. This form of ideological shaping is effective even from today's perspective.

In the text, after giving all the gifts, Ur-Nammu is placed in charge of the trial of the guilty, along with Gilgamesh. He calls Gilgamesh "his beloved brother".²⁷⁸ In this passage, Ur-Nammu is not only elevated to the level of Gilgamesh, but he is also portrayed as a brother of Gilgamesh. He has the power of judgment as if he were the king of the Sumerian people. These points demonstrate the source of the power of the Ur III Dynasty, as well as its legitimacy and authority.

The text continues to pull the perspective back to the real world. The details of the king's funeral are revealed one by one. People are not only distraught but also question the gods. In the end, the text responds to such doubts, arranging for Inanna to question Enlil and express significant anger and sadness.²⁷⁹ This arrangement, on the one hand, shows Enlil's status as king of the gods. On the other hand, it shows the close relationship between the Ur III Dynasty and Uruk because Inanna is a goddess from Uruk. There is a very interesting phenomenon in the whole text of the *Death of Ur-Nammu*, which is that the divine world, the human world, and the netherworld do not intersect or interfere with each other. In the heavens, Inanna confronts Enlil to express anger and sorrow. On earth, the Sumerians hold the king's funeral in an orderly manner, in accordance with tradition. In the netherworld, Ur-Nammu takes his rightful place after the completion of the traditional rites. The description of these three worlds not only reflects the Sumerians' understanding of them but also shows the high literary achievement of the author of the *Death of Ur-Nammu*.

III.2) Šulgi Reign

III.2.1 Northern Wars

The Ur III Dynasty entered the Šulgi period with the sudden death of Ur-Nammu. Šulgi ruled the Ur III Dynasty for about 50 years. During his reign, domestic politics

²⁷⁸ Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition*, OBO 166, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, pp. 125-126.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-182.

stabilized, and a series of reforms were introduced, which has meant that many war texts from this period have been preserved.²⁸⁰ Therefore, this study divides this period into two parts, focusing on the large-scale operations against the enemy in the north, as well as on the battle against the enemy in the east. The results of this approach may be a little more coherent than the traditional chronological approach that is generally used to describe the wars of this period. From the surviving year names for the Šulgi period, we can tell that while Šulgi's reign was very long, there was very little warfare during the first two decades. Based on the analysis of the *Death of Ur-Nammu* in the previous section, it is likely that during this period Šulgi was busy suppressing the domestic rebellion and consolidating his regime both politically and ideologically.²⁸¹ Also, Šulgi was probably involved with religious affairs for the first two decades. Moreover, the external environment of the Ur III Dynasty was not very stable, so even if there were no military conflicts with foreign hostile forces recorded during this time, it is likely that some military conflicts still occurred. However, none of these were particularly important for Šulgi, who had succeeded to the throne in the wake of Ur-Nammu's sudden death. His priority was to consolidate his dominance.²⁸² Thus, although major foreign wars would have been very likely during the first two decades of Šulgi's reign, it is clear that they were not the most important events recorded.

This section will discuss the hostile forces in the North during the reign of Šulgi. Firstly, we will turn our attention to the most obvious source for information about this topic: the Šulgi hymns. The extant copies of the Šulgi hymns most likely come from the Old Babylonian period, serving partly as cultic texts and partly as school texts.²⁸³ Although these texts appear to have been composed after the death of the

²⁸⁰ For a recent discussion of the vast numbers of cuneiform texts from the period, see Magnus Widell, "The Sumerian Expression a-ra2 X-kam and the Use of Installments in the Ur III Administration", *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 8-20.

²⁸¹ Piotr Michalowski, "The Mortal Kings of Ur: A Short Century of Divine Rule in Ancient Mesopotamia", in Nicole Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, OIS 4, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008, pp. 35-36.

²⁸² Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp. 68-86.

²⁸³ Eleanor Robson, "The Tablet House: A Scribal School in Old Babylonian Nippur", *RA*, vol. 93, no. 1 (2001), pp. 39-66.

kings in late Ur III or Old Babylonian periods,²⁸⁴ the historical allusions contained in them provide a reconstruction of historical events described in primary sources (such as royal inscriptions) from the Ur III Dynasty. They demonstrate the royal ideology and provide a representation of the Ur III kings.²⁸⁵ Given the relative scarcity of contemporary administrative texts from the first two decades of Šulgi's reign, the Šulgi hymns deserve careful analysis.²⁸⁶

The number and richness of the Šulgi hymns are unmatched by the hymns for any other king of the Ur III Dynasty. Most of them contain depictions of war. Three of them are significantly different from the rest in terms of their content, and they are of great scholarly value. Šulgi hymn B gives a very rich overview of the various aspects of Šulgi's achievements.²⁸⁷ At the same time, it contains a great amount of detail about the heroic battles of Šulgi, highlighting the king's military prowess. The contents of Šulgi hymn B vividly depict the king's actions on the battlefield as a military general and show the highest levels of literary achievement.

Šulgi hymn O is slightly different.²⁸⁸ It does not praise the king's achievements directly, but through the mutual praise of Šulgi and Gilgamesh, or through the praise of Gilgamesh's past achievements. On the one hand, by praising Gilgamesh's brilliant achievements to establish Gilgamesh's high status, this makes Gilgamesh's recognition of Šulgi's achievements authoritative. On the other hand, Šulgi and Gilgamesh become brothers with the same mother, thereby hinting at a connection between the Ur III Dynasty and the ruling family of Uruk. To some extent, this can also be seen as a continuation of Sumerian political and cultural traditions.²⁸⁹ Thus, there is a very interesting cultural phenomenon at work here. As mentioned, in the

²⁸⁴ Nicole Brisch, *Tradition and the Poetics of Innovation: Sumerian Court Literature from the Dynasty of Larsa (ca. 2003-1763 BCE)*, AOAT 339, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007, pp. 29-31.

²⁸⁵ Jacob L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, p. 20.

²⁸⁶ Miguel Civil, "Ur III Bureaucracy: Quantitative Aspects", in McGuire Gibson and Robert D. Biggs (eds.), *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, SAOC 46, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1991, pp. 44-49.

²⁸⁷ *ETCSL*, 2.4.2.02, "A praise poem of Šulgi (Šulgi B)"; Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp. 167-171.

²⁸⁸ *ETCSL*, 2.4.2.15, "A praise poem of Šulgi (Šulgi O)".

²⁸⁹ J. N. Postgate, "Royal Ideology and State Administration in Sumer and Akkad", in Jack M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, CANE 1, New York: Charles Scribners' Son, 1995, pp. 395-411.

Death of Ur-Nammu, Gilgamesh and Ur-Nammu are also represented as brothers. Thus, in the later hymn, the father-son relationship between Ur-Nammu and Šulgi becomes indirectly brotherly through the intermediary of Gilgamesh. This may show an ancient Sumerian ethic. Once the king became a god, both in life and after death, he became associated with the Sumerian tradition, of which Gilgamesh was the main symbol. It was also a sign that these kings who became gods were no longer bound by secular ethics.

The richness of Šulgi hymn D cannot be overlooked.²⁹⁰ Much of hymn D, like hymns B and O, describes the king's valiant battles and his relationship with the Uruk ruling family. In addition, Šulgi hymn D is invaluable for its depiction of the disposition of the defeated enemies following the many wars. There are three parts to the content. 1) After a city had been captured, Šulgi would ask his soldiers to kill the enemies who were lying on the ground. This reflects the cruel nature of ancient warfare. It was a means of ensuring that all the enemies incapacitated soldiers were killed. A surrendering enemy who was free to move was sometimes taken captive, whereas one who was wounded and unable to move was killed. Šulgi would kill any captive adults and ship the children back as slaves. Finally, a curse was placed on those who were lucky enough not to be killed or captured, ensuring that they would die soon after. This shows the various ways in which Šulgi physically destroyed his enemies. It is worth noting that the value of captives was based on their age, rather than their gender. 2) Šulgi stated that the purpose of revenge was to justify his actions in war. Šulgi probably brought the idols from the enemy city back to Ur or left them just outside the city. He likely did this to demonstrate the gods' abandonment of his enemies and destroy his enemies spiritually. 3) Eventually, the enemy fields, orchards, and cash crops were destroyed and overgrown with weeds. Šulgi also destroyed the buildings and walls of enemy cities. He would return, laden with looted goods, and the enemy lost its chance of economic revival.²⁹¹

The above text provides literary descriptions of how the army under Šulgi

²⁹⁰ *ETCSL*, 2.4.2.04 "A praise poem of Šulgi (Šulgi D)".

²⁹¹ Jacob Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns: Sumerian Royal Hymns Glorifying King Šulgi of Ur*, Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981, pp. 78-81.

destroyed an enemy city. It may reflect the situation of Ur III, or simply the later (especially the Old Babylonian) literary creation. In some cases, this is probably what the name of the year means when it says that some cities were “destroyed”. However, some key information in hymn D draws our attention to the north of the kingdom. This is because the text of the hymn indicates that these means of destruction were directed against Gutian enemies. This information is confusing. The exact date of Šulgi’s campaign is not clear, but both the Utu-hegal and Ur-Nammu who preceded him claimed that they had driven out the Gutians. Based on the available information, there are two possible hypotheses regarding this phenomenon. First, it may be that, before the death of Ur-Nammu, the Gutians were not completely expelled from their traditional Sumerian territory and retained a considerable degree of power. Ur-Nammu was probably killed in the war with the Gutians. This possibility exists, but the probability is low. On the one hand, it is almost impossible that decades of large-scale warfare would have failed to expel the Gutians. On the other hand, if the Gutians threat persisted, then Ur-Nammu would scarcely have been able to suppress the local ruling family, and Šulgi’s succession would not have been as smooth as the data suggest. The result of this speculation is that it may well have been a propaganda ploy by Šulgi to claim the same Sumerian legitimacy as his father by declaring himself expelled from the Gutians. The second theory may seem a little conspiratorial: namely, that Ur-Nammu drove the Gutians back to their native land. However, the Šulgi invaded the Gutians’ territory for economic purposes and to expand their territory. There is another possibility. It may be that Šulgi, to satisfy his need to expand his territory, declared himself to be the target of the annihilation of the city as the “Gutians”, but it may be that the target of the military operation had nothing to do with the Gutians. In other words, the Gutians became something of a sinful target and a legitimate pretext for the Šulgi’s military expansion into northern territory. Šulgi could call the foreigners from the north “Gutians” if he wanted to. In fact, this kind of pretext for war would have unsettled the legitimacy of the Ur III Dynasty. This is why it is not widely recorded in the literature.

In any case, Gutians had withdrawn from the stage of history during Šulgi’s reign.

Beginning in the 20th year of Šulgi's reign, he waged wars against the northern cities.²⁹² Those targeted included city-states like Der, which also had loose tribal alliances like the Amorite lands. The defining feature of Šulgi's wars was the repeated defeat of the same enemy. Northern cities were defeated in what W. Hallo calls the "Hurrian war".²⁹³ Cities such as Simurrum and Lullubum were destroyed nine times. However, the seemingly "eternal" victory of the war did not disguise the political defeat that followed for Šulgi. I will supplement this discussion at the end of this chapter, and in the following chapter I will provide a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between war and politics in this period. The northern enemies of the last three kings of the Ur III Dynasty, the Amorites, do not seem to have been a force to be reckoned with during Šulgi's reign. All in all, Šulgi's military operations in the north and northeast (in the Zagros Mountains) ensured the strategic security of the northern trade routes and the northern territory of the kingdom.²⁹⁴

III.2.2 Eastern Wars

The Ur III Dynasty, under the leadership of Ur-Nammu, gained control of the Susa region in the east. When the crown passed to Šulgi, whether for the purpose of territorial expansion or securing the eastern territories, Šulgi needed to strengthen the Sumerian military presence in the east.²⁹⁵ He began his military deployment in the east. To avoid a surprise attack by the eastern kingdom when the war in the north of the kingdom was starting, it seems likely that Šulgi employed some political tactics, which can be seen from the year names. From the beginning of the 20th year to the end of the 27th year of Šulgi's reign, Šulgi's first great northern expedition (which lasted for years) was recorded. Probably in preparation for the second northern expedition, Šulgi appointed his son as high priest of the temple of Enki in Eridu. Then, the governor of Anšan married his own daughter through the means of political

²⁹² Bertrand Lafont, "On the Army of the Kings of Ur: The Textual Evidence", *CDLJ*, vol. 2009, no. 5 (21 October 2009), p. 1.

²⁹³ William W. Hallo, "Simurrum and the Hurrian Frontier", *RHA*, vol. 36 (1978), pp. 71-83.

²⁹⁴ Douglas R. Frayne, "The Zagros Campaigns of the Ur III Kings", *CSMS Journal*, vol. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 33-56.

²⁹⁵ Liu Changyu, "Eastward Warfare and Westward Peace: the 'One-Sided' Foreign Policy of the Ur III Dynasty (2112-2004 BC)", *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 53-57.

marriage to ensure the temporary security of the eastern territory.²⁹⁶ This suggests that Šulgi's focus during his reign was on security in the north. Šulgi's second northern expedition was significantly more successful than his first. It took less than four years, whereas the first northern expedition took seven.

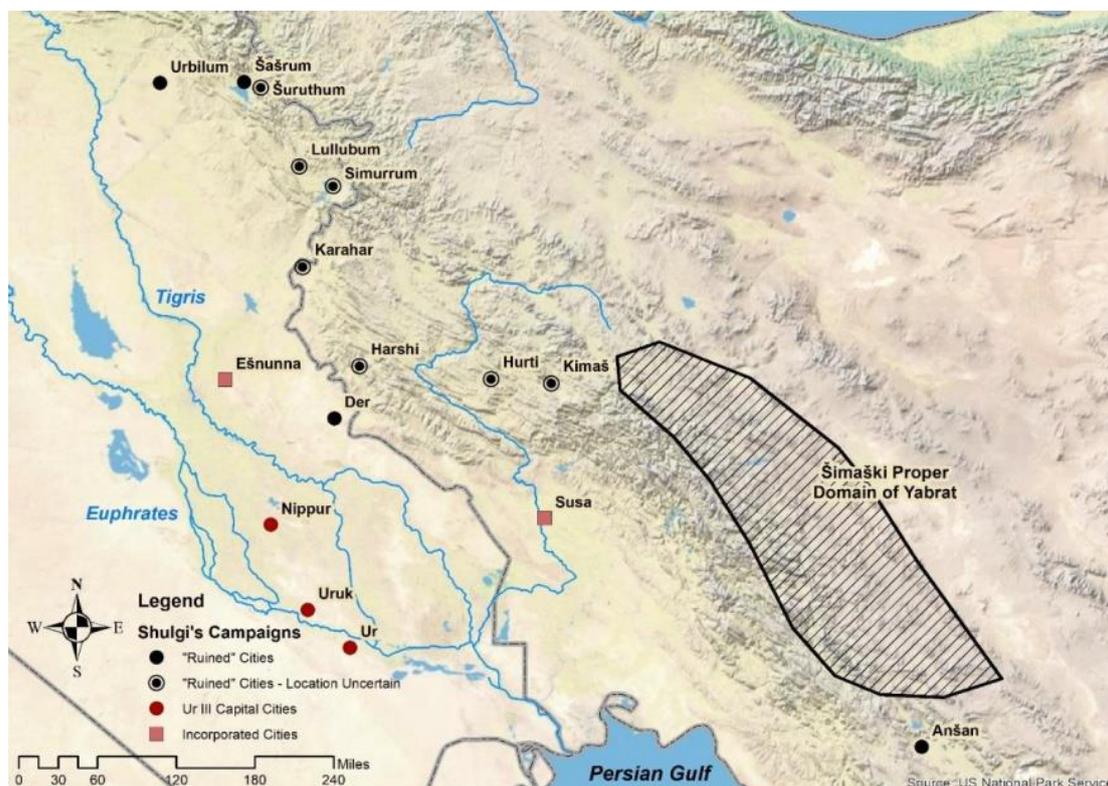


Figure 12. Objectives of Šulgi's campaigns²⁹⁷

Another sign of the success of the northern expedition is that Šulgi's troops immediately moved east and captured Anšan without much rest. This was only four years after the marriage between Šulgi's daughter and the governor of Anšan. From this point of view, the Šulgi raid on Anšan was more like a military sneak attack. It was an unprecedented military victory that became the swan song for military operations in the east. Never again in recorded history did the kings of the Ur III Dynasty invade lands this far east. One possible reason is that the Ur crown's political and economic gains from such a large expedition were too small. The exception was

²⁹⁶ Audrey Pitts, *The Cult of the Deified King in Ur III Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Harvard University, 2015, p. 134.

²⁹⁷ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, p. 273.

the war against Anšan, which Šulgi undertook in the 34th year of his reign. Another war in the east was waged in the 46th year of the Šulgi's reign against the rival cities of Kimaš and Hurti in the northeast.²⁹⁸

III.3) Amar-Suen's and Šu-Suen's Reign

III.3.1 Fewer Foreign Wars

This part of the discussion will focus on the war and reigns of Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen. These are considered together for several reasons. 1) The reigns of Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen were short. The combined length of their reigns (18 years) was less than Ur-Nammu's. 2) There is doubt about the circumstances surrounding the death of Šulgi and the subsequent contest for the throne between Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen, who were brothers.²⁹⁹ Given that two of Šulgi's queens died only five months after him, Michalowski has proposed that Šulgi was assassinated and two of his consorts were murdered with him.³⁰⁰ In addition, the name of Amar-Suen is absent from any extant records before his coronation.³⁰¹ In contrast, Šu-Suen is well attested in administrative documents during the reigns of Šulgi and Amar-Suen, serving as general (šagina) in Uruk and Durum and taking part in the military expedition against Huhnuri.³⁰²

This section looks at the year names, which are the most intuitive and simplest materials to start with. There is a very clear trend in the year names of this period. There are fewer wars than there are in the year names for Šulgi's reign. Moreover, the content of the year names from the Šu-Suen period showed the same downward trend as that of the Amar-Suen period. Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen ruled over the Ur III

²⁹⁸ William W. Hallo, "Simurru and the Hurrian Frontier", *RHA*, vol. 36 (1978), p. 77.

²⁹⁹ Piotr Michalowski, "Of Bears and Men: Thoughts about the End of Šulgi's Reign and the Ensuing Succession", in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature, Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, 2013, pp. 316-317.

³⁰⁰ Piotr Michalowski, "The Death of Šulgi", *OrNS*, vol. 46, 1977, pp. 220-225.

³⁰¹ For possible explanations for the lack of textual references to Amar-Suen during Šulgi's reign, see Jacob L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, 2007, p. 20.

³⁰² Piotr Michalowski, "Of Bears and Men: Thoughts about the End of Šulgi's Reign and the Ensuing Succession", in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature, Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, 2013, pp. 309-310.

Dynasty for nine years each. However, four of the nine year names of Amar-Suen’s reign reference war. In contrast, war only appears in two of the year names for Šu-Suen’s reign.

