

**THE READING OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN LOGOGRAM  
LÚ.SIMUG.KUG.GI “GOLDSMITH”**

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The appearance of two comprehensive Akkadian dictionaries has revolutionized Assyriological studies, but sometimes the previous generations (or some individuals among them) seem to have known better than the well-equipped present generation. A case in point is the entry *šarrapu* “Silberschmied” in Bezold, *Glossar*, p. 240a, which is not found in any other Akkadian dictionary, earlier<sup>1</sup> or later. *CAD* Š (1961) briefly notes on p. 114a: “\**šarrapu* (Bezold *Glossar* 240a) see *šārip dušē*”. No reference to \**šarrapu* is made under the latter entry (p. 110b), but one finds a word occurring in *ADD* 626 = 806, r. 4 and previously read *zarabbu* in *CAD* Z (1961), corrected there into “LÚ *ša-rip<sub>x</sub>* (RAB) *d[u<sub>8</sub>-ši-e]*”. *AHw* Lfg. 12 (1974), accepting the correction, does not even bother to refer to the deleted lemma, and no \**šarrapu* is found in the *Nachträge* to *AHw* included in Lfg. 16 (1981).

Against this background, it is interesting to find the following entry in D.J. Wiseman’s and J.V. Kinnier Wilson’s preliminary catalogue of the 1950 Nimrud texts in Iraq 13 (1953), pp. 102ff.: “(amēl) *šarrapu* (SIMUG.GUŠKIN), ‘goldsmith’, [ND] 423, 7” (index, p. 122). No justification is given for the reading, which pops up a few years later in B. Parker’s catalogue of Nabû temple texts in Iraq 19 (1957), pp. 125ff. (cf. p. 127 *ad* ND 5447, 10, and index, p. 137), again without any justification or comment.

Interestingly, in Parker’s edition of BT 101 (Iraq 25 [1963], p. 90), completed after the appearance of *CAD* Š, the reading *šarrapu* is no longer maintained. Evidently the authority of the dictionary had crushed whatever ideas Miss Parker may have earlier harbored about the reading of the logogram. The reading *šarrapu* does not figure in J.N. Postgate’s (1973) edition of ND 423 (*GPA* no. 118) either, where the word “goldsmith” is given in logographic transliteration (LÚ.SIMUG GUŠKIN) only. From the space

<sup>1</sup>) Cf. Delitzsch, *AHW* (1896), p. 574b, and Muss-Arnolt, *Handwörterbuch*, (1905), p. 896.

between the components of the logogram and the glossary entry in Postgate, *FNALD* (1976), p. 183b, it is clear that the intended reading was *nappāh hurāši*. This of course agrees with the position of *AHW* (p. 739a) and *CAD* (N/1, p. 309), where all attestations of <sup>LÚ</sup>SIMUG KUG.GI are listed under *nappahu*. And it of course also agrees with today's Assyriological common opinion. Compare simply Borger, *ABZ* (1981), p. 140 (under 338 SIMUG), as well as K. Deller, *AfO* 32 (1985), p. 50, and O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur II* (1986), p. 132, both with a space between SIMUG and KUG.GI clearly implying the reading *nappāh hurāši*.

But is the reading *šarrāpu* earlier suggested for this logogram really out of the question? One should note that the passage in *ADD* 626 = 806 containing the word "zarabbu", corrected into *šārip d[ušē]* in *CAD* Š, p. 110b, is not damaged at all; on the contrary, the signs in question, <sup>LÚ</sup>ZA-rab-bi, are perfectly preserved and their reading is not in doubt, as can be easily seen from the two (independently made) copies by Johns. Hence the 'correction' suggested in *CAD* is not acceptable. Moreover, there is no justification whatsoever in Neo-Assyrian for a syllabic value RAB = /rip/ posited by the 'corrector'. One must therefore take a more serious look at the the passage and its implications.

