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Urmes Appointed, Dismissed, and Re-appointed as Governor of Irisaĝrig: A Model Case of Royal Interventions and Their Administrative Implementation

The collection of tablets looted in Irisaĝrig stems from the palace of its governors and thus reflects their history from Amar-Suena's 7th regnal year onwards. The documentation starts with the dismissal of Urmes as governor, a son-in-law of Amar-Suena, whom the king had installed earlier in his reign. Already twenty months later, directly after the death of Amar-Suena, his successor Šu-Suen re-appointed Urmes again. These royal interventions reflect the special role of Irisaĝrig in the Ur III state, whereas the officials carefully documented the administrative implementation of the changes in office.¹

1 The 'Royal City' of Irisaĝrig/Āl-šarrākī and its Tablet Collection

Irisaĝrig, a city name which may often have been read in Akkadian as *Āl-šarrākī*, meaning "City of the (Divine) Donors" (AHw. 1187; cf. CAD Š/2, 68), appears in textual sources since the Fara period (FTP 78 rev. i 1).² Under the Third Dynasty

¹ Observations on the historical situation of the Irisaĝrig collections stem from research in the DFG-ANR project i3MesopOil (directed together with G. Chambon, Paris); see the summary at <https://www.i3-mesop-oil.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/archive/ur-iii-irisagrig/>, Sallaberger (ed.) 2020–2023, based on results from a seminar in the winter semester 2019/20. I am most grateful for the invitation to Bologna, the fruitful discussion there, and the careful editorial work of Palmiro Notizia and Manuel Molina, the latter pointing out some further references. The article could not have been written without the great work on the digital collections *BDTNS* by Manuel Molina and *Writing Sumerian* by Marc Elsässer (<https://corpus.writing-sumerian.assyriologie.uni-muenchen.de/#/about>).

Abbreviations of textual references basically follow *BDTNS* (<https://bdtns.cesga.es>, last accessed 04/12/2025).

² The presence of the place name *iri-saĝ-rig*^{ki} (together with *Adab* and *Umma*) in this text from the University Museum of Philadelphia excavations at Fara, a text related to those from the DOG excavations (Martin et al. 2001: 60) excludes the assumption of an alternative orthography of the

of Ur, the city of Irisağrig represented the capital of a province like other formerly independent cities and their states. Within the twenty provinces of the Babylonian alluvial plain (more precisely 19 or 21, Sharlach 2008: 83), Irisağrig had a special status because of its close connections to the crown. Irisağrig certainly was not considered a capital with the same rank as Ur, Uruk, or Nippur, the latter with the royal centers of Puzriš-Dagān and Tummal. However, Irisağrig was the destination of regular royal journeys (§2) and partly governed by one of the highest officials of the empire, and the governor (**ensi**₂) Urmes, the focus of this article, was apparently married to a royal princess (§3).

When traveling on foot from Sumer to the east, one passed Irisağrig and then reached Dēr at the eastern border of the alluvial plain, the gateway to the Diyala region, Simurru and Karaḥar, and to Susa, and from there to other regions in the Zagros (Owen 2013, I: 130–64; Brunke 2013; Steinkeller 2013; Ghobadizadeh and Sallaberger 2023: 22–24). The royal prince Šu-Suen acted as “general of Dēr,” as attested by the seal of a scribe who rolled it on a tablet in the same month that Šu-Suen became king of Ur (in AS 9/iii, BDTNS 020163 = *Mesopotamia* 12: 92 A; Verkinderen 2006). This route through Irisağrig was chosen routinely by royal messengers, and the royal connections of both Irisağrig and Dēr provided the best support for their journeys (Michalowski 2013b).

Much information on Irisağrig became available with the publication of tablets that were looted in the aftermath of the US-led invasion of 2003 from a site east of Nippur, perhaps Al-Wilaya or another site in the region of Tulūl al-Baqarāt (Milano 2023: 52; Viano this volume). The 3,000 Irisağrig tablets known today stem overwhelmingly from the fifteen years from Amar-Suena 7 (2038 BCE) through the reign of Šu-Suen (2035–2027 BCE) to the first month of Ibbi-Suen 4 (2023 BCE), with only a handful of earlier texts.