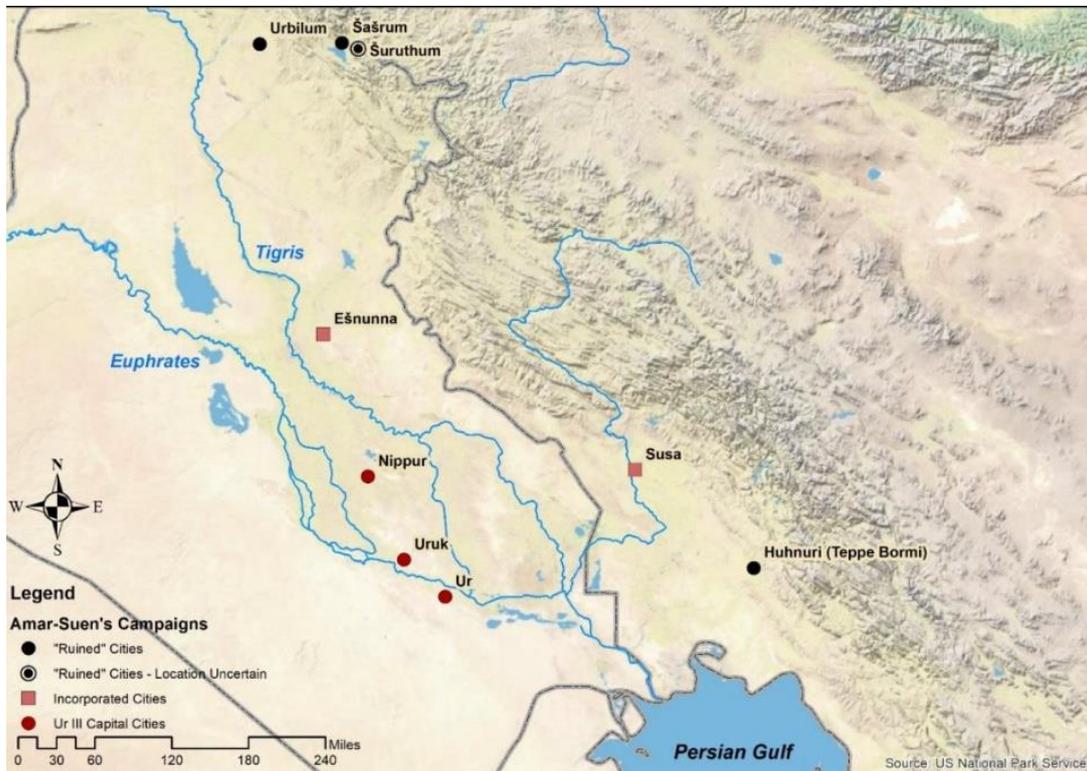


Figure 13. Objectives of Amar-Suen’s campaigns³⁰³

There is another key point about the year names of the Ur III Dynasty. The kings of the Ur III Dynasty used to name the years after events of great significance, but sometimes they just added “the year after” (us₂-sa) as the new year name, because nothing happened in that year that was more important than the year before. The land wall of Šulgi and the Martu Wall of Šu-Suen are two of few major events that are referenced for three consecutive years. If we compare the use of “us₂-sa” year names in the texts of Umma and Drehem from the 43rd year in Šulgi’s reign and the second year in Ibbi-Suen’s reign, it is clear that there are more year names associated with the Martu Wall. This also leads to the assumption that the Martu wall was completed in

³⁰³ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, p. 274.

about the sixth month of the fourth year of Šu-Suen's reign.³⁰⁴ After Šu-Suen's victory over Simanum in the third year of his reign, the whole kingdom was put into a state of complete strategic defense. The kingdom entered one of the longest periods of calm in its history. The next section will discuss the transfer of strategic emphasis and the decline in foreign wars.

This downward trend is not only reflected in the names of years but also in the number of cuneiform clay tablets used to record the spoils of war.³⁰⁵ Given the uncertainty caused by changes in the way the throne was inherited during the period, mentioned above, the records of the Amar-Suen reign may have been destroyed. Even in this case, the number of cuneiform tablets that we have found to date record more spoils in Amar-Suen's reign than Šu-Suen's reign.³⁰⁶

Let us set aside for a moment the possible contest for the throne between Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen, but rather focus on the noteworthy content of their hymns. Unfortunately, only one hymn belonging to Amar-Suen has been found so far, and its content is a little strange compared to the hymns of other kings. The hymns of other Ur III Dynasty kings tended to portray the kings as wise and mighty. The only hymn that remains of Amar-Suen, however, seems to belittle him.³⁰⁷ The hymn describes Amar-Suen's attempt to build a luxurious temple for Enki, which resulted in a waste of money and a rebellion among the people. During each of the nine years of Amar-Suen's reign, there were ominous signs surrounding the temple. Eventually, the gods abandoned the temple and Amar-Suen. The contents of this hymn are not objective in the description of year names and booty texts. If Amar-Suen had faced opposition at home, he would not have had the time or energy to wage frequent

³⁰⁴ Jacob L. Dahl, "Naming Ur III Years", in Alexandra Kleinerman and Jack M. Sasson (eds.), *Why Should Someone Who Knows Something Conceal It? Cuneiform Studies in Honor of David I. Owen on His 70th Birthday*, Bethesda: CDL Press, 2010, pp. 85-93.

³⁰⁵ Laurent Hebenstreit, "The Sumerian Spoils of War During Ur III", in Hans Neumann, Reinhard Dittmann, Susanne Paulus, Georg Neumann and Anais Schuster-Brandis (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden im Alten Vorderasien: 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Münster, 17.-21. Juli 2006*, AOAT 401, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp.373-380.

³⁰⁶ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 594-596.

³⁰⁷ *ETCSL*, 2.4.3.1 "Amar-Suena and Enki's temple (Amar-Suena A)". Other later Old Babylonian works show similar motives, for example, the description of Amar-Suen's inability to receive favorable omens from the gods to rebuild the temple of Enki in Eridu, see Douglas R. Frayne, *Ur III Period (2112-2004 BC)*, RIME 3/2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997, p. 236.

foreign wars. In addition, sometime in the 10th month of Amar-Suen's seventh year, most if not all the generals of the realm were summoned to Ur to swear an oath of allegiance to the king.³⁰⁸ Considering that this was the first time when high-ranking officials were made to take such an oath, this event may reflect Amar-Suen's inner insecurity. There also lies the possibility that Amar-Suen was wounded in war.³⁰⁹

Since there is only one hymn of Amar-Suen, it is important to study the hymns of Šu-Suen's reign in detail. The same blurring of ethics mentioned above occurs in the text of the Šu-Suen hymns. Šu-Suen also became the son of Ninsumun after his coronation, indirectly becoming brother to both his father and grandfather.³¹⁰ This could also be seen as a demonstration of the legitimacy of royal succession and the heroic actions of the king, like those before him. The contents of Šu-Suen's hymns B and C are quite special.³¹¹ They are love poems (*balbale*) between Šu-Suen and Inanna in a style that imitates the love poems describing Inanna and Dumuzi. This may reflect Šu-Suen's desire for children, especially a male heir to the throne. Unlike his father and grandfather, who yearned for the power to fight, Šu-Suen probably yearned for the power to bear children. This may have contributed to the apparent decline in fighting during this period. Therefore, the reason for the significant decline in foreign wars during the reign of Šu-Suen may not be due to a decline in state power but to Šu-Suen's different mentality. The content of Šu-Suen hymn D is similar to that of the Šulgi hymn T, which uses the god of war Ninurta to show the kings' courage.³¹²

In general, the number and quality of the hymns declined significantly during this period. This shows that the succession crisis decreased the country's military strength (the number of foreign wars declined significantly) and also affected other aspects of the country, such as its cultural strength.

³⁰⁸ Piotr Steinkeller, "Joys of Cooking in Ur III Babylonia", in Piotr Michalowski (ed.), *On the Third Dynasty of Ur: Studies in Honor of Marcel Sigrist*, JCSSS1, Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2008, p. 187.

³⁰⁹ Bertrand Lafont, "Game of Thrones: the Years when Šu-Sin Succeeded Amar-Suen in the Kingdom of Ur", in Lluís Feliu, Fumi Karahashi & Gonzalo Rubio (eds.), *The First Ninety Years, A Sumerian Celebration in Honor of Miguel Civil*, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2017, pp. 189-204.

³¹⁰ *ETCSL* 2.4.4.a "A hymn for Šu-Suen".

³¹¹ *ETCSL* 2.4.4.2 "A *balbale* to Inana for Šu-Suen (Šu-Suen B)"; 2.4.4.3 "A *balbale* to Inana for Šu-Suen (Šu-Suen C)".

³¹² *ETCSL* 2.4.4.4 "A *tigi* (?) to Ninurta for Šu-Suen (Šu-Suen D)"; 2.4.2.20 "A *tigi* to Ninurta for Šulgi (Šulgi T)".

III.3.2 Change in Strategic Focus

During this period, the Ur III Dynasty showed a very obvious strategic contraction and adopted a defensive posture. At present, the mainstream view of this is that the national strength of the Ur III Dynasty declined significantly during this period. One of the main pieces of evidence supporting this view is the archive of Puzriš-Dagan. The texts of Puzriš-Dagan that have been found show a marked decrease in the number of items received during this period.³¹³ This is usually interpreted as a decrease in domestic and foreign tributes caused by a decline of national power. However, this study believes that there may have been several reasons for the strategic contraction during the Ur III Dynasty. Though the negative influencing factor of a decline of national strength may have been part of it, it is possible to speculate on other causes based on the existing materials.

In combination with the analysis of the content of the booty text from this examined in the previous chapter, it is clear that the types of booty shifted from livestock to people and food at the end of the Šulgi reign. This was probably due to the development of agriculture and handicraft industry. It was necessary to increase the workforce for ongoing institutional production.³¹⁴ The large labor force in the local government consumed large amounts of livestock, but this is not included in the Puzriš-Dagan statistics. Such developments may have enabled local rulers to build up some strength, providing an economic base for later rebellions. In addition, other possible factors such as climate change, grain reduction, and livestock epidemics may also have been responsible for the decline in the number of livestock mentioned in the text.³¹⁵ Even if we think that there may have been a decline in the power of the state during this period, the archives from Puzriš-Dagan do not provide conclusive

³¹³ Evidence for a marked decline in the number of Puzriš-Dagan texts from Amar-Suen to Šu-Suen, see Liu Changyu, *Organization, Administrative Practices and Written Documentation in Mesopotamia during the Ur III Period (c. 2112–2004 BC)*, KEF 3, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2017, p. 5.

³¹⁴ Agnès Garcia-Ventura, “Ur III Biopolitics: Reflections on the Relationship between War and Work Force Management”, in Davide Nadali and Jordi Vidal (eds.), *The Other Face of the Battle: The Impact of War on Civilians in the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 413, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp. 7-23.

³¹⁵ Minna L. Silver, “Climate Change, the Mardu Wall, and the Fall of Ur”, in Olga Drevnawska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Warsaw, 21-25 July 2014*, RAI 60, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 271-295.

evidence.



Figure 14. Objectives of Šu-Suen's campaigns³¹⁶

It is undeniable that wars played a very positive role in national cohesion in the early stage of human civilizations.³¹⁷ So one possibility is that the Ur III Dynasty strengthened Sumerian national cohesion and national identity through domestic reforms.³¹⁸ This would have meant that the two kings did not have to wage frequent foreign wars to maintain their rule. These changes in bureaucratic management and religious culture would have decreased the cost of maintaining domestic stability, which would have meant that the king did not need to carry out costly, high-risk activities such as war to consolidate his position. On the other hand, it also shows that the local governments were weakened, so it was difficult for them to confront the central government economically and militarily. Thus, there was no need to carry out

³¹⁶ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, p. 276.

³¹⁷ Bruce Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 240.

³¹⁸ Piotr Steinkeller, "The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: The Core and the Periphery", in McGuire Gibson and Robert Biggs (eds.), *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, SAOC 46, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1991, pp. 15-33.

foreign wars to weaken the economic and military strength of local governments. Based on these speculations, it may be that the decrease in the number of wars during this period is a reflection of an increase of national power. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Finally, this study gives another more general speculation. Probably out of a need to consolidate the new state, the military expansion of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi was very rapid. However, the cost of maintaining control in these newly conquered lands was very high and the death of Ur-Nammu may have had something to do with it. The Ur III Dynasty showed very significant diminishing marginal benefits in its frontiers, so it had to shrink strategically to limit its losses. This strategic retrenchment was, frankly, on display in the Šulgi reign. Šulgi's attempts to establish and maintain his rule on the newly conquered frontiers closer to the core area of the kingdom failed and combined with other material this failure is seen as a setback to the kingdom's expansion strategy.³¹⁹ This may also have influenced the foreign strategy of Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen to some extent. Even so, the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty would not hesitate to give the most thorough military strikes when faced with military conflicts involving their core interests. By building a wall on the border, Šulgi and Šu-Suen were creating a boundary on the country's frontiers.³²⁰ To some extent, this shows the rulers' willingness to govern the areas within the wall more effectively. Therefore, these are some rough speculations about the reasons for the decrease in foreign wars during this period. All in all, their good times were over.

III.4) Ibbi-Suen's Reign

III.4.1 Foreign Defense Wars

The Ur III Dynasty's last king was Ibbi-Suen. As J. Dahl has pointed out, the Ur III Dynasty passed through four stages of development, namely consolidation,

³¹⁹ Such as Simurru, see Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 135-138.

³²⁰ Steven J. Garfinkle, "The Kingdom as Sheepfold: Frontier Strategy under the Third Dynasty of Ur; a View from the Center", in Grant Frame, Joshua Jeffers and Holly Pittman (eds.), *Ur in the Twenty-First Century CE: Proceedings of the 62nd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Philadelphia, July 11–15, 2016*, RAI 62, University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021, pp. 245-251.

expansion, stability, and decline.³²¹ This study argues that there were some worries about the dynasty during Šulgi's reign, but until the early part of Ibbi-Suen's reign, the dynasty was still in relatively good condition. Therefore, any discussion of the decline and eventual demise of the Ur III Dynasty should focus primarily on Ibbi-Suen.

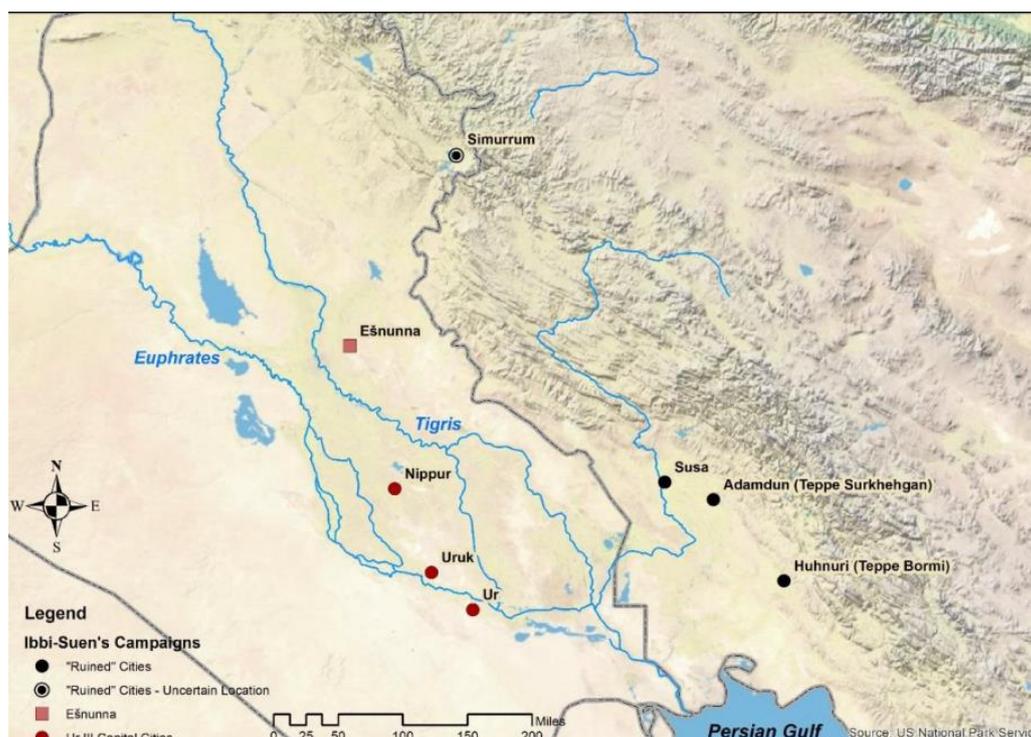


Figure 15. Objectives of Ibbi-Suen's campaigns³²²

According to the year names for Ibbi-Suen's reign, the only credible foreign war was an attack on Simurrum recorded in Ibbi-Suen's third year. Potential conflicts with foreign countries in the other year names look dubious. The surviving hymns on Ibbi-Suen are also mostly religious and have little to do with war. For these reasons, the discussion in this part will focus more on Ibbi-Suen's relations with foreign countries and on some of his personal problems.

The relationship between Ibbi-Suen and foreign countries can be roughly divided into two chronological stages. We can take the 14th year of Ibbi-Suen as a watershed.

³²¹ Jacob L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, p. 1.

³²² Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, p. 276.

From the first year of Ibbi-Suen's reign to the 14th year, the Ur III Dynasty was able to retain some control and influence over the neighboring states. There were three foreign powers that were very distinctive during this period. We will analyze these foreign powers and their relationship with Ur in chronological order.

The first is the relationship between the Ur III Dynasty and Simurrum. It was one of the few foreign wars of Ibbi-Suen's reign in which victory can be verified. This victory is not only recorded in the name of the year but can also be verified by checking local texts in Simurrum. The contents of the texts found at Simurrum confirm that the central government of the Ur III Dynasty effectively ruled Simurrum during the early period of Ibbi-Suen's reign.³²³ At the beginning of Ibbi-Suen's reign, he continued the kingdom's long-standing policy of dealing with the foreign powers in the north. He struck down the non-compliant northern powers militarily. His military operation proved to be a success in terms of its results, but that did not stop the north slipping out of control. Simurrum was defeated nine times during the reign of Šulgi, and Šulgi tried to establish effective rule in the area.³²⁴ However, a number of changes in the power of the Ur III central government clearly affected the rule of the region. There is evidence that the people of Simurrum collaborated with rival local forces to get out of Šu-Suen's control, but the military campaign against the northern enemy under Šu-Suen effectively deterred such behavior.³²⁵ Ibbi-Suen's military victory against Simurrum was a further sign of the decline in the control of the Ur III central government. In other words, this military campaign marks a complete failure of the policy that had been used to govern the northern frontier since the Šulgi's reign.

Ibbi-Suen's inadvisable strategic action on the northern frontier led to a rapid decline in the influence of the Ur III Dynasty in the region. Then, Ibbi-Suen tried to stabilize foreign forces from the eastern frontier through political marriage.³²⁶ He may have been emulating Šulgi in focusing on the troubles in the north. This was the

³²³ Aaron Shaffer, Nathan Wasserman and Ursula Seidl, "Iddi(n)-S ñ, King of Simurrum: A New Rock-Relief Inscription and a Reverential Seal", *ZA*, vol. 93, no. 1 (2003), p. 39.

³²⁴ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 135-138.

³²⁵ William W. Hallo, "Simurrum and the Hurrian Frontier", *RHA*, vol. 36 (1978), p.79.

³²⁶ Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016, pp. 476-487.

second external relationship that Ibbi-Suen wanted to maintain without resorting to war. Nevertheless, the reality he had to face was not as smooth as he had imagined. He lost control of much of the northern and eastern frontiers. According to the year names, this may have occurred around the ninth year of Ibbi-Suen's reign. Scholars conservatively speculate that this occurred between the third and 14th years of his reign.³²⁷ It is impossible to get a precise date, but it is clear that Ibbi-Suen lost control of most of the frontier in the first 10 years of his rule. This is indicative of Ibbi-Suen's poor military and political skills.

Ibbi-Suen soon lost its monopoly on trade in the Persian Gulf after losing control of the land frontier. This brings us to the third relationship that need to discuss, of which Magan is an example. The relationship between the Ur III Dynasty and the Magan can be traced back to the reign of Ur-Nammu. After defeating Puzur-Inšušinak and purging the remnants of the Awan Dynasty in Elam, Ur-Nammu achieved virtual dominance of Persian Gulf trade.³²⁸ This control was, on the whole, stronger than that of any previous dynasty. This was due not only to the re-establishment of commercial links between Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf states but also to the change in the position of Magan in Persian Gulf trade during this period. Mesopotamia's traditional trading partners in the Persian Gulf were Magan, Tilmun, and Meluhha.³²⁹ However, Tilmun came under the military control of the Ur III Dynasty and became a waystation for overseas trade. At the same time, the Magan rulers monopolized direct trade with Mesopotamia by maintaining a relatively close relationship and paying tribute to all the kings of the Ur III Dynasty. Magan was almost like a vassal state in these diplomatic relations. This monopoly was reflected in the objects of trade and the fact that the shipbuilders and boatmen were people from Magan.

The categories of Ur's and Magan's bulk commodity trade were relatively

³²⁷ Katrien De Graef, "Dual power in Susa: Chronicle of a transitional period from Ur III via Šimaški to the Sukkalmas", *BSOAS*, vol. 75, no. 3 (2012), p. 543.