*ADD* 626 (= 806) is an administrative document listing landed property (field and orchards) sold to "servants" (ARAD<sup>MES</sup>) of government officials under Tiglath-pileser III (Obv. 1-6), Shalmaneser V (Obv. 7-12) and the ruling king (Obv. 13-Rev. 8), who must be Sargon II. The reverse, clearly pertaining to the reign of the ruling king, details silver and copper dues collected from five individuals identified by name and profession. One of these is identified as "Nabūwa the goldsmith" (<sup>Id</sup>PA-u-a SIMUG.KUG.GI, r. 13). A person with the same name, this time identified as <sup>LÚ</sup>ZA-rab-bi, figures among the buyers of land in the preceding section (r. 4).

Since both sections of the text pertain to the same reign, the two entries are contemporary and could accordingly pertain to the same individual. <sup>LÚ</sup>ZA-rab-bi would then be a syllabic spelling of SIMUG.KUG.GI<sup>2</sup>. This seems plausible in view of Syr. *šarrāpa* "refiner of silver" (Payne Smith, p.485b, *nomen professionis* from *šrp* "to refine, purge") and Bibl. *šôrēp* "gold-, silversmith" (Köhler-Baumgartner, p. 817b,

<sup>2</sup>) Alternation of syllabic and logographic spellings, even within the same text, is a feature well attested in Neo-Assyrian, note e.g. the spellings of "groom" in *ADD* 852 (<sup>LÚ</sup>GIS<sup>S</sup>GIGIR in col. I, 6, <sup>LÚ</sup>su-sa-ni/nu in I, 2', and rev. II, 2, and mere *su* in I, 8 and 10). The equation <sup>LÚ</sup>GIS<sup>S</sup>GIGIR = <sup>LÚ</sup>su-sa-nu tentatively proposed by me in *AOAT* 6 (1970), p. 319, *JSS* 21 (1976), p. 172, and *OLZ* 74 (1979), col. 35a, can now be considered certain, as the logographic and syllabic spellings occur as orthographic variants in different manuscripts of a cultic commentary (*LKA* 71 // *TIM* 9, 59):

<sup>LÚ</sup> GIS <sup>S</sup> GI]GIR	<sup>d</sup> EN <sup>LÚ</sup> SAL <sup>d</sup> EN.LÍL	<i>LKA</i> 71, 8
<sup>LÚ</sup> su-sa- <sup>r</sup> nu <sup>r</sup>	<sup>d</sup> EN <sup>LÚ</sup> SAL <sup>d</sup> EN.[LÍL]	<i>TIM</i> 9, 59, 11.

participle of *šrp* “to smelt, refine”). <sup>LÚ</sup>ZA-*rab-bi* would then have to be read <sup>LÚ</sup>ša-*rab-bi* and interpreted as a variant of /*\*šarrāpu*/, a *nomen professionis* from *šarāpu* “to refine metals (gold, etc.) by firing” (*CAD* Š, p. 102, cf. MA *šarpu* “silver”), featuring three well-attested phonological features of Neo-Assyrian: (1) secondary voicing of a stop in voiced root environment (*šarrāpu* → *šarrābu*<sup>3</sup>; (2) quantity metathesis (*šarrābu* → *šarrabbu*)<sup>4</sup>, and (3) neutralization of gemination before a stressed syllable ending in a geminate (*šarrabbu* → *šarabbu*)<sup>5</sup>.

The possibility that /*šarrāpu*/ might be the Neo-Assyrian reading of (<sup>LÚ</sup>)SIMUG.KUG.GI had occurred to me on the basis of the *ADD* 626 passage as long as 22 years ago<sup>6</sup>, but in the absence of further evidence it seemed (despite the Syriac and Biblical parallels) too tenuous to be seriously advocated. I suspect that the *šarrapu* entry in Bezold, *Glossar*, and the readings of Wiseman, Kinnier Wilson and Parker in Iraq were likewise based on the *ADD* passage, and that the latter decided to reverse their opinions because they too felt that the evidence was too tenuous.