In economic terms, the looted Irisağrig texts hardly deal with the details of primary production, agriculture, and husbandry, a main concern of the tablet collections found at Ġirsu or Umma (see Notizia, this volume). Characteristically, most transfers of animals known from Irisağrig are not concerned with herding management but are receipts of the fattener who prepared them for slaughter. The kitchen, as well as the workshops of the craftsmen, surely stand at the center of the Irisağrig documentation (for the latter see Molina, this volume). The highest number of persons appearing in the texts are the female and male workers in the workshops and kitchen, the guests including the royal messengers represented a much smaller, but relevant group of persons populating the governor’s palace (see Li 2021 and Li,

city’s name as **e₂-nu-zuḥ** (in TSŠ 320) at Fara and its interpretation as “City of Thieves” as proposed by Steinkeller (2024: 11).

Table 1: Sacrifices and donations to Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig from royal holdings.

Date	Object	Act	Reference
Š 33/ii	1 talent of copper	to Ninġursaġa, brought in via Esaġdana Nibru; in Irišaġrig	HSSt 68: 257
Š 33/viii	20 sheep	consignment (sa₂-du₁₁) for Ninġursaġa to Irišaġrig	Nisaba 9: 142 (Umma)
Š 46/iv/20	4 fattened sheep	NE.NE- ġar ritual of Ninġursaġa within Irišaġrig, commissioner: zabar-dab₅	BCT 1: 66
Š 47/vii/19	10 sheep	Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig; commissioner: Nanše-adgal	BPOA 7: 2868
AS 1/viii/3	4 black sheep	for Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig, ġiri₃ PN “runner” (lu₂ kaš₄)	AUCT 2: 179
AS 2/xi/10	130 black sheep	“for ibex horns” (a₂-dara₄-še₃ , unclear), dedication (a-ru-a) to Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig, presence of the king (lugal ku₄-ra)	Nisaba 33: 1144
AS 4/vi/22	600 (or 70) black sheep	dedication (a-ri-a) to Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig; from a delivery of the troops of Sabum	JCS 32: 172 no. 2
IS 1/iii/20	1 grass-fed sheep	socle (para₁₀) of Ninġursaġa at the shore (gu₂) of the Tabbi-Mama canal	YBC 15162 (BDTNS 062521) obv. 7
date lost	x lambs	Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig	Nisaba 8: 21 obv. ii'

this volume). The governor of Irišaġrig can be identified as the nominal leader of the institution that issued the administrative tablets.³

The Irišaġrig tablets, therefore, represent the remains from the governor's palace at Irišaġrig, focusing on secondary production. Thus, the collection differs substantially from the provincial archives of Ġirsu and Umma with their focus on primary production; Garšana in the Umma province was not the seat of a governor (**ensi₂**) and therefore handled more modest materials and did not host royal guests very often. The best comparisons to the collection of Irišaġrig tablets are provided by the Sargonic archives of the governor's palace at Adab (Molina 2014; Molina 2019), and to a lesser extent the archive of Gudea's palace at Ġirsu (Lehmann 2016; Maiocchi and Visicato 2020).

The city of Irišaġrig was situated close to Keš, the age-old sanctuary of the mother goddess, and housed another temple of hers. To this “Ninġursaġa of Irišaġrig,” animals were sacrificed or donated from the royal herds managed at Puzriš-Dagān, and she also received a donation of copper (Table 1).

³ The description of the archive applies the STEP formula (space, time, economy, people) proposed by Sallaberger (in print).