³²⁸ Piotr Steinkeller, "Puzur-Inšušinak at Susa: A Pivotal Episode of Early Elamite History Reconsidered", in Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier (eds.), *Susa and Elam: Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives (Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. 293-317.

³²⁹ Christopher Edens, "Dynamics of Trade in the Ancient Mesopotamian 'World System'", *American Anthropologist*, vol. 94, no. 1 (March 1992), pp. 118-139.

concentrated. The main goods that Mesopotamia exported to Magan were barley, finished textiles, wool, and perfumed oil.³³⁰ In turn, Ur imports from Magan consisted mainly of copper, diorite, and some precious materials from Meluhha. It has been argued that the mythological poem “Enki and the World Order” is an abstract description of trade in the Persian Gulf during this period.³³¹ Possibly because Ib-bi-Suen had gained some advantage in the conflict with Elam, the king of Magan presented Ib-bi-Suen with some gold in the 11st year of his reign.³³² The king of Magan may have wanted to curry favor with Ib-bi-Suen to continue his monopoly of commerce with Ur. Nevertheless, as we have discussed, Ib-bi-Suen’s loss of absolute control over the eastern frontiers resulted in the loss of the close commercial trade relationship with Magan almost immediately after the 10th year of his reign.

The foregoing lists are representative of foreign relations during this period, which relied on military power. This reflects the different strategies adopted during the Ur III Dynasty to solve the problems on several different frontiers. First, the aim was to manage the northern frontier using military and political means and turn the northern frontier into a new territory under the direct rule of the king. Along with the decline in military power, it may have been the fact that it was difficult to spread political influence from Ur in the south to the newly conquered areas that contributed to the final failure. Second aim was to manage the eastern frontier militarily and diplomatically by turning the eastern frontier into a new dependency like other Sumerian city states that were under the control of the Ur III Dynasty. Elam had a long history of its own, and the influence of the Ur III military force had declined too quickly, both of which contributed to the eventual defeat. Third, the aim was to manage the southern frontier by military and commercial means and turn the southern frontier into a vassal state with a close relationship. This plan ended after the military’s decline. To sum up, the rapid and unexplained decline in military power

³³⁰ Harriet E. Crawford, “Mesopotamian Invisible Exports in the third millennium BC”, *World Archaeology*, vol.5, no.2 (1973), pp. 232-241.

³³¹ Steffen Laursen and Piotr Steinkeller, *Babylonia, the Gulf Region, and the Indus: Archaeological and Textual Evidence for Contact in the Third and Early Second Millennia B.C.*, MC 21, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 54-60; Claudio Giardino, *Magan – The Land of Copper: Prehistoric Metallurgy of Oman*, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019, pp. 23-25.

³³² Leon Legrain, “Quelques Tablettes d’Ur”, *RA*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1933), p. 119.

was the main reason for the decrease in the number and impact of wars during Ibbi-Suen's reign.

This inexplicable decline in military power probably had something to do with politics, so we need to analyze and discuss some problems related to Ibbi-Suen. In so doing, we will focus on the domestic impact of the royal succession pattern of the Ur III Dynasty, and the influence of the change of royal power on the frontier and abroad.

The relationship between the kings of the Ur III Dynasty and the Uruk V Dynasty before it suggests that Neo-Sumerian royal succession was a complex system. Even in this period, the number of kings who succeeded to the throne by blood brothers outnumbered those who succeeded as the sons of fathers. For these reasons, the senior successive pattern was put forward by J. Dahl.³³³ The fundamental principle of this model is that the heir must be a blood relative who is mature and capable enough. It can still be found in the Middle East today in places like Saudi Arabia.³³⁴ In fact, such a principle of succession has existed widely throughout world history, such as in the feudal system practiced for a long time in ancient China.³³⁵ It is obvious that the power of the Ur III Dynasty rose and reached its peak when Šulgi and Amar-Suen succeeded to the throne. In contrast, Šu-Suen, who controlled the central government and took the throne, was supported by some of the local ruling families like Umma. In return, he had to give up some power to local ruling families. This political compromise not only enabled Ibbi-Suen to inherit the throne as a brother but also enabled local secessionist forces to fight the central government. Specific details about these will be discussed in later sections.

A study of the impact of changes in the royal power structure on the frontier and the surrounding states is presented in the subsequent chapter. Here is just one example for brief analysis. Previous evidence suggests that Simurrum was under the control of Ur in the early years of Ibbi-Suen's reign. However, a political liquidation of the

³³³ Jacob L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, pp. 7-12.

³³⁴ Jacob L. Dahl, "The Quest for Eternity: Studies in Neo-Sumerian Systems of Succession", in J. G. Dercksen (ed.), *Assyrian and Beyond, Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, PIHANS 100, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004, pp. 117-136.

³³⁵ Bruce Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 74-78.

former king's appointees by the succeeding king may have resulted in distrust. On the other hand, the predecessor had a group of long-standing political partners around whom the new king was bound to redistribute political benefits. Ibbi-Suen could have achieved complete control of the northern frontier territories through political means. Instead, he chose military action against his own dependency, Simurru. The military victory, which marked the end of the Ur III Dynasty's rule over the northern frontier, soon had a ripple effect. Ibbi-Suen may have wanted to show off his strength with the military victory, but local officials and allies in the north saw it as a sign of danger. At the same time, the handling of the Simurru situation may have exposed Ibbi-Suen's lack of political and military talent. The most obvious example of this is the abandonment of the year name of Ur by Ešnunna after the conquest of Simurru.³³⁶ Not only that, but the ruler of Ešnunna tore down the temple that had been built for Šu-Suen and erected a palace for himself in its place.³³⁷

All in all, the way in which royal power changed hands led to the political uncertainty of the Ur III Dynasty. The political cost of the transition greatly increased, and the political foundation of the dynasty was shaken. These political upheavals also spilled over into the region's military power. The result was a rapid decline in the military power of the Ur III Dynasty following this period.

III.4.2 Internal Conflicts

The reasons for the decline and collapse of the Ur III Dynasty were internal, but the first manifestations were in the less well-controlled frontier areas, as mentioned above. The negative feedback from the frontier eventually fed into the core area of the kingdom and led to all kinds of internal conflict. Previously, scholars have argued that Sumerian cities slipped out of Ibbi-Suen's control when they switched from using Ur

³³⁶ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur; An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 196-198.

³³⁷ Clemens Reichel, "The King is Dead, Long Live the King: the Last Days of the Šu-Sin Cult at Ešnunna and its Aftermath", Nicole Brisch (eds.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, OIS 4, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008, pp. 133-156. See also, Fabienne Huber, "La Correspondance Royale d'Ur, un corpus apocryphe", *ZA*, vol. 91, no.2 (2001), pp. 169-206.

year names to local ones.³³⁸ The use of a central calendar was an act of political submission to Ur. These are political manifestations of the confusion in the political construction of Ibbi-Suen's reign, and this confusion was probably the result of the spread of negative political influence in the northern frontier region.

It seems that the economic difficulties of Ibbi-Suen's reign had a more harmful negative than the political ones. From the economic texts of the Ur III period that have been found so far, prices in the Ibbi-Suen period were significantly higher than normal, which means that there was significant inflation. This severe economic crisis was the result of a long, cumulative process.³³⁹ The economic crisis was combined with a decline in national power. The economic crisis was also exacerbated by a loss of food due to environmental degradation. The central government's financial difficulties made it difficult to provide assistance to the local governments, leading to a decline in Ibbi-Suen's control over them. However, the local ruling families, who had been heavily suppressed in the early period of the dynasty, had accumulated enough political and economic resources to counter the central government of the Ur III Dynasty. They had accumulated a lot of resources in the change of royal power. This is the negative effect of the manner in which the succession of the Ur III Dynasty was carried out.³⁴⁰ The local ruling families needed only a reasonable opportunity and a pretext to reassert their independence from the Ur III Dynasty's central control as it was rapidly declining. Išbi-Erra's actions may have been appropriate in light of his royal correspondence with Ur. In the end, it was probably the local ruling families and the foreigners who conspired to destroy Ur.

In short, the internal conflicts of the Ur III Dynasty were the result of a long process. This was in part a result of the central government's declining political and economic control over local ruling families. The following analysis of Išbi-Erra's rebellion will provide us with more evidence about this topic.

³³⁸ Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Reign of Ibbī-Suen", *JCS*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1953), pp. 36-47; more recently, see Eric L. Cripps, "The Structure of Prices in the Ur III Economy: Cults and Prices at the Collapse of the Ur III State", *JCS*, vol. 71 (2019), pp. 53-76.

³³⁹ Daniel C. Snell, *Ledgers and Prices: Early Mesopotamian Merchant Accounts*, YNER 8, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, pp. 196-207.

³⁴⁰ Noemi Borrelli, "The Central State and the Provincial Authorities in Late Third Millennium Babylonia: Badari and the Governors of Ĝirsu/Lagaš", *KASKAL*, vol. 17 (2020), pp. 1-21.

III.4.3 Military Strategy Reflected in Royal Correspondences

The collapse of the Ur III Dynasty was inevitable under the reign of Ibbi-Suen. The powerful local rulers' rebellion led to the crumbling of the empire, but Ibbi-Suen had no effective way of restraining such behavior. Although the process of disintegration was long and drawn-out, nothing had such a profound impact as Išbi-Erra's betrayal.³⁴¹ There are four royal correspondences that can help us to reconstruct the course of this event, but it is thought that some of these royal correspondences probably contain some fake details.³⁴² Even so, these documents offer us more possibilities for understanding the crisis of Ibbi-Suen's reign. These correspondences document the Amorite invasion and the food shortages in the early years of Ibbi-Suen's rule. Based on the year names and the contents of these royal correspondences, T. Jacobsen has suggested that the correspondences date from the reigns of Išbi-Erra and Ibbi-Suen. They appear in Ibbi-Suen's reign from the sixth to the eighth year. Then, Išbi-Erra started to use his own year name around the 12th year of Ibbi-Suen's reign, marking the official beginning of the rebellion.³⁴³ The gap was probably when Išbi-Erra was accumulating his power and looking for allies to support him. In the next section, we will analyze the details of these correspondences. Since the correspondences have been translated many times, I will only give a brief introduction to their content.³⁴⁴

The content of the royal correspondence from Išbi-Erra to Ibbi-Suen (IšIb 1, 3.1.17, RCU 19) is as follows: Ibbi-Suen ordered Išbi-Erra to purchase grain and conduct an expedition from Isin to Kazallu with 20 talents of silver. Then, Išbi-Erra claimed that he invested all his money in the purchase of grain, with one shekel per

³⁴¹ Walther Sallaberger, "Ur III-Zeit", in Walther Sallaberger and Aage Westenholz (eds.), *Mesopotamien: Akkade-Zeit und Ur III-Zeit*, OBO 160/3, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, pp.174-178.

³⁴² Cécile Michel, "Cuneiform Fakes: A Long History from Antiquity to the Present Day", in Cécile Michel and Michael Friedrich (eds.), *Fakes and Forgeries of Written Artefacts from Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern China*, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020, pp. 28-30.

³⁴³ Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Reign of Ibbī-Suen", *JCS*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1953), p. 43.

³⁴⁴ For complete contents of these correspondences, see Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 416-482.

gur. However, he also claimed that he asked the king to send an armed fleet to meet them because of the invasion of the Amorites, otherwise it would only be possible to store the 72,000 gur of grain in Isin, making it impossible to ship the grain. He detailed the number of ships and tools needed and mapped out a suitable route for the traffic. He said that he would take responsibility for the place where the boats moored, so that all the grain would be safe. Išbi-Erra also pointed out that Ibbi-Suen not only faced a shortage of grain but also struggled in the war against the Elamites, and he claimed that he has enough grain in his city to feed Ibbi-Suen's palace and his people for 15 years. He also asked Ibbi-Suen to appoint him to guard the cities of Isin and Nippur. In the second half of the correspondence, he devoted a lot of space to reassuring Ibbi-Suen and showing him loyalty.

The content of the royal correspondence from Ibbi-Suen to Išbi-Erra (IbIš 1, 3.1.18, RCU 20) is as follows: Ibbi-Suen expressed great anger at Išbi-Erra's behavior and showed an omen of Enlil to frighten him. Ibbi-Suen remained dissatisfied that he had exaggerated the price of the grain. Ibbi-Suen also blamed him and Puzur-Marduk, the general of Badigihursaga, for not confronting the Amorites. He pointed out that Išbi-Erra had received his money for purchasing grain, but Išbi-Erra had not paid for the grain from the governors of Kiš, Ešnunna and Borsippa. In the end, Ibbi-Suen ordered Išbi-Erra not to come back to Ur until he had dispatched the grain to Ibbi-Suen. He claimed that guarding Nippur and Isin is Išbi-Erra's responsibility.

The content of the royal correspondence from Puzur-Numušda/Puzur-Šulgi to Ibbi-Suen (PuIb 1, 3.1.19, RCU 21) is as follows: Puzur-Numušda, the governor of Kazallu, was confused about Išbi-Erra's behavior. He relayed the contents of his letter from Išbi-Erra. Išbi-Erra claimed that he had obtained power from Enlil and became the king of Isin and Nippur in the letter. In addition, he declared that he would drive Ibbi-Suen out of his land and threatened to attack Puzur-Numušda if he did not surrender. Išbi-Erra also used a lot of description in this letter to say that he was going to be the greatest king in the Sumer. The governors of Kiš, Ešnunna, and Borsippa had come over to Išbi-Erra's side. Meanwhile, the governor of Girkal and the chief temple administrator of Nippur had been taken prisoner by Išbi-Erra. Išbi-Erra had taken full

control of the frontier, and Puzur-Numušda felt so frightened that want to flee.

The content of the letter from Ibbi-Suen to Puzur-Numušda/ Puzur-Šulgi (IbPu 1, 3.1.20, RCU 22) is as follows: Ibbi-Suen blamed Puzur-Numušda and the governor of Girkal for not confronting Išbi-Erra with the troops that were under their authority. What follows is a bit of a puzzle, but it probably shows Ibbi-Suen making an excuse for his own incompetence. Ibbi-Suen also cursed Išbi-Erra, but he acknowledged that Enlil and the gods abandoned Sumer in favor of Išbi-Erra, who was a foreigner from Mari. Then, Ibbi-Suen compelled Puzur-Numušda not to surrender to Išbi-Erra. In the end, Ibbi-Suen believed that the Amorites and Elamites would aid him in defeating Išbi-Erra.

According to these letters, there was a famine in Ur that affected part of Ibbi-Suen's army. So, Ibbi-Suen ordered Išbi-Erra to purchase grain and assist Kazallu with 20 talents of silver. Nevertheless, Išbi-Erra received the money and used Ibbi-Suen's reputation to purchase grain from Kiš, Ešnunna, and Borsippa, who were the important allies who had not been paid. Kiš, Ešnunna, and Borsippa were very dissatisfied with Ibbi-Suen and came over to Išbi-Erra's side. Išbi-Erra also lied to Ibbi-Suen, claiming that he spent all money to purchase the grain (72,000 gur) at one shekel per gur and refusing to ship back to Ur. At the same time, he sent all of his grain to Isin, citing the unconvincing excuse that it was due to the invasion of the Amorites. The purpose of Išbi-Erra's letter is to test Ibbi-Suen's trust in him and see whether he will let him take on the responsibility of guarding the cities of Isin and Nippur. In another word, he wanted to be the governor of Isin and Nippur. Ibbi-Suen was clearly aware of Išbi-Erra's ambitions. He used an omen of Enlil to frighten Išbi-Erra and was dissatisfied that Išbi-Erra exaggerated the price of the grain. However, he still believed that Išbi-Erra would ship the grain back and start to prepare the boats and tools that Išbi-Erra needed. Ibbi-Suen made an incredible decision in his letter, in which he claimed that guarding Nippur and Isin was already Išbi-Erra's responsibility. Thus, we can see the bad results of his stupid decision in the letter of Puzur-Numušda. Išbi-Erra clearly took advantage of the conflict created by the change in royal power to try and gain power for himself. Ibbi-Suen made a lot of bad

decisions in dealing with the changes of power in the royal family, including his decisions regarding Išbi-Erra. Išbi-Erra claimed that he had purchased all the grain of Sumer, and Ibbi-Suen should not have given Nippur to him. Due to the above, Išbi-Erra started to destroy the foundations of the Ur III Dynasty and achieved political legitimacy by occupying Nippur. Then, Išbi-Erra used the governors of Kiš, Ešnunna, and Borsippa to form an alliance and obliterated Ibbi-Suen's allies step by step. Maybe, Puzur-Numušda was the next target that Išbi-Erra wanted to defeat, which is why he sent a letter to Ibbi-Suen asking him to rescue him. What is ridiculous is that not only did Ibbi-Suen not pacify Puzur-Numušda, but he also forced him to solve the difficult problem without having any ideas about rescuing him. Unexpectedly, Ibbi-Suen believed that the Amorites and Elamites would aid him in defeating Išbi-Erra. From these letters, we can see that Ibbi-Suen was not a good king and was somewhat stupid. Thus, Išbi-Erra was able to trick him and get money, grain, and power from Ur. At the same time, Ibbi-Suen's cronies, like Puzur-Numušda, showed incompetence in their duties, which also suggests that Ibbi-Suen was an incompetent king.

This event proved to be the final straw in the collapse of the rule of the Ur III Dynasty. The local ruling families now had the ability and the cause to rebel, as I mentioned earlier. Išbi-Erra's actions not only contributed to the rebellion but also helped unite the disaffected local ruling families. It is important to note that some of these royal letters may have been fabricated. This is because they are mostly from Old Babylonian manuscripts.³⁴⁵ Based on these letters, it must be said that Išbi-Erra's military and political capabilities were outstanding. These military and political machinations that took place about four thousand years ago can be seen as an early example of military strategy. In ancient China, there are also famous historical examples of people using borrowed grain to mask their disloyalty and test their rulers. So, being entrusted with critical food mattered in ancient times and was a sign of great trust. However, Išbi-Erra sounded the death knell of the Ur III Dynasty.

³⁴⁵ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, p. 3.

III.4.4 The Collapse of the Ur III Dynasty

The Ur III Dynasty entered its heyday at the end of the Šulgi reign, but this also laid the groundwork for the political and economic collapse of the dynasty. For instance, it introduced the huge costs and corruption associated with a large bureaucracy. More importantly, Šulgi left behind a group of very capable sons vying for the throne.³⁴⁶ Under the leadership of Šulgi, these sons could have ensured the stability of the dynasty, but they quickly became a source of unrest after he died.³⁴⁷ In fact, the collapse of the Ur III Dynasty can probably be attributed to this. However, these problems were not unique to the Ur III Dynasty. They existed in ancient countries all over the world and continue to exist today. They include the problem of the political selection of the right national leader. The problems caused by the succession to the throne of the Ur III Dynasty were explained at great length in the previous section. Pointless political infighting and instability eventually led to the collapse of the economy and the decay of the military. Various sources confirm that even during Ibbi-Suen's reign, there was little external threat to the core area of the dynasty. Therefore, internal factors were the decisive factor in the demise of the Ur III Dynasty. In the previous chapter, I speculated from archaeological sources that the rebellious local ruling families might have helped the foreign armies that eventually destroyed Ur. Unfortunately, direct evidence of this may never be found by archaeologists. This section will analyze the content of several "Lamentations" related to the demise of the Ur III Dynasty.

There are five Sumerian Lamentations that have been discovered and catalogued.³⁴⁸ They are the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, the *Lamentation over the Destruction of*

³⁴⁶ For an overview of Šulgi's 17 sons and their roles within the state administration, see Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp.61-64.

³⁴⁷ For a possible coup to usurp the throne towards the death of Šulgi, see Piotr Michalowski, "The Death of Šulgi," *OrNS*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1977), pp. 220-225; "Of Bears and Men: Thoughts about the End of Šulgi's Reign and the Ensuing Succession," in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature, Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, 2013, pp. 316-317.

³⁴⁸ Jerrold. S. Cooper, "Genre, gender, and the Sumerian lamentation", *JCS*, vol. 58 (2006), pp. 39-47.