In fact, however, additional evidence for the reading <sup>LÚ</sup>SIMUG.KUG.GI = /*šarrāpu*/ has been available, albeit in disguised form, for over twenty years! In *Orientalia* 37 (1968), pp. 81ff., E. Klengel-Brandt published a fragment of a terracotta Pazuzu head from Aššur (Ass 169 = VA 5803) bearing the following inscription in Neo-Assyrian characters: “This is the head of Pazuzu which Gabbu-ilāni-ēreš the goldsmith (SIMUG.KUG.GI) and prophet (*za-[a]b-bu*) of the god Aššur made with the skill of his hands and keeps displaying to the people”.

A study of the photograph published on pl. VII reveals that reading the word in line 3 as *zabbu* “prophet, ecstatic” is out of the question. The second sign ends in two verticals and can thus (also judging from the copy on p. 81) only be DA or RA. Since the former reading makes no sense (no root *z/s-d/ṭ-b/p* exists in Akkadian), the only feasible reading is *ša-ra-b/pu*. Hence in Ass 169 we have another Neo-Assyrian example of a person identified both as SIMUG.KUG.GI and /*šarrāpu*/, and this time there is no doubt whatsoever about his identity.

Since *šarrāpu* (etymologically) means “refiner, smelter”, it could of course be speculated that *ša-ra-pu* in Ass 169 is not a syllabic spelling but a synonym of SIMUG.KUG.GI. However, this possibility is practically excluded by *ADD* 626, as it is extremely unlikely that an administrative document would identify a person by two

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *turtānu* ~ *turtannu*, *hu-šab-bu* *ADD* 1252, 17, *dēnu* ~ *de-en-nu* *ADD* 397, r. 3', out of many similar examples.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e.g., *za-ri-pi* *GPA* 35, 12 ~ *za-ri-bi* *ADD* 386, 10, root *zrp*; *ir-ti-di-bi* *ABL* 251, 19, beside *ri-di-pi* *ibid.*, 17, root *rdp*; *a-ra-šib-bi* *NL* 69, r. 4', root *ršp*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. my note in *Festschrift Reiner* (*AOS* 67, 1987), p. 273<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *AOAT* 6, p. 321, s.v. *šarrāpu*.

aspects/descriptions of an occupation rather than a single occupational title. Hence in *ADD* 626 at least *šarrāpu* is best taken as the Neo-Assyrian reading of SIMUG.KUG.GI<sup>7</sup>, and this interpretation seems likeliest in Ass 169 too. Why should Gabbu-ilāni-ēreš have been a goldsmith by profession but at the same time a “(metal) refiner/smelter” of Aššur? The latter title does not mean that when serving Aššur, he changed from a goldsmith into a smelter, but simply indicates professional affiliation with the temple of Aššur<sup>8</sup>. The co-occurrence of a syllabic and a logographic spelling (*ša-ra-pu* and SIMUG.KUG.GI) in the same context can be easily explained as a stylistic device trying to mask the repetition of identical words in two subsequent lines.

Goldsmiths in present-day Iraq produce both gold and silver artifacts, refining their working materials themselves. The article *kuttimmu* in *CAD* K, pp. 608-609, makes it plain that the same situation has prevailed in Mesopotamia from the earliest times on. Thus “goldsmiths” not only also were “silversmiths”, but “refiners” and “smelters” of precious metals *par excellence*. This explains why there was no logogram SIMUG.KUG.UD “silversmith” in cuneiform and why “smelter” could become a word for “gold- and silversmith” both in Hebrew and in Assyrian.

<sup>7</sup>) Many Neo-Assyrian logograms had more than one current reading, e.g. <sup>GI</sup>SIGIR (= *mugirru* or *narkabtu*), KASKAL (*hulu* or *harrānu*).

<sup>8</sup>) Compare, e.g., Kišir-Aššur, exorcist of the Aššur temple (Hunger, *Kolophone*, pp. 68ff.), and Marduk-zeru-iddina the chanter (*kalû*) of Sin and the king (*ibid.*, p. 136).