2 Royal Presence in Irišaĝrig

One case of royal sacrifices to Ninĥursaĝa listed in Table 1 noted the presence of the king at the ritual (AS 2/xi/10). But royal visits to Irišaĝrig happened more often, as attested in tablets both from Esaĝdana Nibru/Puzriš-Daĝān and from Irišaĝrig itself. The Puzriš-Daĝān references span the time from Šulgi 40 to Šu-Suen 9 and stem from the “early Drehem series” of Lady Šulgi-simti and the animal and treasure files of the royal organization (Table 2). They list animals for slaughter or silver rings as gifts for the trip or for welcoming the king. Most often the texts note high numbers of oxen and sheep to be placed on the boats, no doubt for the crew and guards accompanying the king to and from Irišaĝrig (as explicitly mentioned in the reference with the fragmentary date Nisaba 8: 23, Table 2). Although this record is certainly incomplete, it already indicates that the Ur III kings traveled frequently to Irišaĝrig, which in this regard may be ranked in the top group of cities with royal presence after the three capitals. From the first year of Amar-Suena onwards, the royal visits at Irišaĝrig dated to the eleventh and third months of the year, February and June, before and after the harvest, during months with no royal festivals in Nippur, Ur, or Uruk. This calendrical setting allowed the king to come regularly to Irišaĝrig, independent of other obligations. The calendrical distribution is, as we will see, confirmed by the Irišaĝrig evidence.

Royal visits were instrumental in royal representation, and the Ur III kings may have considered the city of Irišaĝrig of primary importance in this regard. The many royal messengers that passed by on their journeys towards the Diyala, Susa, and the Zagros regions, made the city a hub of the diplomatic and commercial networks of the Ur III state. This was even more relevant since most of Ur’s interests were (willingly and/or unwillingly) directed towards the east and hardly to the north or northwest. At such a place the king would have met messengers and dignitaries in person, to receive their reports and to instruct them.

The royal visits are reflected in much greater detail in the textual record from Irišaĝrig over its whole runtime, starting with a high density in Amar-Suena 7/vi and continuing to Ibbi-Suen 4/i. As noted above, the texts stem from the governor’s palace at Irišaĝrig, and here the arrival and stay of the king were well prepared.

King Amar-Suena visited Irišaĝrig thrice, in AS 7/xi, in AS 8/iii, and again in AS 8/xi; he died in AS 9/ii, thus before a possible visit in AS 9/iii. His successors Šu-Suen and Ibbi-Suen continued the visits to Irišaĝrig in months iii and xi until Ibbi-Suen’s

Table 2: Royal presence at Irišaĝrig as attested in documents from Esaĝdana Nibru/Puzriš-Dagān in chronological order.