Uruk, the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur*, and the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Eridu*. These Lamentations seem to have been composed in the period of Isin-Larsa, and it is likely that the rulers of Isin and Larsa wrote them separately to present themselves as the legitimate heirs of the Ur III Dynasty.³⁴⁹ For example, in the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur* and the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Uruk*, there is a clear eulogy to Išme-Dagan, the king of the Isin Dynasty, who was the dominant ruler of Nippur.³⁵⁰

It is worth mentioning that these five lamentations have two distinct styles. The *Uruk* and *Nippur* lamentations are declarations of the legitimacy of the Isin Dynasty's cultural succession to the Ur III Dynasty. By contrast, the remaining three lamentations focus more on the tragic scenes brought about by the fall of the Ur III Dynasty. Therefore, these three lamentations were probably written for the Ur III Dynasty rather than a specific city. Although they are primarily works of literary fiction, such content makes them historical and reflective. This shows that the residents of Mesopotamia at the time recognized that their identity was shaped by the Ur III Dynasty, from one direction.³⁵¹ Even though the Ur III Dynasty had fallen, they still recognized their own identity. So, there is a possibility that the king of the Larsa dynasty, who might have been the actual ruler of Ur at the time these lamentations were created, wanted to use his political identity to assert himself as the rightful heir of the Ur III Dynasty. This is also based on the fact that the Isin Dynasty's conquest of Nippur put the cultural legitimacy of the Larsa Dynasty at a disadvantage.

There are some details of the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* and the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* that are worth discussing.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Piotr Michalowski, "Literary Works from the Court of King Ishbi-Erra of Isin", in Yitschak Sefati, Pinhas Artzi, Chaim Cohen, Barry L. Eichler and Victor A. Hurowitz (eds.), *"An Experienced Scribe Who Neglects Nothing": Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Jacob Klein*, Bethesda: CDL, 2005, pp. 199-212.

³⁵⁰ Jacob Klein, "Šulgi and Išmedagan: Originality and Dependence in Sumerian Royal Hymnology", in Jacob Klein and Aaron Skaist (eds.), *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology Dedicated to Pinhas Artzi*, Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990, p. 87.

³⁵¹ The curricular setting of Sumerian literature was also used in Old Babylonian period to help create an 'invented tradition' of Babylonian unity, see Niek Veldhuis, *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship: The Sumerian Composition Nanše and the Birds*, CM 22, Leiden, Boston: Brill and Styx, 2004, pp. 60-80.

³⁵² For the content of these two Lamentations, see Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, MC 1, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1989, pp. 36-69; Samuel Noah Kramer, *The*

Comparing the contents of the two lamentations, we see that the former is more historical and the latter more literary. *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, describing the fate of king Ibbi-Suen, the destruction of the temple, the death of the people from hostile attacks and famine, and finally the removal of the statues of gods by the enemy. This not only confirms that there was a famine at the end of Ibbi-Suen's reign that led to a decline in power, but it also supports the fact that Lagaš and Girsu were probably under Ibbi-Suen's control at the time and were attacked and destroyed. Much of the information is very detailed, suggesting that the lamentation was not written very long after Ur was destroyed. Its content is of great historical value. The *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* is narrated by the goddess Ningal and depicts the fall of Ur. Although it also confirms the fact that Ur was eventually destroyed, the subjective emotional content is overpowering. It is effective as a work of literature, but it does not provide much genuine historical information. In short, the two lamentations separately reflect the political revival and cultural revival after the fall of the Ur III Dynasty.

The Ur III Dynasty came to an end due to internal and external troubles, but its political, economic, military, and cultural legacy had a huge impact on all of ancient Mesopotamia.

III.5) Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the specific wars of the Ur III Dynasty, examining and analyzing them in chronological order. Due to the close relationship between the establishment of the Ur III Dynasty and the Uruk V Dynasty, this chapter began with the Uruk V Dynasty. Although there are very few texts from this period, they still reveal the relationship between Utu-hegal and Ur-Nammu. Ur-Nammu was the general who ruled the city of Ur under Utu-hegal, and he also played an important role in the military campaign to drive out the Gutians.³⁵³ This was confirmed that

Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur, AS 12, Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1940, pp. 16-71; Nili Samet, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, MC 18, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2014, pp. 54-77.

³⁵³ Peeter Espak, "The Establishment of Ur III Dynasty. From the Gutians to the Formation of the Neo-Sumerian

Ur-Nammu drove out the Gutians in texts of the Ur III Dynasty. After that, a detailed analysis of the history and content of *The Victory of Utu-Hegal* was provided, revealing its influence on the history of ancient Mesopotamia. Based on *The Sumerian King List*, some speculations were made about the process by which Ur-Nammu successfully inherited the power of Utu-hegal and established the Ur III Dynasty. Then, the evidence of war or armed conflict between Ur-Nammu and other hostile forces was identified in the extant year names and hymns of Ur-Nammu. During the 18 years of Ur-Nammu's reign, the war brought great gains to Ur-Nammu and the Ur III Dynasty, but it ultimately led to his tragic death in battle. At the end of part 1, the realistic meaning contained in the text of the *Death of Ur-Nammu* was carefully analyzed, and its content was shown to reflect the ideology of Šulgi's reign.³⁵⁴

In the second part, the wars that took place during Šulgi's reign were divided into the northern and eastern wars. In the first 20 year names of Šulgi's reign, there is little mention of war. However, based on the *Death of Ur-Nammu*, this study speculated that the early years of his reign involved the suppression of internal rebel forces. Much of the religious activity that took place during this period can be seen, in part, as a sign of the successful suppression of the local rebels. There were probably wars with foreign countries as well, but the symbolism of unification was less important than internal repression in this period. Then, according to the contents of Šulgi's hymns B, O and D, the possible manifestations of the wars in this period were analyzed in detail. For the enemy in the east, Šulgi initially organized a political marriage to prevent them from posing a threat to himself. Once the enemy in the north had been dealt with, the threat from the east was quickly dealt with using military force. Although the materials examined in this section were traditional, such as year names and hymns, the study did not list all the wars that took place in chronological order, as is sometimes done in traditional studies. This study selected some details that were worthy of analysis. In addition, this study tried to use some other texts to

Imperial Ideology and Pantheon.” in Thomas R. Kämmerer, Mait Kōiv and Vladimir Sazonov (eds.), *Kings, Gods and People, Establishing Monarchies in the Ancient World*, AOAT 390/4, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016, pp. 77-108.

³⁵⁴ Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp. 196-221.

identify the wars that took place in this period. Unfortunately, it still remains difficult to determine from the circumstantial evidence whether what took place was connected to war or religious activity.³⁵⁵

In the third section, the military activities of the two kings, Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen, were discussed together, so that the analysis was not fragmented. There were also practical reasons for this, such as the lack of military materials from Amar-Suen's reign. Overall, the study of Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen provided a clear view of the transformation of the military strategy of the Ur III Dynasty. The Ur III Dynasty changed its aggressive military model to a defensive model during their reign. The reasons for this change are complex. Generally, it was due to a challenge posed to the governance capacity that was caused by the expansion during the reigns of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi.

The fourth section discussed the military actions in Ibbi-Suen's reign. Some previous studies have suggested that the kingdom went from prosperity to decline during the Šu-Suen period, but this study has argued that there were some troubles with the dynasty that were already present during Šulgi's reign. However, this does not mean that Ibbi-Suen should be absolved of his responsibility for the fall of the dynasty. It can be inferred from the existing textual material that the kingdom was still functioning well at the start of Ibbi-Suen's reign. Therefore, any discussion of the decline and eventual demise of the Ur III Dynasty should focus primarily on Ibbi-Suen's activities. The military operations that took place under Ibbi-Suen's rule gradually changed from foreign wars to internal armed conflicts. Before starting the discussion in the fourth section, it was not anticipated that some events from the Ibbi-Suen period could be used to understand and comment on the policies of the entire Ur III Dynasty. Due to the scarcity of records regarding military operations in Ibbi-Suen's reign, this part attempted to understand some of the possible military conflicts with foreign forces by discussing foreign relations in the first 14 years of Ibbi-Suen's reign. The study divided them into three different types of relationships,

³⁵⁵ Audrey Pitts, *The Cult of the Deified King in Ur III Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Harvard University, 2015, p. 135.

corresponding with the different strategies adopted by rulers of the Ur III Dynasty in response to threats from the north, east, and south. It should be noted that these strategies will be discussed in more detail and from various perspectives in the next chapter. Therefore, much of the content was omitted in this chapter. It is clear from the example of Simurrum in the north that the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty were keen to have direct control over their conquered territories. However, it was difficult to achieve this under the conditions of the time. The local ruling family in the north was too powerful, so the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty were unable to destroy them completely. Therefore, there was a contest for leadership with the local ruling family, which led to much of the armed conflict in the north.

It is interesting to note that many of Ibbi-Suen's military and political actions were stilted imitations of Šulgi's actions. Ibbi-Suen tried to maintain relations with foreign powers in the east by means of political marriage. Unfortunately, as the north spiraled out of control, the foreign powers in the east also saw an opportunity to elude control. Ibbi-Suen ended up losing his control over the foreign powers in the east following an apparent military victory. In fact, up to this point, the Ur III Dynasty was still militarily powerful. But no army could prevent the political and economic defeat. Ibbi-Suen eventually lost his hegemony over the southern powers in the Persian Gulf. In general, the Ur III Dynasty was a hegemonic state based on military power, with politics, diplomacy, and trade as supplementary pillars. The kingdom's internal political and economic problems affected its military presence, leading to the gradual disengagement of the external forces that were previously subservient. Then, the behavior of external forces worsened the existing problems and led to the fall of the dynasty.

To understand the root of the series of problems that affected the Ur III Dynasty, we have to discuss the pattern of royal succession. The kings of the Ur III Dynasty emphasized their kinship with the Uruk ruling family in many ways. Therefore, when we talk about the succession of the Ur III Dynasty, it is best to also include Utu-hegal, the king of the Uruk V Dynasty. There are currently some studies that argue that

Amar-Suen, Šu-Suen, and Ibbi-Suen were brothers.³⁵⁶ Therefore, after Šulgi, the line of succession mostly ran from brother to brother rather than from father to son. This type of inheritance is what Dahl calls the fraternal successive pattern.³⁵⁷ There were practical reasons for this phenomenon. This style of succession ensured that each king had relatively mature abilities and a group of cronies who could be appointed directly. Also, the short reigns of the kings would have led to many changes among officials, causing conflict and confusion. Of course, this form of succession also influenced the religious and cultural pursuits of the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty.

Despite some military achievements recorded in the year names, a more comprehensive analysis of the available data indicates that these victories represented political setbacks for the Ur III state. This negative influence quickly spread from the frontier to the core area. This led to the defections of the inner cities and local ruling families.³⁵⁸ Ibbi-Suen faced a political crisis and total economic collapse.³⁵⁹ Although many of Ur's economic problems can be traced back to the reign of Šulgi, it was a pity that Ibbi-Suen had to deal with these unsolvable economic problems. After the rapid decline of the central government, an alternative emerged in the form of local forces. One of the most notable was the rebellion launched by Išbi-Erra, who established the foundation of the Isin Dynasty.³⁶⁰

The entire progress of Išbi-Erra's rebellion is shown in detail in four royal correspondences from the Ur III Dynasty, which are recorded in Old-Babylonian manuscripts. While the historical value of these letters remains a matter of discussion,³⁶¹ the correspondence seems to imply that Išbi-Erra was trying to destroy the political, economic, and military authority of the Ur III Dynasty by deceiving

³⁵⁶ Piotr Michalowski, "Of Bears and Men: Thoughts about the End of Šulgi's Reign and the Ensuing Succession," in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature, Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, 2013, pp. 316-317.

³⁵⁷ Jacob L. Dahl, *The Ruling Family of Ur III Umma: A Prosopographical Analysis of an Elite Family in Southern Iraq 4000 Years Ago*, PIHANS 108, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007, pp. 7-12.

³⁵⁸ Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Reign of Ibbi-Suen", *JCS*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1953), pp. 36-47.

³⁵⁹ Tohru Ozaki, "On the Critical Economic Situation at Ur Early in the Reign of Ibbisin", *JCS*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Autumn 1984), pp. 211-242; Eric L. Cripps, "The Structure of Prices in the Ur III Economy: Cults and Prices at the Collapse of the Ur III State", *JCS*, vol. 71 (2019), pp. 53-76.

³⁶⁰ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur, An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 433-439.

³⁶¹ See e.g. Cécile Michel, "Cuneiform Fakes: A Long History from Antiquity to the Present Day", in Cécile Michel and Michael Friedrich (eds.), *Fakes and Forgeries of Written Artefacts from Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern China*, Walter de Gruyter, 2020, pp. 28-30.

Ibbi-Suen about grain. Ibbi-Suen's poor political and military skills allowed Išbi-Erra to gain control of a large amount of land and quickly make many allies. There are many examples in the ancient world of this kind of fraud involving food, and many of them result in war or political victory. Yet the military strategy used by Išbi-Erra may be one of the earliest recorded examples.

The Ur III Dynasty finally collapsed for several reasons. Although Ibbi-Suen is not entirely responsible for the fall of the dynasty, his mediocre ability prevented him from solving these problems and stopping the collapse of the dynasty. We can get a rough idea of what happened in Ur after the fall of the Ur III Dynasty from the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* and the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*. Overall, through an analysis of the military events of the Ur III Dynasty and a discussion of their political, economic, and cultural dimensions, we can have a holistic understanding of the history of the Ur III Dynasty. The great wealth left by the Ur III Dynasty will be the focus of the next section of this study.

Chapter IV: Impact of Warfare in the Ur III Dynasty

IV.1) Impact of War

IV.1.1 An Economic Model of War

As mentioned at the beginning of this study, war is an act that uses all the resources of a country, and thus its effects will be reflected in all aspects of the country. This section discusses the impacts of war on three aspects of society. First, we will discuss the relationship between war and economy in the Ur III period. The warfare launched by the Ur III Dynasty had an important impact on the economic system of the kingdom. The following will first focus on three issues: 1) The possible dependence of economic demand on war; 2) The possible influence of war on the formation and development of the Ur III Dynasty's economic system; 3) A possible economic model of war in the Ur III Dynasty. Being able to answer these three questions will help us in our subsequent discussion.

Before solving these problems, the fundamentals of the economic system of the Ur III Dynasty must be discussed. It is worth noting that all of these discussions are based on the very few available sources regarding the economic system under Ur-Nammu prior to the formal establishment of the Ur III Dynasty. This study argues that the economic systems in this period laid a solid foundation for the establishment and development of the Ur III Dynasty economic system. After the defeat of the Gutians, ancient Mesopotamia came under the rule of Utu-hegal, king of the Uruk V Dynasty. Ur-Nammu was in charge of Ur during the reign of Utu-hegal.³⁶² On the one hand, the close relationship between Ur-Nammu and the ruling family of Uruk may mean that the economic system of Ur likely was closely connected to that of Uruk during this period. As a result, the Ur and Uruk economic systems were the most integrated after the establishment of the Ur III Dynasty, and most of them directly served the royal family of Ur.³⁶³ On the other hand, Ur's economic system probably

³⁶² Douglas Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*, RIME 2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 281, 283.

³⁶³ Christina Tsouparopoulou, *The Material Face of Bureaucracy: Writing, Sealing and Archiving Tablets for the Ur III State at Drehem*, PhD. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008, p. 5.

maintained a degree of independence during the Uruk V period. These two aspects of Ur's economic system are best seen in the dispute between Ur and Lagaš. (For details see Chapter II.6.2 and Chapter III.1.1.) This documented dispute was ostensibly territorial but was, in fact, economic and political. Both cities are near the mouth of the river on a relatively fertile delta.³⁶⁴ This was important for the southern cities, which may have already begun to experience declining agricultural yields (see Chapter I.2), impacting the ability of Ur's economic system to guarantee its own food security.³⁶⁵ From another perspective, the two cities were also competing for the right to trade with the Persian Gulf. A vast monopoly on the Persian Gulf trade was the key to Lagaš's autonomy and independence under both the Gutian and Uruk V dynasties. Ur-Nammu's capture of part of the Persian Gulf trading rights was thus a great help to the rise of the authority of the Uruk V Dynasty. Unfortunately, it is difficult to infer from the available material whether this was Ur-Nammu's motive and whether it succeeded. This study concludes that such motives are highly likely to have been active, given the extremely trusting and dependent attitude of Utu-hegal toward Ur-Nammu as shown in some texts, as well as the possible blood relationship between Ur-Nammu and the ruling family of Uruk. As for the final result, according to the existing texts, this study believes that Ur may have suffered losses in land interests at the micro level while it established trade rights in the Persian Gulf at the macro level. The spaces between ancient countries were mostly frontier with uncertain boundaries rather than clearly defined national boundaries as in the case of modern countries.³⁶⁶ By establishing the boundary between Ur and Lagaš, Utu-hegal reduced Ur's gains in the frontier areas, but he formally established the presence and authority of Ur, and even that of the Uruk V Dynasty behind it, in the Persian Gulf trade. Based on the above speculation, it can be seen that Ur-Nammu had mastered part of the important

³⁶⁴ Magnus Widell, "Sumerian Agriculture and Land Management", in Harriet Crawford (ed.), *The Sumerian World*, London, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 55-67.

³⁶⁵ Seth Richardson, "Obedient Bellies: Hunger and Food Security in Ancient Mesopotamia", *JESHO*, vol. 59, no. 5 (November 2016), pp. 750-792.

³⁶⁶ Steven J. Garfinkle, "The Kingdom as Sheepfold: Frontier Strategy under the Third Dynasty of Ur; a View from the Center", in Grant Frame, Joshua Jeffers and Holly Pittman (eds.), *Ur in the Twenty-First Century CE: Proceedings of the 62nd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Philadelphia, July 11–15, 2016*, RAI 62, University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021, pp. 245-251; Gina Konstantopoulos, "Gods in the Margins: Religion, Kingship, and the Fictionalized Frontier", in Gina Konstantopoulos and Shana Zaia (eds.), *As Above, So Below: Religion and Geography*, University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021, pp. 3-27.

economic system of the Uruk V Dynasty during this period.

There is little material available to help us understand the economic system of the Ur III Dynasty from Ur-Nammu's reign to the middle of Šulgi's reign. What is certain, however, is that during the reign of Ur-Nammu, the kingdom incorporated Sumerian cities into the economic system of the Ur III Dynasty through constant warfare. In addition, Ur-Nammu also brought under the control of the kingdom a large number of foreign lands to the east and north by means of war. The regions that came under the administration of the Ur III Dynasty, especially the former Sumerian cities, lost some of their independence but gained some of the benefits of this union. The most direct expression of this benefit came from Ur-Nammu's monopoly on trade in the Persian Gulf. Ur-Nammu militarily defeated rivals from Lagaš and Elam to establish himself as the de facto controller of Mesopotamia's trade along the Persian Gulf.³⁶⁷ Moreover, Ur-Nammu used military means to take over Tilmun and to use the Magans' superiority to exclude Meluhha from direct trade. The Magans used their skills in shipbuilding and navigation to facilitate the Persian Gulf trade for the Ur III Dynasty.³⁶⁸ The loyalty of the Magans did not disappear until Ibbi-Suen lost control of Elam. (See Chapter III.4.1.) Ur-Nammu thus provided a good start for the economic system of the Ur III Dynasty. But upon Ur-Nammu's dishonorable death in battle, the economic system faced a serious challenge.

According to the chronology and the *Death of Ur-Nammu*, the Ur III Dynasty was at risk of splitting up at the beginning of Šulgi's reign. Over the next two decades, Šulgi not only managed to keep the dynasty together but also to further integrate the economic systems of the Sumerian cities. Šulgi was deeply involved in the local temple economy while militarily confronting the local elites in the former Sumerian city-states. Traditionally, it is believed that the assets of the Mesopotamian temple at

³⁶⁷ Piotr Steinkeller, "Puzur-Inšušinak at Susa: A Pivotal Episode of Early Elamite History Reconsidered", in Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier (eds.), *Susa and Elam: Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives (Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. 293-317; Steffen Laursen and Piotr Steinkeller, *Babylonia, the Gulf Region, and the Indus: Archaeological and Textual Evidence for Contact in the Third and Early Second Millennia B.C.*, MC 21, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 54-60.

³⁶⁸ Juris Zarins, "Magan Shipbuilders at the Ur III Lagash State Dockyards (2062-2025 B.C.)", in Eric Olijdam and Richard H. Spoor (eds.), *Intercultural Relations between South and Southwest Asia: Studies in commemoration of E.C.L. During Caspers (1934-1996)*, BARIS 1826, Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2008, pp. 209-229.

that time were sufficient for some commercial and financial activities to take place there.³⁶⁹ As economic and trade activity increased, the protection afforded by a unified dynasty allowed for the development of an organized system between temples. This possibility exists only if there is a subordinate relationship between temples serving the same god. Whether or not the speculation above is true, there is no denying the fact that the temple's property was fully incorporated into the management of the Ur III Dynasty's ruling family in the latter part of Šulgi's reign.³⁷⁰ The direct manifestation of this is the emergence of material allocation agencies serving the central government.

An analysis of the text reveals that as early as the 26th year of Šulgi's reign, a prototype of an administrative body responsible for the allocation of royal supplies was established.³⁷¹ Before the official establishment of Puzriš-Dagan (modern Drehem) in the 39th year of Šulgi's reign, it was mainly the queen Šulgi-simti and the official Naram-ili who were responsible for its operation.³⁷² Perhaps due to the immaturity of the fledgling bureaucracy of this institution, few texts have been discovered from this period. Those texts show that Šilluš-Dagan, the governor of Simurrum, delivered 13 times for the queen, and he was the earliest and greatest contributor to this institution.³⁷³ To some extent, he was also the person who played an important role in establishing the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty. Šilluš-Dagan had been the owner of the land of Puzriš-Dagan before he became governor of Simurrum, and indeed Simurrum was probably a way of compensating him for forfeiting Puzriš-Dagan to the royal family.³⁷⁴ He worked directly with the royal family to bring the newly conquered Simurrum into the economic system under

³⁶⁹ Ouyang Xiaoli, "Foundlings Raised in the Temple? The Meaning of *dumu kar-ra* in Ur III Umma", *DABIR*, vol. 9, Special Issue: Discussions in Assyriology (2022), pp. 21-34; Darren Ashby, *Late Third Millennium BCE Religious Architecture at Tell Al-Hiba, Ancient Lagash*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2017, pp. 49-53.

³⁷⁰ Jacob Dahl, "Neo-Sumerian Temple Treasure Inventories", in Sven Günther, Wayne Horowitz and Magnus Widell (eds.), *Of Rabid Dogs, Hunchbacked Oxen, and Infertile Goats in Ancient Babylonia: Studies Presented to Wu Yuhong on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, Journal of Ancient Civilizations, Supplement Series 7, Changchun: Northeast Normal University Press, 2021, pp. 39-51.

³⁷¹ Tom B. Jones and John W. Snyder, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Third Ur Dynasty*, SET, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961, pp. 203-238.

³⁷² Marcel Sigrist, *Drehem*, Bethesda: CDL Press, 1992, pp. 222-246.

³⁷³ Wang Junna and Wu Yuhong, "A Research on the Incoming (Mu-Túm) Archive of Queen Šulgi-simti's Animal Institution", *JAC*, vol. 26 (2011), p. 42.

³⁷⁴ David I. Owen, "The Royal Gift Seal of Šelluš-Dagan, Governor of Simurrum", in S. Graziani (ed.), *Studi sul Vicino Oriente dedicati alla memoria di Luigi Cagni*, Napoli: Istituto universitario orientale, 2008, pp. 815-846.

direct royal control. His political role in this process will be discussed in the next section on politics. All in all, the formal establishment of Puzriš-Dagan marked the formal establishment of the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty.

IV.1.2 Royal Economy Through the Operation of Puzriš-Dagan

IV.1.2.1 The Organization and Function of Puzriš-Dagan

In general, Puzriš-Dagan was the royal tribute allocation center. It was mainly responsible for receiving and managing cattle, sheep, wild animals, and other supplies from all over the country as royal presents, temple sacrifice, taxes, and the spoils of war. They were then used in temple worship, the daily expenses of the royal family, receptions for foreign dignitaries, or wages for soldiers and staff.³⁷⁵ Traditional opinions used to consider Puzriš-Dagan to be a large stockyard, where the raising and management of livestock really took place.³⁷⁶ However, the amount of livestock and supplies associated with Puzriš-Dagan was huge, exceeding what the land area could handle. According to the archaeological data, the ruins of Puzriš-Dagan are mainly composed of three mounds in the north, the middle, and the south, covering an area of more than 25 hectares. There are no obvious traces of living areas and no outlines of large temples or palaces.³⁷⁷ Instead, it is more likely to have been a complex composed of many administrative departments. Therefore, it has been proposed that Puzriš-Dagan functioned in Ur III as an administrative center rather than as an actual cattleyard.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁵ Shin T. Kang, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Drehem Archive*, vol. 1, SACT I, Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1972, p. 5. More recently, see Markus Hilgert, *Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, vol. 1: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Šulgi*, OIP 115, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1998; *Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, vol. 2: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Amar-Suena*, OIP 121, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003; Christina Tsouparopoulou, "A Reconstruction of the Puzriš-Dagan Central Livestock Agency", *CDLJ*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (2 June 2013), pp. 1-15; Liu Changyu, *Organization, Administrative Practices and Written Documentation in Mesopotamia during the Ur III Period (c. 2112–2004 BC)*, KEF 3, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2017.

³⁷⁶ See for example, Gertrud Farber, "Pecus non olet? Visiting the Royal Stockyards of Drehem during the First Month of Amarsu'ena 2", in Martha T. Roth, Walter Farber, Matthew W. Stolper and Paula von Bechtolsheim (eds.), *Studies Presented to Robert D. Biggs, June 4, 2004*, AS 27, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007, pp. 35-64.

³⁷⁷ Christina Tsouparopoulou, *The Material Face of Bureaucracy: Writing, Sealing and Archiving Tablets for the Ur III State at Drehem*, PhD. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008, pp. 128-147.

³⁷⁸ Christina Tsouparopoulou, "Counter-Archaeology: Putting the Ur III Drehem Archives Back in the Ground", in Y. Heffron, A. Stone and M. Worthington (eds.), *At the Dawn of History Ancient Near Eastern Studies, in Honour*

The reconstruction of Puzriš-Dagan is text-oriented and based on the prosopographic study of certain important individuals. Profiting from the archival approach, M. Hilgert proposed to divide the central agency of Puzriš-Dagan into subordinate administrative units termed bureaus, distinguished by the officials who initiated the transactions.³⁷⁹ More recently, on the basis of Hilgert's classification, C. Tsouparopoulou suggested the division of Puzriš-Dagan into four main offices: the office of the chief official, the disbursal office, the shepherds' office, and the office for dead animals.³⁸⁰ Despite having different functions and responsibilities, the four offices worked closely with each other, and their chief official seems to have been the director of Puzriš-Dagan.

Table 5. The Four Offices and Main Officials of Puzriš-Dagan³⁸¹

Chief Office	Disbursal Office	Shepherds' Office	Office for Dead Animals
Nasa (Š 42-AS 2)	Ahuni (Š 42-AS 2)	Enlila (Š 41-ŠS 2)	Belī-arik (Š 42-Š 43)
Abba-saga (AS 2-AS 9)	Ahu-Wer (AS 3-8; ŠS 2-4)	Ur-ku-nuna	Ur-niġar (Š 43-AS 3)
Lugal-amar-ku (AS 8/1-5)	Nalu (Š 28-ŠS 5)	(Š 41-AS 8; ŠS 4-IS 2)	Šulgi-irimu (AS 3-IS 2)
Intaea (AS 9/4-IS 2)	Šulgi-ayamu (Š 44-AS 6)	Duga (AS 4-IS 2)	Nur-Suen (AS 2-ŠS 3)
	En-dingirmu (Š 45-AS 9)	Intaea (AS 3-AS 9)	Lukalla (ŠS 4-ŠS 9)
	Zubaga (AS 8-ŠS 1)	Lugal-melam	
	Šu-Mama (AS 6- AS 8)	(ŠS 3-IS 1)	

For unknown reasons the directors initially appeared anonymously. Until mid-July of the 47th year of Šulgi's reign, the position of director was signed by

of J. N. Postgate, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 611-630.

³⁷⁹ Markus Hilgert, *Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, vol. 1: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Šulgi*, OIP 115, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1998; *Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, vol. 2: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Amar-Suena*, OIP 121, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003.

³⁸⁰ Christina Tsouparopoulou, "A Reconstruction of the Puzriš-Dagan Central Livestock Agency", *CDLJ*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (2 June 2013), pp. 4-15.

³⁸¹ This table is based on *ibid.*, p. 6, fig. 1, pp. 8-10.

Nasa.³⁸² Based on the existing text, the previous anonymous director was probably also Nasa, who had already done some management work at the embryonic agency before Puzriš-Dagan was officially established.³⁸³ An analysis of Nasa's extensive economic archives during this period shows that Puzriš-Dagan was already a very large and complex bureaucracy. After Nasa, the chief officials in succession were Abba-saga, Lugal-amar-ku, and Intaea. Main officials and their terms of office can be seen in the table above. To some extent, the complexity of the organizational structure also reflects the complexity of the economic system at that time.

In addition, to meet the cultic and subsistence needs of the state, Puzriš-Dagan was closely linked to diplomacy. Not only were diplomatic marriages and provisions for the cults of foreign deities recorded, but also the obligations of foreign envoys and governors were common to see in the archives of Puzriš-Dagan. The diplomatic significance of Puzriš-Dagan was well represented by the appointment of Naram-ili, Lugal-iti-da, Šara-kam, and Babati to oversee the closing of accounts at Puzriš-Dagan.³⁸⁴ These four high functionaries performed their functions by checking or controlling the bullae, which were clay objects to seal containers of tablets.³⁸⁵ All of them possessed high quality cylinder seals and held very important positions in the Ur III state. Naram-ili was one of the directors of the embryonic organization before the official establishment of Puzriš-Dagan, working until the 44th year of Šulgi's reign. His son Šu-Kabta married the princess Me-Ištaran and then became governor of the city Ĝaršana.³⁸⁶ The seal title of Lugal-iti-da is "scribe" (dub-sar), which represents his qualifications for entry into the administrative system.³⁸⁷ Šara-kam was

³⁸² Wu Yuhong, "The Anonymous Nasa and Nasa of the Animal Center during Šulgi 44-48 and the camel (*g ú-gurs*), hunchbacked ox (*gurs-gurs*), ubi, habum and the confusion of the deer (*lulim*) with donkey (*anše*) or šeg9", *JAC*, vol. 25 (2010), pp. 1-19.

³⁸³ Xueyan Li, *The Reconstruction of the Archives of Nasa, the General Manager and Fattener (Kurušda) of the Animal Center of Ur III Dynasty under Šulgi in Drehem (including Anonymous Texts) (Šulgi 34 vi, Šulgi 39 iv—Amar-Sin 1 viii/13)*, PhD. Thesis, Northeast Normal University, 2011, pp. 5-7.

³⁸⁴ Christina Tsouparopoulou, "A Reconstruction of the Puzriš-Dagan Central Livestock Agency", *CDLJ*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (2 June 2013), pp. 2-4. Unlike Tsouparopoulou, Maeda suggested the four officials were archivists partly responsible for the collection of bala tax, see Tohru Maeda, "Bal-ens in the Drehem Texts", *ASJ*, vol. 16 (1994), pp. 126-130.

³⁸⁵ Christina Tsouparopoulou, "Counter-Archaeology: Putting the Ur III Drehem Archives Back in the Ground", in Y. Heffron, A. Stone and M. Worthington (eds.), *At the Dawn of History Ancient Near Eastern Studies, in Honour of J. N. Postgate*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 611-630.

³⁸⁶ Wu Yuhong, "Naram-ili, Šu-Kabta, and Nawir-ilum in the Archives of Ĝaršana, Puzriš-Dagan and Umma", *JAC*, vol. 23 (2008), pp. 1-36.

³⁸⁷ Wu Yuhong, "High-ranking 'Scribes' and Intellectual Governors during the Akkadian and Ur III Periods", *JAC*,

a governor of Girsu, whose father Inim-Šara also held a high position.³⁸⁸ Among the four, Babati was the most important. He was the brother of the queen Abi-Simti.³⁸⁹ As a foreigner, Babati began to oversee the closing of some Puzriš-Dagan accounts during the reign of Amar-Suen, and consolidated his right under Šu-Suen, when he got a royal gift seal from the king.³⁹⁰ In addition to supervising transactions, there are two texts that record their traveling to other areas to audit mass inventory operations. One text concerns counting the grain stocks in the Tummal district from the first to sixth year of Amar-Suen's reign; this grain was loaned to the army as rations.³⁹¹ Another concerns the counting of the grain stocks in the Nippur district from the first to sixth year of Amar-Suen's reign; this grain was also loaned to the army as rations.³⁹² These two stock counts and loans took place in June and December, respectively, during the sixth year of Amar-Suen's rule. It is important to note here that two major conflicts were recorded in the sixth and seventh year names of Amar-Suen's reign.

In addition to the central administration, there were some affiliated organizations in other cities or locations.³⁹³ Cities like Ur, Uruk, and Nippur were important cities where the daily consumption of goods was high. These affiliates often required direct contact with and handling of supplies and therefore required a large number of personnel to carry out the day-to-day work. One example is Naqabtum, a special organization responsible for animals belonging to the royal family.³⁹⁴ This facility had to handle not only high-grade livestock but also wildlife and some vital supplies.

vol. 10 (1995), pp. 127-146.

³⁸⁸ Douglas Frayne, *Ur III Period (2112-2004BC)*, RIME 3/2, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997, pp. 274-75.

³⁸⁹ For more on Babati, see Robert M. Whiting, "Tišatal of Nineveh and Babati, uncle of Šu-Sin", *JCS*, vol. 28, no. 3 (Jul., 1976), pp. 173-182; Piotr Michalowski, "Iddin-Dagan and his Family", *ZA*, vol. 95, no. 1-2 (2005), pp. 65-76.

³⁹⁰ The royal gift seal of Babati is outstanding for the many prominent titles accorded to him, including the comptroller, royal trustee, general of Maškan-šarrum, governor of Abal, see Rudolf H. Mayr and D. I. Owen, "The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III period", in Hartmut Waetzoldt and Giovanni Pettinato (eds.), *Von Sumer nach Ebla und zur ück: Festschrift für Giovanni Pettinato zum 27. September 1999 gewidmet von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*, HSAO 9, Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 2004, pp. 150, 153.

³⁹¹ MVN 03, 234 (1975).

³⁹² PDT 01, 0552 (1954).

³⁹³ Christina Tsouparopoulou, *The Material Face of Bureaucracy: Writing, Sealing and Archiving Tablets for the Ur III State at Drehem*, PhD. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008, p. 132.

³⁹⁴ Hagar Brunke, "The Nakabtum—An Administrative Superstructure for the Storage and Distribution of Agricultural Products", *KASKAL*, vol. 5 (2008), pp. 111-126.

It was so large that livestock management alone required two separate management departments. The department officers were professionally managed, as illustrated by the following table of Naqabtum livestock department chief officers.

Table 6. The Livestock Officers of Naqabtum³⁹⁵

Department A	Department B
Lu-digir-ra (Š 46 - AS 3)	Ahuni (Š 44 - AS 1)
Ahu-wer (AS 3 - AS 9)	Šulgi-a-a-mu (AS 1 - AS 6)
	Šu-mama (AS 6 - AS 8)
Zubaga (AS 8 - ŠS 1)	Igi-Enlil-še (AS 8 - ŠS 2)
Ahu-wer (ŠS 2 - ŠS 7)	Ur-Nanna (ŠS 3 - ŠS 4)
	Ibni-Sin (ŠS 3 - ŠS 4)
	Beli-ili ? (ŠS 3 - ŠS 5)
	Du-u-du (ŠS 5 - ŠS 6)
Aba-Enlil-gin (ŠS 6 - IS 2)	Puzur-Enlil (ŠS 7 - IS 2)

As can see from the table above, this large, specialized management organization was not established until several years after the official establishment of Puzriš-Dagan. It can thus be inferred that the degree of integration of the economic system was gradually improved over time. This improvement in professional management was the result not only of frequent royal and religious engagements but also of the demands of military management. It is not hard to find evidence in the archives of these livestock chiefs that they were responsible for allocating large quantities of livestock for soldiers' rations.³⁹⁶ While the regions with these important subordinate institutions were increasingly integrated into the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty, some other important regions without subordinate institutions strengthened their economic ties with the central government in another way.

By studying the operations of the relevant institutions in Puzriš-Dagan, we can intuitively understand the operational characteristics of the central economic system in the Ur III period. The central economic system of the Ur III period was almost complete at the end of Šulgi's reign and there were no significant institutional

³⁹⁵ Xiaobo Dong, "The Livestock Officers of Naqabtum", *N.A.B.U.*, no. 1 (2018), p. 10.

³⁹⁶ See for example, SAT 02, 0505 (2000); Hirose 059 (1990).

innovations after that. There would be a change of position among the principal officials of the organization when the king changed, and the most changes took place during the fifth-eighth year of Amar-Suen's reign. Considering the two major wars conducted by Amar-Suen during this time, this was likely to have been a rather troublesome time for him.³⁹⁷ The importance of Puzriš-Dagan in the economic system, as the largest center of material management and distribution for the central government of the Ur III Dynasty, is undeniable. The above discussion shows the operation of the economic system of the Ur III period, in terms of the core institutions, subsidiaries, and local branches of Puzriš-Dagan. In short, the central economic system of Ur III was built on the existing temple economic system and local economic systems and relied on a large group of professional bureaucrats to assist the royal family in managing its operations.³⁹⁸

It is easy to understand why Puzriš-Dagan was closed in the second year of Ibši-Suen's rule. On the one hand, Puzriš-Dagan had fulfilled its historic mission of integrating the central economic system and the local economic systems.³⁹⁹ On the other hand, officers of the central government and royal family members dispatched to the provinces may have allied themselves with local ruling families to form interest groups. Such interest groups would have rejected any redistribution of their resources and wealth when royal power declined. This may explain the diminishing resources available to Ibši-Suen as he lost control of the northern frontier. After Puzriš-Dagan's closure, officials attached to the institution were usually sent to the provinces to continue economic management.⁴⁰⁰ This may have been a way for Ibši-Suen to tighten his grip on the local economic systems. At this point, the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty was already on the eve of collapse.

In addition to Puzriš-Dagan and its associated institutions, the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty had many other departments, such as the administration

³⁹⁷ Christina Tsouparopoulou, "A Reconstruction of the Puzriš-Dagan Central Livestock Agency", *CDLJ*, vol. 2013, no. 2 (2 June 2013), p. 4.

³⁹⁸ Ouyang Xiaoli, *Silver Management in Umma: A Case Study of Provincial Economic Administration in Ur III Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Harvard University, 2008, pp. 14-34.

³⁹⁹ Marcel Sigrist, *Drehem*, Bethesda: CDL Press, 1992, pp. 408-409.

⁴⁰⁰ For example, after the closure of Puzriš-Dagan, Lugal-iti-da was sent to Iri-Sagrig to continue his work on the management of the economic system, see *Nisaba* 15, 0967 (2013).

of storage, which included central storage and regional, small-scale storage in major cities.⁴⁰¹ However, none of these systems were as comprehensive and representative as Puzriš-Dagan.

IV.1.2.2 The Booty Texts

It is very difficult to assess the impact of war on the domestic economy of Ur III, largely due to the difficulty of making comparisons between times of war and times of peace. The first reference to military conquest appeared in the 20th year name of Šulgi, when the citizens of Ur were drafted as spearmen. From the 24th year of Šulgi to the eighth year of Ibbi-Suen, nearly half of the year names concerned military activities. Ur III texts began to come forth in the 25th year of Šulgi and peaked from the 44th year of Šulgi to the second year of Ibbi-Suen. It can be seen that most of the Ur III texts were produced during war years. The coincidence of the temporal distribution of surviving texts with war years led S. J. Garfinkle to propose an impact of warfare on record-keeping innovation.⁴⁰² In fact, the documents of Ur III do have several direct or relevant military references. Among this enormous corpus, the documents directly related to military gains are the so-called booty (nam-ra-ak) texts. This type of text can not only complement unmentioned wars in year names but also provide clues about the enemies of Ur III.