Date	Objects	Royal presence in translation	in Sumerian	Reference
Š 40/ix/12	birds	when the king came to Irišaĝrig	u₄ lugal I.^{ki}-še₃ ĝen-na	TCUR 4 obv. 4
Š 41/viii/9	1 fattened female kid	for the consumption of the king when he came from Irišaĝrig	ṛniĝ₂^ṛ-gu₇ lugal-še₃ I.-ta ĝen-na	BDTNS 59452/ Hermitage 3 94 obv. 2
Š 42/x/13	2 fattened sheep	for the banquet of the king when he delivered them from Irišaĝrig	kaš-de₂-a lugal u₄ I.^{ki}-ta mu-ku_x(DU)-ra	TRU 284 obv. 2
Š 46/xii/20	1 pig, 1 goose	for the consumption of My Lady in Irišaĝrig	niĝ₂-gu₇, nin-ĝa₂-še₃ ša₃ I.^{ki}	Nisaba 33: 614 obv. 3–4
AS 1/iii/22	30 cattle, 55 sheep	for the guards when the king came from Irišaĝrig	mu aga₃-us₂-e-ne-še₃ [u₄] ṛlugal^ṛ I.^{ki}-ta i₃-im-ĝen-na	MVN 15: 58 rev. 9–10
AS 1/xi	silver rings	when My Lord drank beer in Šulgi's Brewery; in Irišaĝrig	u₄ lugal-ĝu₁₀ e₂-babir₂ ṛsul-ge-ra-ka {še₃} kaš i₃-naĝ-ĝa₂-ṛa^ṛ	AUCT 1: 176 obv. 2–3
AS 2/xi/10	black sheep	dedication to Ninĥursaĝa, presence of the king	see Table 1	Nisaba 33: 1144
AS 4/iii	2+2 silver rings	for a vizier bringing greetings of Abī-simti from Uruk; and in the palace; in Irišaĝrig	PN sugal₇, mu silim-ma a-bi₂-si₂-im-ti unu^{ki}-ta mu-de₆-a-še₃ . . . ša₃ e₂-gal-še₃	JCS 10: 30 no. 10 obv. 2–6
AS 5/xi/7	31 goats	when the king was going to Irišaĝrig it was placed on the boat	lugal I.^{ki}-še₃ du-ne₂ ma₂-a ba-a-ĝa₂-ar	OIP 121: 404 obv. 3–4
AS 8/xi	animals	account made in Irišaĝrig, including “from the royal boat”	ma₂ lugal-ta; niĝ₂-ka₉-aka I.^{ki}	PDT 1: 347 obv. 4
ŠS 1/iii/19	21 sheep & goats	when the king was going to Irišaĝrig it was placed on the boat	lugal I.^{ki}-še₃ du-ne₂ ma₂-a ba-a-ĝa₂-ar	Ontario 1: 148 obv. 7
ŠS 2/xi/8	2 cattle	when the king was going to Irišaĝrig it was placed on the boat	lugal I.^{ki}-še₃ du-ne₂ ma₂-a ba-a-ĝar	HSSt 68: 505 obv. 1
ŠS 7/iii/18	4 cattle, 10 sheep	when the king was going to Irišaĝrig	lugal I.^{ki}-še₃ du-ne₂	Muséon 88: no. 4 obv. 5

Table 2 (continued)

Date	Objects	Royal presence in translation	in Sumerian	Reference
ŠS 8/iii/20	3 cattle, 15 sheep	when the king was going to Irisaĝrig it was placed on the boat	lugal I. ^{ki} -še ₃ du-ne ₂ ma ₂ -a ba-a-ĝa ₂ -ar	TRU 341 rev. 4–5
ŠS 9/iii/24	2 sheep	for Haršitum, when the king went to Irisaĝrig	u ₄ lugal I. ^{ki} -še ₃ i ₃ -ĝen-na	YOS 4: 217 rev. 4
IS 1/iii/20	[n] sheep	for Nanna, rite in the palace in Irisaĝrig, presence of the king	^d nanna siškur ₂ ša ₃ e ₂ -gal ša ₃ I. ^{ki} lugal ku ₄ -ra	YBC 15162 (BDTNS 062521) obv. 1–6
[]/[]/23	4 cattle, 39 sheep	for the guards who punted the royal boat from Irisaĝrig	mu aga ₃ -us ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta ma ₂ lugal gid ₂ -da-n[e]-še ₃	Nisaba 8: 23 rev. i 12–14
no date	1 lamb	for Ninegal, when the king came from Irisaĝrig	^r lugal ^r I. ^{ki} -ta ^r ĝen-na	SAT 3: 2212 obv. 7

Note: I. = **iri-saĝ-rig**₇.

second year. Both visits included sacrifices at the shrine of the mother goddess.⁴ On his first attested trip to Irisaĝrig, Amar-Suena received meat as a royal sacrifice in the “house of Amar-Suena”:

2 fattened sheep and one lamb

“in the house of Amar-Suena, the king, (at a) royal rite, (during the) trip of the king”
e₂ ^damar-^dzuen **lugal** | **siškur**₂ **lugal** | **ĝiri**₃ **lugal** (CUSAS 40/2: 963, AS 7/xi/11)

The conflation of the designations for the divine king by the personal name “Amar-Suena” and for the political ruler as “king” (**lugal**) is revealing about the combination of political and religious aspects in representing the king (according to the distribution identified by Waetzoldt 1990). The “house of Amar-Suena” may have been a place for the royal cult at Irisaĝrig; it also kept this name under Šu-Suen and so was named after the founder, Amar-Suena (Nisaba 15/2: 492, ŠS 9/xi). To immortalize the king’s presence, royal statues for Amar-Suena were erected and equipped in

⁴ Some examples for cultic activities: preparing the plough of Ninĥursaĝa (Nisaba 15/2: 573, IS 1/iii), royal prayer (**siškur**₂ **lugal**) in Keš (CUSAS 40/2: 334, ŠS 5/iii and more often), or offerings at the statue in Keš (CUSAS 40/2: 668, ŠS 7/xi).

Irišaḡrig at the time of the visits.⁵ Then, large amounts of gold were also presented to the king, the queen, and the accompanying princess.⁶ These were welcome gifts for the royal family, whereas usually ceremonial transfers of gold were made at the large state festivals in the capital of Ur.

A “royal trip” (**ḡiri₃ lugal**) included a large banquet, as revealed by several documents. Hundreds of liters of soup, hundreds of fish, and a large quantity of roast mutton were served to the palace personnel, legates, drivers, and cup-bearers, that is the royal entourage.⁷ Local personnel were not excluded: female and male servants and their children, donated (**a-ru-a**) by Amar-Suena, received 1500 liters of beer for their drinking party during the royal visit (CUSAS 40/2: 1475, AS 8/iii).

The king’s arrival led to intensive activity in the governor’s palace, and the preparations for the event occupied many people. Some examples for work “on the day of the royal trip” (**u₄ ḡiri₃ lugal**) are informative in this regard: 39 craftsmen prepared the place for the royal boat (CUSAS 40/2: 643, ŠS 9/iii), others fixed windows, doors, and vessels with bitumen (Nisaba 15/2: 492, CUSAS 40/2: 108, both ŠS 9/xi), cared for chariots (Nisaba 15/2: 748) as well as for baskets (Nisaba 15/2: 736; IS 2/iii), for vessels and mats for the drinking party, food and anointing oils. During one royal visit, 120 craftsmen were present at an occasion of unknown significance in the “large garden” connected with the royal trip.⁸

The province also had to make extensive preparations for a royal stay, for which the documentation from Irišaḡrig provides unique evidence. As we have seen, the cuneiform tablets stem from the governor’s palace and especially docu-

5 Amar-Suena 8, month iii: “A copper sceptre (with which) he subdued the foreign country” (**uruda₃ ḡidru kur mu-gurum**) of 324 g “with which the royal statue was equipped” (**alan lugal-ka ba-a-ḡar**; CUSAS 40/2: 432, AS 8/iii). Same year, month xi: sculptors (**tibira**) brought another royal statue (**alan lugal**), accompanied by a cupbearer (**sagi**) for the religious ceremony (CUSAS 40/2: 456, AS 8/xi).
6 20 shekels of gold of 15-rate quality for each of them: “My Lord, My Lady, Šeleppūtum the royal princess” (**lugal-ḡu₁₀, nin-ḡu₁₀, še-le-pu-tum dumu munus lugal**; CUSAS 40/2: 1198; AS 8/xi).

7 103 liters of soup and 91 fish, “the palace personnel, legates, drivers, and the cup-bearers received it; expenditure at the trip of the king” (**ša₃ e₂-gal | sugal₇ ra₂-gaba | u₃ sagi | šu ba-ab-ti | (space) zi-ga | ḡiri₃ lugal**; CUSAS 40/2: 139, AS 7/xi/11). At the next royal visit four months later, “when a banquet was held in the house of Amar-Suena (probably the royal apartments), the generals, drivers, palace personnel, and the guards ate” 7 roasted sheep, 33 sheep cuts, 338 liters of soup and 333 fish (**u₄ kaš-de₂-a | e₂ amar-⁴zuen | ba-aka | šagana ra₂-gaba | ša₃ e₂-gal u₃ aga₃-us₂ | [ib₂]-ḡu₇**; CUSAS 40/2: 799 AS 8/iii/–); the dishes of beer, bread and dessert for the same groups are attested for the same occasion at the following visit (CUSAS 40/2: 1355, AS 8/xi). The participants also received oil for anointing (receipt concerning pieces of leather to cap oil pithoi, received by the royal guards, expenditure at a “royal trip”, **ḡiri₃ lugal**; Nisaba 15/2: 497, ŠS 9/xi).