The spoils of war in Ur III included livestock, people, and sometimes metals.⁴⁰³ According to the statistics given by L. Hebenstreit, there are 50 years from Šulgi 33 to Ibbi-Suen 14 that generated booty texts, and the number of records peaked twice, once at the end of Šulgi's reign and once at the middle of Amar-Suen's reign.⁴⁰⁴ The first peak corresponds precisely to military successes recorded in administrative

⁴⁰¹ Magnus Widell, "A Note on the Sumerian Expression SI-Ge 4-De 3/dam", *Sefarad*, vol. 62, no. 2 (2002), pp. 393-400; Magnus Widell, "The Administration of Storage in Early Babylonia", *Orient*, vol. 53 (2018), pp. 23-34.

⁴⁰² Steven J. Garfinkle, "The Economy of Warfare in Southern Iraq at the End of the Third Millennium BC", in Hans Neumann, Reinhard Dittmann, Susanne Paulus, Georg Neumann and Anais Schuster-Brandis (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden im Alten Vorderasien: 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Münster, 17.-21. Juli 2006*, AOAT 401, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, p. 354.

⁴⁰³ For the catalogue of booty texts including date, origin and items of spoils, see Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 594-596.

⁴⁰⁴ Laurent Hebenstreit, "The Sumerian Spoils of War During Ur III", in AOAT 401, 2014, p. 377.

documents and year names, while the second peak, relating to slaves, shows less consistency with year names. As for the drastic decline in booty records in the reign of Šu-Suen, Hebenstreit proposed the possibility of a relative decline in the military power of the Sumerian army. It also seems likely that the reign of Šu-Suen turned to strategic defense, building city walls and reducing military operations.

Many of the booty texts designate the geographic origin of the spoils, and it seems likely that the spoils from different regions were administered separately. Among the enemy toponyms to appear in booty texts, the largest sources of booty came from the Amorite land (kur mar-tu), and less frequent geographic names include Anšan, Šurudhum, Urbilum, Šimaški, Šašrum, Elam, Hurti, Harši, etc.⁴⁰⁵ The term “kur mar-tu” is only attested in 26 documents dating from Šulgi’s 40th year to Amar-Suen’s seventh year, and most of them reference spoils of war. The exact geographical location of kur mar-tu is not known with certainty. W. Sallaberger suggested that it may have comprised various polities and tribal territories in the northeast of the Ur III region.⁴⁰⁶ Another hypothesis proposed by P. Michalowski locates it in the amorphous region along the Diyala valley.⁴⁰⁷

The nature of spoils showed a change from livestock to male and female slaves (nam-guruš, nam-geme₂) in the middle of Amr-Suen’s reign.⁴⁰⁸ In terms of domestic demands, A. Garcia-Ventura proposed the existence of a kind of “Biopolitics” in Ur III to balance the relationship between warfare and workforce management.⁴⁰⁹ There also lies the possibility that the economy of the plundered areas was difficult to exploit and develop effectively in years of war. Below is a table illustrating changes in

⁴⁰⁵ The Sumerian word mar-tu was generally used to designate the west, people from the west, or population of West Semitic heritage, see Robert M. Whiting, “Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia”, in Jack M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2, CANE 2, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1995, pp. 1231-1242.

⁴⁰⁶ Walther Sallaberger, “Ur III-Zeit”, in Walther Sallaberger and Aage Westenholz (eds.), *Mesopotamien: Akkade-Zeit und Ur III-Zeit*, OBO 160/3, Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999, p. 158.

⁴⁰⁷ Piotr Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur. An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom*, MC 15. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011, pp. 104-105.

⁴⁰⁸ Laurent Hebenstreit, “The Sumerian Spoils of War During Ur III”, in AOAT 401, 2014, p. 379.

⁴⁰⁹ Agnès Garcia-Ventura, “Ur III Biopolitics: Reflections on the Relationship between War and Work Force Management”, in Davide Nadali and Jordi Vidal (eds.), *The Other Face of the Battle: The Impact of War on Civilians in the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 413, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, pp. 7-23. The evidence used by Garcia-Ventura include one literary royal inscription of Šu-Suen (RIME 3/2.1.4.3) and an administrative text (BCT 02, 206).

the types and quantities of spoils over time.

Table 7. Items of Booty Chronology⁴¹⁰

Date	Amount of livestock	Amount of food	Amount of people
Šulgi	13,833	0	12
Amar-Suen	926	327 (aš) 2 (ban ₂) 5 (sila ₃) še	172
Šu-Suen	5	41 dug kaš	1
Ibbi-Suen	0	0	180

As for the management of spoils of war, the archives of Puzriš-Dagan provide much information on transactions of booty. By analyzing the entrance of booty into the administrative offices of Puzriš-Dagan and its redistribution afterward, two observations can be made:⁴¹¹ 1) Most suppliers held military titles and often used these deliveries to partially or totally fulfill their obligations to provide regular delivery to Puzriš-Dagan. 2) The recipients were well-known officers of Puzriš-Dagan, and there was no separate agency for booty. Redistributions of animal booty were either regular deliveries to the king or to other officers such as fatteners.

The last point that needs to be clarified here is the pitfall of using booty texts for the reconstruction of military actions. Although booty texts contain the date of delivery, it is hard to match them with specific military campaigns. The year to which they are dated cannot be assumed to be the same year in which the campaign that produced the spoils occurred.⁴¹² It seems that animal booty generally stayed under the control of the army, and the spoils from one campaign could be kept in circulation for years.

⁴¹⁰ This table is based on Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 594-596.

⁴¹¹ Laurent Hebenstreit, "The Sumerian Spoils of War During Ur III", in *AOAT* 401, 2014, pp. 379-380.

⁴¹² Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 63-64.

IV.1.2.3 The Taxation Systems

According to P. Steinkeller, the state of Ur III consisted of a core and some periphery areas, with two tribute or taxation systems accordingly.⁴¹³ The heartland of the kingdom comprised all regions of southern Mesopotamia, which were divided into roughly 20 provinces derived from the earlier city-states of the Early Dynastic period.⁴¹⁴ The composition of a province depended to a large extent on the appointment of a provincial governor (ensi₂) and its participation in the bala system. The Sumerian word bala means “to transfer” or “to take turns”, and the bala system was essentially a tax assessed and imposed by the central government on the provinces, functioning as a system of redistribution and entitlements.⁴¹⁵ The bala-obligations were not distributed equally among the provinces, and the types and amounts of goods sent by the provinces varied greatly.⁴¹⁶ This tax system not only strengthened the central government’s control over local economies but also facilitated the flow of goods between the provinces.

Another tax, “gun₂ ma-da”, was imposed on the territories surrounding and in contact with the Ur III state. P. Michalowski highlighted the military value of gun₂ ma-da and proposed that it should be viewed as “military tribute” paid by peripheral regions that served as both defensive zones and offensive staging areas for the kingdom.⁴¹⁷ The independent or incorporated status of the peripheral territories switched back and forth, depending on the changing political situation of the Ur III state. The texts specifically labeled as gun₂ ma-da show a significant amount of variation, ranging from the obligation of one captain from one settlement to the troops

⁴¹³ Piotr Steinkeller, “The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery”, in SAOC 46, pp. 18-33.

⁴¹⁴ The provinces composed of Marad, Apiak, Kazallu, Kiš, Babylon, Kutha, Puš, Urum, Tiwe and Sippar in the northern region traditionally known as Akkad, and Ur, Uruk, Girsu, Umma, Šuruppak, Adab, Isin, Iri-Saġrig and Nippur in the southern region of Sumer. See Tonia M. Sharlach, *Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State*, CM 26. Leiden, Boston: Brill and Styx, 2004, pp. 6-8.

⁴¹⁵ Piotr Steinkeller, “The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery”, in SAOC 46, pp. 25-33. In addition to economic functions, William W. Hallo presented the religious importance of bala, and suggested that the bala was a monthly rotational system fulfilled by provincial governors to supply the major temples in the religious capital Nippur, see William W. Hallo, “A Sumerian Amphictyony”, *JCS*, vol. 14, no.3 (1960), pp. 88-114.

⁴¹⁶ Tonia M. Sharlach, *Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State*, CM 26. Leiden, Boston: Brill and Styx, 2004, pp. 27-29, 65-66.

⁴¹⁷ Piotr Michalowski, “Foreign Tribute to Sumer during the Ur III Period”, *ZA*, vol. 68, no.1 (1978), p. 46.

and officers of 11 settlements.⁴¹⁸ Additionally, a substantial variety of terms were utilized to refer to the same kind of peripheral tax.⁴¹⁹ By analyzing these tax records, one finds that there were regular tax rates among officers of various ranks;⁴²⁰ the tax levied from generals, captains, master sergeants, and troops in standard amounts can be seen from the table below.

Table 8. Amount of Tax Per Person⁴²¹

Cattle	Sheep	Category of Taxpayers	Silver Equivalent
10	100	“general” (šakkan ₆)	200 shekels (3 1/3 minas)
2	20	“senior captain” (nu-banda ₃)	40 shekels (2/3 mina)
1	10	“junior captain” (nu-banda ₃)	20 shekels (1/3 mina)
1/20	1/2	“master sergeant” (ugula geš ₂ -da)	1 shekel (1/60 mina)
1/300	1/30	“trooper” (eren ₂)	12 grains (1/15 shekel)

Based on the above discussions, a possible economic model of war in the Ur III Dynasty generated by the war is likely to be a comprehensive system. That question is difficult to analyze in terms of economics alone. The economic model may be heavily influenced by political, religious, and other factors. The vast resources consumed by waging foreign wars actually weakened the economies of local ruling families who might have wanted to rebel. This not only provided adequate supplies for the army but also brought stability to the domestic political environment. To some extent, the economic system that the Ur III period built around war may have been influenced more by political and cultural factors.

⁴¹⁸ Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, p. 360.

⁴¹⁹ Such terms including gun₂, eren₂ GN, ša₃ GN, šu-gid₂ and udu, for more discussions, see Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 369-370.

⁴²⁰ Piotr Steinkeller, “The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery”, in SAOC 46, p. 31.

⁴²¹ This table is based on Daniel Patterson, *Elements of the Neo-Sumerian Military*, PhD. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 356.

IV.1.3 A Political Model of War

War is often seen as a continuation of politics. For this reason, before discussing the relationship between politics and war in the Ur III Dynasty, we must briefly review the political system of this period. As argued by I. J. Winter, the political system of Ur III was composed of a four-tiered hierarchy,⁴²² as shown in the figure below.

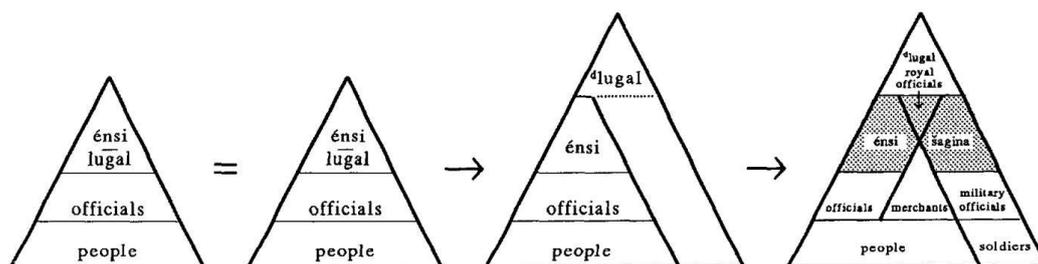


Figure 16. Schematic model of administrative system from Uruk period to Ur III⁴²³

The above model illustrates the complex and closely linked political and administrative systems of the Ur III period. One of the best demonstrations of the tightly interlocked relationship between the king and his subordinates is the so-called “royal gift seals” of the highest specification. At present, 34 different royal gift seals from the Ur III Dynasty have been discovered, belonging to 31 identifiable government officials or royal family members, ranging from the middle period of Šulgi’s reign to the late period of Ibbi-Suen’s reign.⁴²⁴ The content of this kind of seal follows the fixed formula of “king’s name + king’s title + seal holder’s information + in-na-ba”. The text content is divided into two columns: the left column is the name and title of the king who issued the seal; the right column is the information of the seal holder, including the name and title of the holder, but sometimes the name and title of the seal holder’s father

⁴²² Irene J. Winter, “Legitimation of Authority Through Image and Legend: Seals Belonging to Officials in the Administrative Bureaucracy of the Ur III State”, in SAOC 46, 1991, pp. 76-78.

⁴²³ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴²⁴ For an overview for Ur III royal gift seals, see Rudolf H. Mayr and D. I. Owen, “The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III period”, in Hartmut Waetzoldt and Giovanni Pettinato (eds.), *Von Sumer nach Ebla und zurück: Festschrift für Giovanni Pettinato zum 27. September 1999 gewidmet von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*, HSAO 9, Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 2004, pp. 146-174.

were added as an effective means to distinguish the namesake. The right column is usually lower in height than the left column, allowing the seal holder's information to begin after the king's title in the left column, which may indicate the holder's submission to the king.⁴²⁵

The "royal gift seal" is different from other seals in that the determinative sign of god (dingir) is always added before the name of the king. Therefore, it is likely that this kind of seal appeared after the self-deification of Šulgi during his lifetime and was inherited by the rulers after him. In this regard, it is likely that the awarding of "royal gift seals" by the king was a way to strengthen the royal authority after his self-deification. At the same time, "royal gift seals" may have been more than just a gift. They may even represent the power granted by the king to the holders of the seals.⁴²⁶ This study selects three officials or members of the royal family as examples of holders of this kind of seal, so as to explicate the relationship between the holders of this kind of seal and the comprehensive management mode of war and politics in the northern frontier during the Ur III Dynasty.

The first seal owner to be discussed is Šeluš-Dagan. His "royal gift seal" is also the earliest seal found to have been used on cuneiform tablets. His identity was mentioned earlier in this study, as governor of Simurru and the original owner of the land on which Puzriš-Dagan stands.⁴²⁷ Šulgi appointed him governor of Simurru and awarded him the "royal gift seal". On the one hand, this could be regarded as the king's compensation to Šeluš-Dagan for the loss of his land. On the other hand, these behaviors also highlighted Šulgi's trust in Šeluš-Dagan's loyalty and working ability. There is some evidence that control of Simurru was important to Šulgi. This is not only reflected in the fact that Šulgi destroyed Simurru nine times in less than 20 years, but also in the fact that Šulgi added the title of "king of the four quarters" to his own title after defeating Simurru.⁴²⁸ At this point, some explanation of the title of king in

⁴²⁵ Christina Tsouparopoulou, *The Ur III Seals Impressed on Documents from Puzriš-Dagān (Drehem)*, HSAO 16, Heidelberg: Heidelberg Orientverlag, 2015, p. 26.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38, 122.

⁴²⁷ David I. Owen, "The Royal Gift Seal of Šeluš-Dagan, Governor of Simurru", in S. Graziani (ed.), *Studi sul Vicino Oriente dedicati alla memoria di Luigi Cagni*, Napoli: Istituto universitario orientale, 2008, pp. 815-846.

⁴²⁸ Robert D. Biggs, "Šulgi in Simurru", in Gordon D. Young, Mark Chavalas and Richard Averbeck (eds.), *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons: Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour on His 80th Birthday*,

the Ur III period is necessary. Since the Ur III Dynasty derived its legitimacy from the Uruk V Dynasty, the format of the kings' titles in the Ur III period almost completely inherited the pattern of the royal titles of Utu-hegal. There are three titles commonly used by kings in the Ur III Dynasty: "hero", "king of Ur" and "king of the four quarters". These three titles reveal the king's personal qualities, the origin of the dynasty, and the extent of his territory.⁴²⁹ The "hero" and "king of the four quarters" were invented in the Akkadian period, and they correspond to the Akkadian words "dannum" and "šar kibrātim" respectively. The title of "king of the four quarters" was meant to show that the king's dominion extended beyond the traditional territory and controlled farther foreign lands in all directions.⁴³⁰ The final result was that Simurrum was continuously destroyed twice in the 25th and 26th years of Šulgi's reign. On those occasions, Šulgi added "king of the four quarters" to his title in the year's name. The question of what role Šeluš-Dagan played after he was appointed governor of Simurrum needs to be addressed in light of the discussion of Puzriš-Dagan in the previous section. The earliest texts from the embryonic period of Puzriš-Dagan date back to the 26th year of Šulgi's reign. At the same time, Šeluš-Dagan, as governor of Simurrum, was the earliest and largest contributor of materials to this embryonic institution.⁴³¹ From this point of view, the construction of the central economic system by Šulgi was probably established after the victory in the war against Simurrum. This may be seen as a sign of the zenith of Šulgi's political power. Šeluš-Dagan is the only local governor among the four holders of the "royal gift seal" from the Šulgi period that has been discovered. This study speculates that the "royal gift seal" may have been invented by Šulgi to give the highest authority to the governor. It was for this reason that Šulgi first gave such a seal to Šeluš-Dagan, whom he trusted and appointed governor of Simurrum. This may have been his way of establishing an effective system of political administration in the conquered foreign lands and extending the royal family's influence to the northern

Bethesda: CDL Press, 1997, p. 175.

⁴²⁹ William W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles: A Philologic and Historical Analysis*, AOS 43, New Haven: Connecticut Press, 1957, pp. 10-12, 49-55.

⁴³⁰ William W. Hallo, "Royal Titles from the Mesopotamian Periphery", *Anatolian Studies*, vol. 30, Special Number in Honor of the Seventieth Birthday of Professor O. R. Gurney (1980), pp. 189-195.

⁴³¹ Wang Junna and Wu Yuhong, "A Research on the Incoming (Mu-Túm) Archive of Queen Šulgi-simti's Animal Institution", *JAC*, vol. 26 (2011), p. 42.

frontier, the part of the country most remote from the capital, Ur. However, Simurru’s constant rebellion had clearly shaken Šulgi’s resolve. This was the most serious violation of his authority as king. It is likely that this was why he did not subsequently issue the “royal gift seal” to the other local governors. Strong military power was his way of securing foreign lands, but inadequate political management and a predatory economic system may have made it impossible for him to manage them effectively. This created a vicious cycle in which the costs of governance increased and the benefits decreased. Once the Ur III Dynasty could no longer afford to do so, the king made a final war for plunder and then relinquished control of the northern frontier as Ibbi-Suen had done.

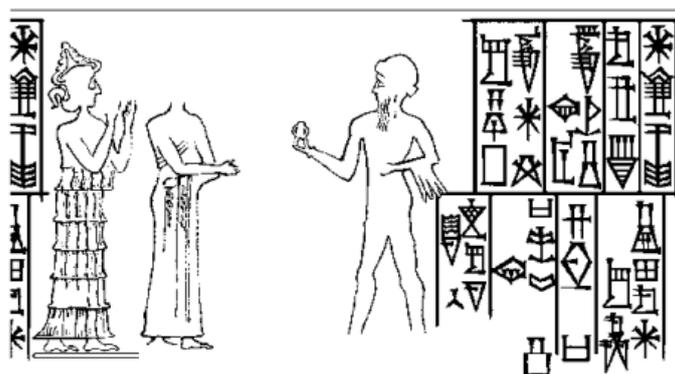


Figure 17. The “royal gift seal” of Šeluš-Dagan⁴³²

The second type of seal holders under discussion were several royal religious women known as *lukur*. A detailed discussion about their role in the Ur III period will be presented in the next section, which focuses on religious and cultural issues. Only the role of their seals will be discussed here. Šulgi presented two “royal gift seals” to the royal women Ea-niša and Geme-Ninlila. According to the text, they were involved in some of the management around Puzriš-Dagan in its infancy. Depending on how the seals were used, they were probably given to them after the official establishment of Puzriš-Dagan.⁴³³ We have only found three attestations of the their “royal gift seals” at

⁴³² Rudolf H. Mayr and D. I. Owen, “The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III period”, in HSAO 9, 2004, p. 167.

⁴³³ Piotr Michalowski, “Royal Women of the Ur III Period: Part II: Geme-Ninlila”, *JCS*, vol. 31, no. 3 (July 1979), pp. 171-176.

Puzriš-Dagan. Ea-niša and Geme-Ninlila had no official position in Puzriš-Dagan and were rarely involved in practical work. In light of this reality, they may have been supervising Puzriš-Dagan on behalf of the royal family. This may explain why Ea-niša and Geme-Ninlila’s “royal gift seals” were so rarely used. This also shows to some extent that royal women in the Ur III period could participate in the management of the economic system, but the degree of participation might not have been very deep.

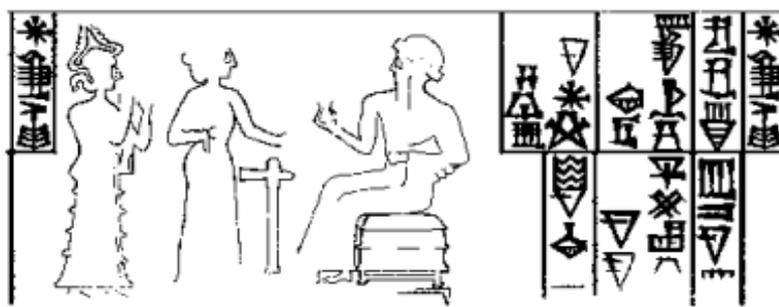


Figure 18. The “royal gift seal” of Ea-niša⁴³⁴



Figure 19. The “royal gift seal” of Geme-Ninlila⁴³⁵

The third category of holders of the “royal gift seals” was the king’s most trusted functionaries. One of the most iconic figures was Abi-simti’s brother Babati. It is suggested that Abi-simti was Šu-Suen’s mother.⁴³⁶ There are some studies that have suggested that Abi-simti was not only Šu-Suen’s mother but also Amar-Suen’s mother, and it has even been suggested that Abi-simti was the name Šulgi’s wife, Šulgi-simti,

⁴³⁴ Rudolf H. Mayr and D. I. Owen, “The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III period”, in HSAO 9, 2004, p. 167.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., p. 167.

⁴³⁶ C. B. F. Walker, “Another Babati Inscription”, *JCS*, vol. 35, no. 1/2 (January - April 1983), pp. 91-96.

adopted after Šulgi's death.⁴³⁷ In this sense, Babati's status is extremely high.

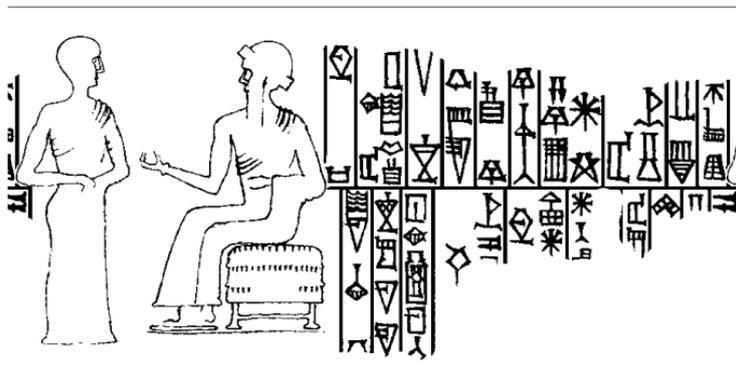


Figure 20. The “royal gift seal” of Babati⁴³⁸

Another direct evidence for Babati's sublime status is that he was the only person to possess two “royal gift seals”. His seals present him as having as many as eight titles, including comptroller (ša₁₃-dub-ba), the king's accountant (ša-tam), the general (šagina) of Maškan-šarrum, the local governor (ensi₂) of Abal, governor and household manager (šabra) of the two queens, ... (ku₃-gal, the meaning here is unclear) in the land irrigation manager, chief temple manager (sanga) of the goddesses Belat-suhner and Belat-teraban, and brother (šeš) of the king's beloved mother.⁴³⁹ These eight titles covered almost all aspects of the administrative work undertaken by the central government during the Ur III period. “Comptroller” and “accountant of the king” represent his power to oversee and manage the central economic system, as in the analysis of the archives department of Puzriš-Dagan, mentioned above. “General” implies that he controlled an army that was subordinate to the central government. “Local governor” meant that he had land, population, and a certain amount of economic power. “Household manager of the two queens” showed his position in the management of the royal family. “Chief temple manager” gave him a religious and cultural status that allowed him to participate in religious affairs. Finally, river projects for irrigation were given to Babati by the central government as a guarantee of food

⁴³⁷ Wu Yuhong and Wang Junna, “The Identification of Šulgi-simti, Wife of Šulgi, with Abi-simti, Mother of Amar-Sin and Šu-Sin, and of Ur-Sin, the Crown Prince, with Amar-Sin”, *JAC*, vol. 27 (2012), pp. 99-130.

⁴³⁸ Rudolf H. Mayr and D. I. Owen, “The Royal Gift Seal in the Ur III period”, in *HSAO* 9, 2004, p. 167.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 150, 153.

security and a relatively important source of administrative funds.⁴⁴⁰ At the same time, the title of “supervisor of the river works” allowed him to smoothly take over various national large-scale projects, such as, for example, the building of the Martu Wall (see Chapter II.5).

The “royal gift seal” with these words was given to Babati, indicating that he was highly empowered in all aspects. In a way, the “royal gift seal” was the highest commission granted by the king. The areas for which Babati was granted these highest mandates were in the northern and northern frontier of the kingdom. This shows that Šu-Suen wanted to strengthen his control over the northern part of the kingdom. This is probably due to the fact that Šu-Suen’s traditional sphere of influence was too concentrated in the south. It can be seen from the text that Babati’s first “royal gift seal” was used until the seventh year of Šu-Suen’s reign. Then, Babati’s second “royal gift seal” was granted in the eighth year of Šu-Suen’s reign. Babati’s “royal gift seals” were not used much. He probably used such seals for matters directly relating to the royal family and requiring a higher mandate. For example, he paid grain for Ninua’s governor in Ešnunna.⁴⁴¹ This behavior has been considered as diplomatic activity in previous studies, so a specific content analysis will be discussed in the section on diplomacy.

Here is a brief summary of the subsequent development of “royal gift seals” in the reigns of Šu-Suen and Ibbi-Suen. Thus far, no “royal gift seals” issued during the reign of Amar-Suen have been found. The number of known “royal gift seals” issued during the reign of his successor Šu-Suen is currently 12, while the number of seals known to have been issued during the Ibbi-Suen period is 19. It is possible that some royal gift seals were also issued during Amar-Suen’s reign, but they simply have not been recovered. The “royal gift seals” of the Šu-Suen period were mostly awarded to close officials and members of the royal family. Only one “royal gift seal” was issued to the local governor, Aa-kalla, the governor of Umma. This may have been a reward for

⁴⁴⁰ Ouyang Xiaoli, “Administration of the Irrigation Fee in Umma during the Ur III Period (ca. 2112–2004 BCE)”, in L. Kogan et. al. (eds.), *City Administration in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 53e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, Vol. 2, RAI 53/2, Babel und Bibel 5, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010, pp. 317-349.

⁴⁴¹ Robert M. Whiting, “Tiš-atal of Nineveh and Babati, Uncle of Šu-Sin”, *JCS*, vol. 28, no. 3 (July 1976), pp. 173-182.

Aa-kalla's support for Šu-Suen's succession to the throne. From about the seventh year of the reign of Amar-Suen the Umma texts begin to refer to Šu-Suen as king.⁴⁴² Under the system of succession in the Ur III period, a candidate had to have strong support to achieve the throne. During the first four years of Ibbi-Suen's reign, the "royal gift seal" was not only issued to relatively high-status people but also was used with great frequency. For example, Arad-Nanna, as *sukkal-mah*, used his "royal gift seal" to dispose of goods related to the king in Girsu.⁴⁴³ At the end of Ibbi-Suen's reign, the "royal gift seals" were used around the city of Ur by lower-ranking officials. This shows the decline of central government power during the Ur III Dynasty.

Thus far, this study can briefly summarize the interaction between the military and politics in the Ur III period. Strong military power not only ensured the king's ability to reform and develop the domestic political system, but also provided strong support for the Ur III Dynasty to control key frontier areas. Even though strong military power ensured temporary control of the newly conquered regions, it was rather difficult to keep those regions loyal. This is evident by the fact that some of the officials sent to administer the northern frontier during Šulgi's reign were brutal. The immaturity of the political system made it difficult to govern effectively after military conquest, leading to repeated rebellions. For example, consider the plight of the kings of the Ur III Dynasty at Simurrum. In contrast to Ur-Nammu, who retained some of the local ruling family's power even after defeating Lagaš, Šulgi's handling of the local ruling family at Simurrum was somewhat radical. This was probably due to Simurrum's critical position on the trade routes of the northern frontier. This may also be due to the strategic importance of Simurrum. Geographically, only by controlling Simurrum could the Ur king control the northern frontier. The location of Simurrum was so important that the rulers of the Ur III Dynasty wanted to bring the region directly under their control. With regard to the central economic system, most of the conquests on the northern frontier were not incorporated into the *bala* system. This is probably why the kings were busy fighting on the northern frontier. Only successful

⁴⁴² Wu Yuhong, "Could Šu-Sin Become King Amar-Sin 7? And a Note on the Two Šu-Sins", *N.A.B.U.*, no.4 (1995), p. 87.

⁴⁴³ Nisaba 08, 017 (2005); ITT 03, 06021 (1912); ITT 02, 00937 (1910-1911).

wars can add to the influence of dynastic political rule. Ibbi-Suen's final victory over Simurrum in the northern war was a military victory but a political defeat, since this war ended the Ur III Dynasty's control over the northern frontier. At the same time, the name of the year, as a symbol of obedience to Ur's rule, gradually fell out of use in other cities from north to south.⁴⁴⁴ The failure of political governance combined with the decline of military power inevitably led to the collapse of northern control by the Ur III Dynasty. This political model, propelled by military power, finally came to an end.

IV.1.4 War, Culture, and Religion

The connections between the wars in the Ur III period and culture or religion are more abundant than they may appear. This section will select some important cultural and religious topics of the Ur III period and examine their relation to war in light of the previous analysis of economic and political models.

The most remarkable religious and cultural aspect of the Ur III period is undoubtedly the self-deification of the king during his lifetime. Although previously the rulers of ancient Mesopotamia had been deified after death, they rarely turned themselves into gods during their lifetime, probably drawing on the behavior of some of the kings of the Akkadian period.⁴⁴⁵ This aspect was so important that the economic systems, political models, and war requirements of the Ur III period were related to it.⁴⁴⁶ Some of the topics related to this are carefully analyzed in Chapter III according to the text.

The practice of deification of the living king in the Ur III period began in the middle of the reign of Šulgi. Šulgi likely did this to expand his political-religious influence and solve some real problems.⁴⁴⁷ From a practical point of view, in such a

⁴⁴⁴ Magnus Widell, "The Calendar of Neo-Sumerian Ur and Its Political Significance", *CDLI*, vol. 2004, no. 2 (14 May 2004), pp. 1-7.

⁴⁴⁵ J. S. Cooper, "Paradigm and Propaganda. The Dynasty of Akkade in the 21st Century", in Mario Liverani (ed.), *Akkad, The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, HANE/S 5, Padova: Sargon srl, 1993, p. 12.

⁴⁴⁶ Ludek Vacin, "Tradition and Innovation in Šulgi's Concept of Divine Kingship", in Alfonso Archi (ed.), *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome, 4-8 July 2011*, RAI 57, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015, pp. 179-192.

⁴⁴⁷ For discussions on motives for deification of Šulgi, see Piotr Michalowski, "The Mortal Kings of Ur: A Short

vast area of ancient Western Asia, there were many rulers who used the title lugal (king). However, in many regions, the supreme ruler did not use the title of lugal. In some regions, it was even the case that the governor who bore the title of lugal was not of high status.⁴⁴⁸ As a king of unprecedented achievement, Šulgi needed a lofty title that was universally recognized. From this, the kings of the Ur III Dynasty developed another unprecedented title: god of the state (dingir kalam-ma). The governors of some regions even built temples to the living king to worship them and to show their loyalty.⁴⁴⁹ In addition, Šulgi carried out a series of cultural constructions. In his hymns he defined Utu and Gilgamesh as his brothers and Inanna as his lover.⁴⁵⁰ He did not make himself the supreme god, probably in order to reduce the challenge to traditional consciousness and interest groups. He also used the *Death of Ur-Nammu* to construct a cultural identity with realpolitik and a cultural tradition. He described in detail the political and cultural system he wanted to build through this text. (For a detailed analysis of the content, see Chapter III.1.3.) At the same time, he was increasing the exalted status of Enlil and Nippur. (See Chapter II.6.2.) This laid the cultural foundation for the establishment of a central economic system around Nippur and the expropriation of bala. Interestingly, by declaring himself to be Utu's brother, he also indirectly became Ningirsu's brother. From this point of view, it is likely that this arrangement was designed to resolve the legitimacy of his rule in cities where a god was king. In addition, there was a group of religious women who probably only existed in the temples of Utu and Ningirsu or around the kings during this period. These religious women were called lukur. After the Ur III king's self-deification, the title lukur was used to describe royal consorts, which on its own

Century of Divine Rule in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in OIS 4, pp. 36-39; Ludek Vacin, *Šulgi of Ur: Life, Deeds, Ideology and Legacy of a Mesopotamian Ruler as Reflected Primarily in Literary Texts*, PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2011, pp. 196-202; Audrey Pitts, *The Cult of the Deified King in Ur III Mesopotamia*, Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2015, pp. 18-29.

⁴⁴⁸ Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy*, London, New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 122.

⁴⁴⁹ Clemens Reichel, “The King is Dead, Long Live the King: the Last Days of the Šu-Sîn Cult at Ešnunna and its Aftermath”, in Nicole Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, OIS 4, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008, pp. 133-156.

⁴⁵⁰ For more on royal hymns of Šulgi, see Jacob Klein, “The Royal Hymns of Šulgi King of Ur: Man's Quest for Immortal Fame”, *TAPA*, vol. 71, no. 7 (1981), pp. 1-48; *Three Šulgi Hymns: Sumerian Royal Hymns Glorifying King Šulgi of Ur*, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981; “Šulgi of Ur: King of a Neo-Sumerian Empire”, in Jack M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2, CANE 2, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995, pp. 843-857.

was a sort of priestess, serving as the junior wife of a male god.⁴⁵¹ It seems reasonable that along with the king's elevation to godhood, his consorts by extension had to receive a religious title derived from an existing priesthood.

Worldly sons, fathers, and grandfathers were deified and became brothers. In other words, the deified royal family of Ur could not be viewed as part of a secular ethical system. According to the available information, the religious women of the royal family of the Ur III period were mainly responsible for economic management.⁴⁵² This was rare in the male-dominated bureaucracy at that time. There are also some studies that have tried to prove that lukur was a priestess and was also required to preside over some religious sacrificial activities,⁴⁵³ but the texts used can only prove the possible relationship between the queen (nin) and this religious activity. It cannot directly prove the existence of religious sacrificial activities that lukur needed to organize and participate in.⁴⁵⁴ The central economic system established by Šulgi was developed from the integration of the existing temple economic system. As divine lukur, the wives of Šulgi had the double blessing of high political and religious status. It was natural for them to participate in the management and supervision of the central economic system. On the other hand, Šulgi's daughters as lukur also had the status of intervening in the local economy after marrying into the local ruling family. It could be argued that Šulgi was gradually bringing more of the economic system under his direct control through the female members of the royal family. In the face of an economic system beyond direct control, the construction of culture and religion exerted its power. With these religious ways, Šulgi perfected the economic system and the political model. These ensured that he could legitimately plunder domestic goods through the central economic system to fund ongoing foreign wars. At the same time, it also ensured that the vast supplies acquired during military operations could

⁴⁵¹ Audrey Pitts, *The Cult of the Deified King in Ur III Mesopotamia*, PhD. Thesis, Harvard University, 2015, pp. 72-76.

⁴⁵² Piotr Steinkeller, "More on the Ur III Royal Wives", *ASJ*, vol. 3 (1981), pp. 77-92.

⁴⁵³ See for example, Tonia M. Sharlach, "Priestesses, Concubines, and Daughters of Men: Disentangling the Meaning of the Word lukur in Ur III Time", in Piotr Michalowski (ed.), *On the Third Dynasty of Ur Studies in Honor of Marcel Sigrist*, JCSSS 1, Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2008, pp.177-183.

⁴⁵⁴ Walther Sallaberger, *Der kultische Kalender der Ur III-Zeit*, UAVA 7/1, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993, pp. 44, 190, 221.

be spent directly by the royal family. These strategies of religious construction implemented by Šulgi effectively promoted the continuous unification and gathering of culture between Sumerian cities. These strategies also deeply involved royal power in the religious system and strengthened royal power. Both ended up strengthening the king's control over the military system.

While these religious and cultural factors justified war, war also promoted the expansion of these cultural elements to the surrounding areas.⁴⁵⁵ In Elam, for example, early Elamite writing was gradually replaced by cuneiform writing. By the end of the third millennium BC, when Puzur-inšušinak unified Elam's regime, a linear Elamite script emerged.⁴⁵⁶ Some scholars believe that this kind of writing was created because Puzur-inšušinak wanted to unify Elam culturally and strengthen cultural cohesion or independence from the cultural influence of ancient Mesopotamia.⁴⁵⁷ The Elamite cultural revolt did not last long before Ur-Nammu's army arrived and made him the new lord of Elam.⁴⁵⁸ Later cuneiform writing in Sumerian replaced linear Elamite and flourished in Elamite lands. In this sense, the army of Ur-Nammu annihilated the rebels not only physically but also culturally. This made Elam's cities less culturally distinct from Sumerian ones. This is also the likely reason why the kings after Ur-Nammu preferred to use diplomacy in conjunction with strong military power to govern Elam. This treatment made Elam's cities look more like traditional Sumerian cities rather than newly conquered foreign lands.

In another aspect, war may have played a very important role in the construction

⁴⁵⁵ It seems that the war also promoted some cultures around Mesopotamia to enter into the Sumerian tradition, see Tonia M. Sharlach, "Local and Imported Religion at Ur Late in the Reign of Shulgi", in Grant Frame, Joshua Jeffers and Holly Pittman (eds.), *Ur in the Twenty-First Century CE: Proceedings of the 62nd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Philadelphia, July 11–15, 2016*, RAI 62, University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021, pp. 429-440.

⁴⁵⁶ Piotr Steinkeller, "Puzur-Inšušinak at Susa: A Pivotal Episode of Early Elamite History Reconsidered", in Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier (eds.), *Susa and Elam: Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives (Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. 293-317; François Desset, "Linear Elamite Writing", in Javier Álvarez-Mon, Gian Pietro Basello and Yasmina Wicks (eds.), *The Elamite World*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, pp. 397-415.

⁴⁵⁷ Michael Mäder, "Linear Elamite", in D. T. Potts, Ethan Harkness, Jason Neelis, Roderick McIntosh (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History: Asia and Africa*, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2021, pp. 1-9.

⁴⁵⁸ Jacob L. Dahl, "Early Writing in Iran, A Reappraisal", *Iran*, vol. 47 (2009), pp. 23-31; Piotr Steinkeller, "On the Dynasty of Šimaški: Twenty Years (or so) After", in Michael Kozuh et al. (eds.), *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper*, SAOC 68, Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014, pp. 287-296.

of national identity. War concentrated political and economic power in the king. The kings of the Ur III Dynasty were almost all military generals who were good at fighting. War also allowed the king to tighten his control over the military. These characteristics were more or less evident in the rulers before the Ur III Dynasty. The kings of the Ur III period differed from the rulers of the earlier period in that they wanted to achieve an acceptable cultural unity on a wider geographical scope. In today's view, by constructing archival records and new religious systems, they were constructing new historical records and new cultural traditions, perhaps without even realizing it themselves. For example, in the *Victory of Utu-hegal*, the text not only expresses the brutality of the Gutians and promotes the merits of Utu-hegal, but also reminds later rulers that only when the Sumerian cities are united and strong are they safe from being enslaved. The cultural efforts of the kings of the Ur III period made the culture of ancient Mesopotamia more closely linked to that of earlier periods.