8 2 sculptors, 4 goldsmiths, 3 stone-cutters, 33 blacksmiths, 31 carpenters, 12 leather workers, 5 fullers and 30 basket weavers (**al-la aka gub-ba ša₃ ^{8es}kiri₆ gu-la u₄ ḡiri₃ lugal**, Nisaba 15/2: 494 and CUSAS 40/2: 595, ŠS 9/xi).

ment the expenditure by the kitchen of foodstuffs and dishes, including for people with official tasks. Various persons received a meal when they performed their tasks to prepare for Amar-Suena's arrival in his seventh year, month xi according to one single text (CUSAS 40/2: 578, AS 7/xi/8):

- Aḫuṭāb, royal messenger, and Urzu, builder (**šidim**), came “to prepare the house for the royal trip” (**e₂ kaskal lugal sa gi₄-gi₄-de₃**; and more often in other years).
- Šu-Adad, royal messenger cared “for fish oil” (**i₃-ku₆-še₃**), thus providing oil for waterproofing wooden objects (Greco and Pöllath 2024).
- The grooms (**šuš₃**) Akua and Ur-Bau were there “for the trip of the king” (**ḡiri₃ lugal-še₃**; CUSAS 40/2: 578 obv. 6–rev. 2; AS 7/xi/8).
- Šu-Adad, the barber (**šu-i**) came for the bathroom (**du₁₀-us₂-še₃**); note that bathrooms were also equipped with sesame oil for anointing (CUSAS 40/2: 1293, ŠS 9/iii).
- Šarrum-ili, the cupbearer, came for the well (**pu₂-še₃**) (similarly, e.g., CUSAS 40/2: 684, AS 8/iii/9), evidently checking the quality of the drinking water before the king's arrival.

Other persons prepared the boat trip: royal boatmen came “to inspect the river” (**i₇-da igi du₈-de₃**, CUSAS 40/2: 1095 obv. 6–7, AS 8/xi), or a royal messenger “because of the carpenters and mat weavers of the royal boat” (**naḡar^{ad} adgub ma₂ lugal-še₃**, CUSAS 40/2: 684 rev. 6–8, AS 8/iii/9). Šu-Suen and Ibbi-Suen brought an even larger entourage with them on their trips to Irisaḡrig. Šu-Suen sent two brewers (Lu-Nanna and Puzur-Enlil) to prepare the drinking party, three royal messengers for the road, four barbers for the bathroom, two persons for the cold store (**ḡal-bi**), one for the bread oven, a throne-bearer, a groom for the journey, and another groom “to check the water” (**a KIN.KIN-de₃**; Nisaba 15/2: 310, ŠS 5/iii/7⁷; UCTIS 72, ŠS 6/iii/19; etc.). Ibbi-Suen added, for example, a slaughterer (**gud-gaz**, Nisaba 15/2: 727, IS 2/iii/12), his own cooks, and once an exorcist (**lu₂ mu₁₃-mu₁₃-ḡa₂**, Nisaba 15/2: 738 ii 9, IS 2/iii/[]). This was topped only by early Šu-Suen with a female healer, four diviners, and three courtyard cleaners in a single trip (Nisaba 15/2: 208, ŠS 2/iii/29). A detailed analysis of the various royal visits to Irisaḡrig would certainly provide more insights into how specialists cared for the king's comfort, safety, and health.