Figure 21. A stone bowl from a moon god temple, BM 118553 (ca. 2400-2050 BC). Engraved on it are two inscriptions: one is personal information from Naram-Sin after his self-deification, while the other is personal information from Šulgi after his self-deification and personal information about his daughter. This may be a concrete manifestation of Šulgi's desire to strengthen the historicity and continuity of culture. ©The Trustees of the British Museum

Meanwhile, the frequent wars of the Ur III period, combined with a central

economic system, made some local rulers realize two things. The first was the unprecedented centralization and unity of politics, economy, and culture among the cities of ancient Mesopotamia. This means that there would no longer be a return to the era of the “king of Kiš”, in which the relative independence of local governance could be guaranteed as long as the local ruling families gave up some interests or performed some obligations for the central government.⁴⁵⁹ The second was that the great power of the union allowed the Ur III period kings to gain more from war. They were able to carry out a great deal of economic plunder both at home and abroad, not only backed by a powerful military but also by the natural legitimacy that religious and cultural constructions lent to their kingship.⁴⁶⁰ It is likely that the Ur III period kings’ strengthening of the legitimacy and sense of inheritance of kingship ensured that Ibbi-Suen, after losing most of his land, was eventually destroyed by the Elamites rather than being attacked by other Sumerian cities. These factors led some local rulers to seek to inherit the political and cultural legitimacy of the Ur III Dynasty when it collapsed, in order to establish a strong central dynasty. Some literary texts and the *Sumerian King List* of the Isin-Larsa period are probably the concentrated embodiment of this need.⁴⁶¹ There were also some literary creations about the kings of the Ur III period which continued until the first millennium BC.⁴⁶² From these points of view, this historical and cultural tradition, constructed during the Ur III period, may have played an irreplaceable role in the subsequent history of ancient Mesopotamia.

IV.2) Impact of War on Diplomacy

⁴⁵⁹ William W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles: A Philologic and Historical Analysis*, AOS 43, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society Press, 1957, pp. 21-29; Douglas R. Frayne, *Presargonic Period (2700-2350 BC)*, RIME 1, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2008, p.67; Irene J. Winter, *On Art in the Ancient Near East, Volume II, From the Third Millennium B.C.E.*, CHANE 34/2, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010, pp. 53-64.

⁴⁶⁰ Clemens Reichel, *Political Changes and Cultural Continuity in the Palace of the Rulers at Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) from the Ur III Period to the Isin-Larsa Period (ca. 2070 - 1850 B.C.)*, PhD. Thesis, University of Chicago, 2001.

⁴⁶¹ Piotr Michalowski, “Literary Works from the Court of King Ishbi-Erra of Isin,” in Yitschak Sefati, Pinhas Artzi, Chaim Cohen, Barry L. Eichler and Victor A. Hurowitz (eds.), *“An Experienced Scribe Who Neglects Nothing”*: *Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Jacob Klein*, Bethesda: CDL, 2005, pp. 199-212.

⁴⁶² Hanspeter Schaudig, *Explaining Disaster. Tradition and Transformation of the “Catastrophe of Ibbi-Sîn” in Babylonian Literature*, dubsar 13, Münster: Zaphon, 2019.

Any directly recorded diplomatic activities from the Ur III period are scarce. Sukkal and messengers have been analyzed as diplomats in previous studies. Possible diplomatic activities are also indicated by lists of gifts or food provided to foreign envoys during festivals.⁴⁶³ On the surface, it is hard to find any discussion of war. For this reason, this section focuses on clues or speculations that may express the relationship between war and diplomacy in the Ur III period.

The kings of the Ur III Dynasty often used marriage to establish relatively friendly relations with local ruling families or foreign rulers. Marriages with local ruling families were likely used for administrative purposes to strengthen local control, i.e., political marriages. On the other hand, marriage between members of the foreign ruling family and the Ur royal family was probably for military security purposes, i.e., diplomatic marriage. The purpose of most diplomatic marriages was to form alliances and avoid military conflict. They also gave the Ur royal family the opportunity to become deeply involved in foreign ruling cliques.⁴⁶⁴

Some of the more important diplomatic marriages will be discussed here. The first analyzed diplomatic marriage took place around the time of Ur-Nammu's reign. Šulgi, who had not yet succeeded to the throne as king, married Taram-Uram who was the daughter of Apilkin, the ruler of Mari. Apilkin was also accepted as a member of the royal family and his son became high priest of the Utu temple in Larsa.⁴⁶⁵ This successful diplomatic marriage led to a lasting peace between Ur and Mari. The second diplomatic marriage to be analyzed is one that took place during the reign of Šulgi, when Šulgi married his daughter to the governor of Anšan. This diplomatic marriage has been analyzed earlier in this study. (See Chapter III.2.2.) It took place just before the start of the second "Hurrian war". Four years later, having just finished that war of expansion in the north, Šulgi quickly attacked and successfully defeated Anšan. This diplomatic marriage may well have been a tactic to paralyze the enemy to

⁴⁶³ Tonia M. Sharlach, "Diplomacy and the Rituals of Politics at the Ur III Court", *JCS*, vol. 57 (2005), pp. 17-29.

⁴⁶⁴ Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016, pp. 476-487.

⁴⁶⁵ Piotr Michalowski, "The Men from Mari", in K. Van Lerberghe and A. Schoors (eds.), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski*, Leuven: Peeters Publishers & Department of Oriental studies, 1995, pp. 181-188; "News of a Mari Defeat from the Time of King Šulgi", *N.A.B.U.*, no.2 (2013), pp. 36-41.

ensure military victory. This is thus the third military model that this study mentioned above, that is to say, the combination of military action and diplomacy to achieve the goal of victory. (For details see Chapter III.4.1.) The third diplomatic marriage in question was between Šu-Suen's daughter and the Simanum ruling family. Some scholars have speculated from the text that Simanum might have rebelled in the third year of Šu-Suen's reign. Šu-Suen thus defeated Simanum in order to protect his daughter's ruling family.⁴⁶⁶ To some extent, it can be said that the diplomatic marriage between Šu-Suen and Simanum gave him the legal authority to intervene in the Simanum conflict. There was also some interesting diplomatic activity between Ur and Ninua in the third year of Šu-Suen's reign. Ninua's governor first took 80 guards to the temple of Inanna in Nippur to take an oath, and then came to Ešnunna to receive food supplies for more than one hundred people. These behaviors have been defined as "state visits" in previous studies. As for the purpose of the Ninua governor's "state visit", some speculate that it may have been to help Šu-Suen's military operations in Simanum or perhaps to strengthen the alliance on the basis of an already formed diplomatic marriage.⁴⁶⁷ The last diplomatic marriage to be discussed took place during Ibbi-Suen's reign. There was a war between Ur and Zabšali in the seventh year of Šu-Suen's reign, so Ibbi-Suen married his daughter to the governor of Zabšali to restore peace between the two sides. Such peace was important to the waning power of the Ur III Dynasty. However, without the guarantee of great state power and military might, the limited role of diplomatic marriage could not prevent the final collapse of the Ur III Dynasty.

IV.3) Conclusion

This chapter mainly discussed the influence of war on society during the Ur III period. The first issue to be discussed was the relationship between war and the economy. This part first discussed the formation process and characteristics of the

⁴⁶⁶ Piotr Michalowski, "The Bride of Simanum", *JAOS*, vol. 95, no. 4 (October - December 1975), pp. 716-719.

⁴⁶⁷ Robert M. Whiting, "Tiš-atal of Nineveh and Babati, Uncle of Šu-Sin", *JCS*, vol. 28, no. 3 (July 1976), p. 178; Richard L. Zettler, "Tišatal and Nineveh at the End of the 3rd Millennium BCE", in Ann K. Guinan, Maria deJ. Ellis, A. J. Ferrara, Sally M. Freedman, Matthew T. Rutz, Leonhard Sassmannshausen, Steve Tinney and M.W. Waters (eds.), *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty*, CM 31, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006, pp. 503-514.

economic system of the Ur III Dynasty, especially the central economic system. It was speculated that the military conflict between Ur and Lagaš during the Uruk V Dynasty was probably a struggle over Persian Gulf trade rights. The settlement of this conflict probably laid the foundation for the establishment and development of the economic system of the Ur III Dynasty. After Ur-Nammu's death, Šulgi succeeded to the throne and spent more than two decades trying to control more of the local economic system. Finally, in the 26th year of his reign, the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty was established. Relying on the existing temple economic system and under the influence of war and other factors, the central economic system of the kingdom gradually matured. It was not until the 39th year of Šulgi's reign that the formal establishment of Puzriš-Dagan marked the beginning of a new era of more professional management of the kingdom's central economic system. Based on available textual and archaeological evidence, this study speculated that the central institutions of Puzriš-Dagan may have constituted an administrative complex. It is also likely that Puzriš-Dagan was a central economic system covering the whole country consisting of the central institution, affiliated institutions (represented by Naqabtum), and local branches. After a brief discussion and analysis of the central economic system of the Ur III period, the final section answered the three questions initially posed. Among the Puzriš-Dagan archives, the booty texts and the two taxation systems imposed on the core areas and the periphery regions provide clues to the economic impact of war.

In the second part, this study took the "royal gift seals" as the entry point to briefly analyze the characteristics of political forms during the Ur III period. After analyzing some representative seal holders, this part began to discuss the relationship between politics and war in the Ur III period. In short, strong military power not only ensured the success of the king's reform and development of the political system domestically but also provided strong support for the Ur III Dynasty to control key frontier areas.

The third part discussed the religion and culture of the Ur III period and analyzed the possible relationships between them and war. By discussing the self-deification of

the king during his lifetime and the role of royal religious women as lukur, it demonstrated that the religious innovations of Ur III may have strengthened the king's control over the military system. War also facilitated the spread of Sumerian culture around ancient Mesopotamia. With the possible help of military factors, the culture of the Ur III period was more closely linked to that of earlier periods than ever before. War may also have relatively strengthened people's consciousness of their country and nationality.

The fourth part focused on diplomatic marriage. Through the analysis of some important diplomatic marriages and their possible influence, this part revealed how diplomatic marriages in the Ur III period were coordinated with war and balanced the relationship between war and peace.

All in all, the interaction between war and the above factors moved the future development of ancient Mesopotamia towards a wider compass of union and unity. It is worth mentioning that war also has a similar mutual influence on other aspects of a society, such as technology, but this was not discussed in this chapter due to the lack of relevant materials.

Chapter V General Conclusion

This study investigates the history and development of the Ur III state from a military perspective. It analyzes some aspects of the conduct and consequences of wars in the Ur III period, through a combination with textual and archaeological data. Rather than chronologically enumerating every conflict involving the Ur III rulers, the study focuses on highlighting the relationship between wars and the historical development of the Ur III Dynasty through some important time nodes affected by wars. The aim is to explore the factors that interact with war. In addition to traditional economic, political, religious and cultural factors, this study also adds diplomacy and policy towards foreigners as an enrichment of the pluralistic investigation.

After a brief introduction to the historical background of the Ur III Dynasty, chapter I attempts to identify and analyze the geographical and environmental factors of warfare at that time, and how these factors influenced the historical development of the Ur III state. Though the region under the political authority of Ur III was changing as a result of socioeconomic development, the core domain of the kingdom had not changed a lot. Given the geographical barriers of sea and desert in the south and west of the kingdom, the wars in which Ur III engaged took place mainly to the north and northeast. The Mesopotamian plain experienced a prolonged period of drought from ca. 2300 BC to ca. 1700 BC. Climate and environmental change are conjectured to have been the catalyst for the Amorite attack, the construction of the Martu Wall, and even the final collapse of Ur III.⁴⁶⁸

Chapter II presents an examination of six factors related to war during the Ur III period, including armament, logistics, military ceremony, booty, military building and hostile forces. Among the armaments, including bows, arrows, protective equipment, chariots and warships, the “šū-lugal” weapons are discussed in detail. By studying texts relevant to the “šū-lugal” weapons, the chapter presents an analysis of the making process and the composition of bronze weapons in the Ur III period. It is

⁴⁶⁸ Minna L. Silver, “Climate Change, the Mardu Wall, and the Fall of Ur”, in Olga Drewnowska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Warsaw, 21-25 July 2014*, RAI 60, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2017, pp. 287-288.

argued that the Sumerians of the Ur III period had relatively mature and standardized technologies of metallurgy, as well as a sophisticated management system for smelting the raw materials used in bronze, forging bronze weapons, and recycling bronze fragments. Moreover, parts composed of different materials were stored in a modular and specialized form.

The discussion of logistics is focused on the official Dayyānu-mišar and the arsenals, the use of animals in the army, and army provisions. The textual study of the Dayyānu-mišar reveals that there was a relatively complete set of standards for the storage of weapons in the Ur III period, at least in the royal arsenal. The stored weapons would be disassembled into parts and then stored according to the characteristics of their materials. When these weapons were needed, they would be assembled very quickly, indicating the existence of a relatively standardized process for management. When it comes to the military uses of animals, they served the usual functions of providing food and transportation. Dogs were employed for guarding and hunting, and were managed by the government and army in a highly specialized way. The two main classes of army provisions in Ur III were rations assigned to soldiers or messengers for specific tasks, and rations allocated to the army for military operations.

The military ceremonies of Ur III included expedition ceremonies and triumphal ceremonies. Before going to war, it is likely that the Ur III kings would have turned to religious ceremonies associated with powerful ancestral deities, including Enlil and Inanna, to seek divine support. There are few records of the army's triumphal ceremonies. It seems that the leaders of the defeated area, as well as their families, would be captured, shackled and blindfolded, and taken to the temple. The victorious Ur III ruler would put his foot on their necks and execute them in the religious ceremony as a tribute to the gods.

Changes in the variety and quantity of booty over time reflected the development of the Ur III Dynasty from prosperity to decline. Military buildings, special military fortresses and cities are speculated to have been held under the leadership of a general, but evidence for this is lacking. City walls used for military defense have been

identified through archaeological excavation, with the most representative one being the Martu Wall. The Martu Wall is reminiscent of the Great Wall built by the ancient Chinese, so a brief comparison is made between the two.

The hostile forces which were influential during Ur III can be divided into external hostile forces and internal separatist forces. The external threats came mainly from the Gutians, Amorites and Elamites, though the Gutians' threat had been largely swept away by the early days of the Ur III Dynasty. Neither the Amorites nor the Elamites had sufficient military strength to defeat or destroy Ur, but they often caused problems on the borders of the kingdom. Hence, it is suggested in this study that the Elamites' military campaign to destroy Ur may have been supported by local Sumerian rulers. Although the Ur kings' strategies for suppressing the separatist forces of local rulers achieved some success, the rebellion of Išbi-Erra ended the reign of the dynasty.

Chapter III primarily concerns data obtained from the analysis of royal inscriptions. Such royal inscriptions offer informative details on the nature of warfare, and a chronological study of the conflicts mentioned in these texts is argued to allow reconstruction of changes and developments in war strategies in the period.

Ur-Nammu was the general of Ur under Utu-hegal, and played an important role in the expulsion of the Gutians. Based on *The Sumerian King List*, some speculations are made about the process by which Ur-Nammu successfully inherited the power of Utu-hegal and established the Ur III Dynasty. Based on extant year names and hymns of Ur-Nammu, it is evident that during the 18 years of his reign, war brought great gains to the king and his dynasty, but it ultimately led to his tragic death in battle. The literary composition of the *Death of Ur-Nammu* included realistic content, which was likely to reflect the ideological construction of the cult of his successor, Šulgi.

The wars that took place during Šulgi's reign were divided into the northern and eastern wars. In Šulgi's first 20 year names, there is little mention of war. However, based on the *Death of Ur-Nammu*, this study speculates that, in the early years of Šulgi's reign, he may have been obliged to suppress internal rebel forces. Much of the religious activity that took place during this period can be seen, in part, as a sign that

this suppression of rebellion was successful. There were probably also wars with foreign countries, but the symbolism of unification was less important than internal repression in this period. Then, according to the contents of Šulgi's hymns B, O and D, in his dealings with the eastern enemy, Šulgi initially used the policy of political marriages to control and subdue his political adversaries. Once the enemy in the north had been dealt with, the threat from the east was quickly handled using military force.

The military activities of Amar-Suen and Šu-Suen are discussed together. Overall, the study of the two kings provides a clear view of the transformation of the military strategy. During these reigns, the Ur III Dynasty changed its aggressive military model to one of defense. The reasons for this change are complex, but generally, it was the result of challenges to the capacity for governance posed by expansion during the reigns of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi.

For the military actions of Ibbi-Suen, due to the scarcity of records, foreign relations in the first 14 years of his reign are used as the entry point to discuss some of the possible military engagements with foreign forces. The foreign relationships are divided into three types, based on the different strategies adopted by the king in response to threats from the north, east and south. It is interesting to note, however, that many of Ibbi-Suen's military and political actions were stilted imitations of Šulgi.

Ur III rulers were keen to have direct control over their conquered territories in the north, but the local powers there were too powerful to be destroyed. Therefore, the contest for leadership with the local ruling family led to much of the armed conflict in the north. In the east, Ibbi-Suen tried to maintain relations with foreign powers by means of political marriage, but, inspired by the rebellion in the north, the eastern powers also saw an opportunity to elude control. Eventually, Ibbi-Suen lost his hegemony over the southern powers in the Persian Gulf, leading to a political crisis and total economic collapse. Following the rapid decline of the central government, an alternative emerged in the form of local forces. One of the most notable of these was the rebellion launched by Išbi-Erra, who established the foundation of the Isin Dynasty.

In general, the Ur III Dynasty was a hegemonic state based on military power,

with other elements, such as politics, diplomacy, and trade, as supplementary pillars. Certain economic, political, religious and cultural strategies may have existed in the arsenal of the Ur III Dynasty for post-occupation administration. Through three representative examples selected from the Persian Gulf, Elam and the northern frontier regions, this study explores the possible different management policies of Ur III following military conquest, and the final effects on the territories under their occupation. The domestic political and economic crisis of the state affected its military presence, leading to gradual disengagement of the external forces that had previously been subservient, which then worsened the existing problems and led to the fall of the dynasty. Through this discussion, it is possible to see how war shaped Ur III, but how the country subsequently lost itself in wars and eventually collapsed.

Through the analysis detailed in Chapter IV, the interaction can be observed between war and economic, political and other social factors in the Ur III period. For the relationship between war and economy, the characteristics of the central economic system of the Ur III Dynasty are discussed, together with the process by which it was formed. It seems likely that, in the Uruk V Dynasty, Ur and Lagaš were vying for control of the trade in the Persian Gulf. The settlement of this conflict probably laid the foundation for the establishment of the economic system of Ur III. Relying on the existing temple economic system and under the influence of war, the central economic system of the kingdom gradually matured, marked by the formal establishment of the Puzriš-Dagan in the 39th year of Šulgi. It is likely that the Puzriš-Dagan was an administrative complex covering the whole country, consisting of four main offices, with affiliated institutions (represented by Naqabtum) and local branches. Among the Puzriš-Dagan archives, booty texts and records of the two taxation systems imposed on core areas and peripheral regions directly reveal the economic impact of war.

The characteristics of political forms during the Ur III period can also be studied from the so-called “royal gift seals” of the period. By analyzing some of the representative seal holders, it can be deduced that strong military power not only ensured the domestic development of the political system but also provided strong support for control of the key frontier areas.

In order to assess the impact of war on religion and culture, special attention is devoted to the concept of royal self-deification in the Ur III period, and the religious roles associated with the members of the court in general. It is argued that the religious innovations of Ur III may have strengthened the king's control over the military system. With the possible help of the military factors, the culture of the Ur III period was more historical and inherited than ever before. The most interesting aspect of this part is that it shows how war may have shaped consciousness of the nation and nationality. The discussion of some important diplomatic marriages reveals how diplomacy in the Ur III period was coordinated with the war effort in general.

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