3 The Governors of Irisaḡrig

The strategic situation of Irisaḡrig as the gateway to the east and the constant passing of royal messengers there demanded the king's attention, with his presence there in

his residence twice a year, as summarized in the preceding section. The king's host was the governor of Irisağrig, an official, therefore, very close to the royal court and imperial representation and politics. Only loyal men could be entrusted with this important post. Seen against the general background of the royal role of Irisağrig, the list of its governors deserves our full attention.

The governors of Irisağrig in chronological sequence (updating Owen 2013: 1, 49–50)

Lubanda	Š 35/– to Š 38/xi	2058–2055 BCE
zabar-dab ₅ /Nannazišağal	Š 46/ii to AS 2/ix	2047–2043 BCE
Urmes	AS 3/ii to AS 7/v	2042–2038 BCE
First review (§4)	AS 7/vi/30	
Ilalum and Dadani	AS 7/vii/1 to AS 9/ii/30	2038–2036 BCE
Second review (§5)	AS 9/ii/30	
Urmes	AS 9/iii/1 to IS 2/x//IS 9/iv	2036–2025/2018 BCE

Lubanda (2058–2055 BCE)

Lubanda, the first governor (Š 35/– to Š 38/xi; Table 3), is not much more than a name.

Zabar-dab₅/Nannazišağal (2047–2043 BCE)

The second person in charge of the governorship of Irisağrig was usually identified by his title **zabar-dab**₅ (Š 46/ii–AS 2/ix; Table 3). He was the highest cultic official in the state, the first royal cupbearer, who presented the king's offerings to the deities, and the overseer of the diviners (Sallaberger 1999: 186–88). The administration of the royal cattle herds in Puzriš-Dagān identified him as the person controlling Irisağrig's holdings, first without the title “governor” (**ensi**₂), then he bore that title as well. Only once and near the end of the five-year office was this top royal confidante and official identified by name as Nannazišağal (Waetzoldt 2006). Whereas governors of the Ur III provinces often came from local elite families, Irisağrig was an exception to this rule as it was closely related to the crown.

Table 3: Governors of Irišaḡrig, textual references in chronological sequence.

Date	Governor	Reference	Provenance of source
Š 30/v	ki ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	JCS 24: 156 no. 37 obv. 3	Puzriš-Dagān
Lubanda (2058–2055 BCE)			
Š 35/–	ki lu ₂ -banda ₃ ^{da} ensi ₂ -ta	HStt 68: 454	Puzriš-Dagān
Š 36/–	lu ₂ -banda ₃ ^{da} ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	OrSP 6: 60 Wengler 50 obv. 19–20	Umma
Š 38/xi	lu ₂ -banda ₃ ^{da} ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	NYPL 281 seal i 1–3 (= RIME 3/2.1.2.2026)	Umma
Zabar-dab ₅ /Nannazišaḡal (2047–2043 BCE)			
Š 46/ii	gud . . . I. ^{ki} ki zabar-dab ₅ -ta	PDT 170 rev. 1–2	Puzriš-Dagān
Š 46/iv	(gud) šu-gid ₂ I. ^{ki} ki zabar-dab ₅ -ta	AUCT 1: 405 rev. 11–12	Puzriš-Dagān
Š 46/iv	udu šu-gid ₂ I. ^{ki} ki ur-mes-ta	HStt 68: 520 obv. 5–rev. 1 // OrSP 18: pl. 3 no. 8 obv. 5–6	Puzriš-Dagān
Š 46/v	(udu) šu-gid ₂ I. ^{ki} ki zabar-dab ₅ -ta	AAICAB 1/4: Bod. S 394 obv. 5–6	Puzriš-Dagān
Š 47/i	šu-gid ₂ udu I. ^{ki} (. .) ki zabar-dab ₅ -ta	OIP 115: 271 // 272 obv. 3–rev. 1	Puzriš-Dagān
Š 47/ix	šu-gid ₂ udu I. ^{ki} ki zabar-dab ₅ -ta	BIN 3 350 rev. 4–5	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 1/ix	zabar-dab ₅ ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} i ₃ -dab ₅	AuOr 10: 93 no. 1 rev. 1	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 1/ix	zabar-[dab ₅ ensi ₂] I. ^{ki} i ₃ -[dab ₅]	OMRO 68: 23 no. 17 rev. 1	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 1/xi	zabar-dab ₅ ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	Hermitage 3: 202 rev. 1	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 2/vi	^d nanna-zi-ša ₃ -ḡal ₂ ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	OIP 121: 478 obv. 3–4	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 2/ix/8	I. ^{ki} -še ₃ zabar-dab ₅ i ₃ -dab ₅	AUCT 2: 265 obv. 5–7	Puzriš-Dagān
Urmes (2042–2038 BCE)			
AS 3/ii	bala ^r ur-mes ensi ₂ ¹ I. ^{ki}	AOAT 240: 81 no. 7 rev. 5	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 3/iv	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	TAD 40: rev. 6'	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 3/v	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	RA 7: 189 obv. 4	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 3/viii	ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	HStt 68: 499 obv. 6	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 4/v	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	BDTNS 172949 obv. i 5	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 4/viii	^r ur ¹ -mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} i ₃ -dab ₅	MFM 2: 18 no. 2 rev. 5	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 4/xi (Is.)	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	YBC 14688 (BDTNS 062251) obv. 2	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 5/v	ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} i ₃ -dab ₅	Nisaba 34: 757 rev. 1–2	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 6/viii/4	ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	PDT 2: 1204 obv. 5	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 7/v	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	YOS 4: 76 obv. 5	Puzriš-Dagān

Table 3 (continued)

Date	Governor	Reference	Provenance of source
First review: AS 7/vi/30 (see §4)			
Ilalum and Dadani (2038–2036 BCE)			
AS 7/viii	ki i ₃ -lal ₃ -lum ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	Nisaba 33: 1075 obv. 16	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 7/xi	i ₃ -lal ₃ -lum ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	SumTemDocs. 7 obv. 3	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 7/xi	da-da-ni ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	BIN 3: 379 obv. 4	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 7/xii	ki i ₃ -lal ₃ -lum ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	CUSAS 40/2: 511 obv. 3	Irišaḡrig
AS 7/xii	ki i ₃ -lal ₃ -lum ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	CUSAS 40/2: 1147 obv. 2	Irišaḡrig
AS 7/[]/[]	ki i ₃ -lal ₃ -lu[m] ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	CUSAS 40/2: 1315 obv. 2	Irišaḡrig
AS 8/viii	ki i ₃ -lal ₃ -lum ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	CUSAS 40/2: 1448 obv. 6	Irišaḡrig
AS 8/ix	da-da-ni ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} i ₃ -dab ₅	AUCT 2: 277 obv. 4	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 8/xi/9	ki i ₃ -lal ₃ -lum ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	JCS 14: 110 no. 12 obv. 3	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 8	ki da-da-ni ensi ₂ -ta	CUSAS 40/2: 551 obv. 4	Irišaḡrig
Second review: AS 9/ii/30 (see §5)			
Urmes (2036–2018 BCE)			
AS 9/vii/21	ur-mes ensi ₂	Princeton 2: 66 obv. 1	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 9/viii/2	ur-mes ensi ₂	MVN 4: 96 rev. 2	Puzriš-Dagān
AS 9/xiii/17	ur-mes ensi ₂	MVN 13: 398 obv. 3	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 1/i/4	ur-mes ensi ₂	Kyoto 23 rev. 2	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 1/iii/25	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	BPOA 6: 79 obv. 3	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 2/–	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ka-ta	MVN 20: 100 obv. 3	Umma (?)
ŠS 2/viii/30	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	MVN 15: 134 obv. 4	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 3/iv/24	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	RA 8: 193 no. 15 rev. 1	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 4/–	bala ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	JCS 14: 114 no. 22 obv. ii 5	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 4/–	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	Nisaba 15/2: 303 rev. 3	Irišaḡrig
ŠS 5/i/5	bala ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	MVN 11: 147 obv. 3	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 5/xi/20+	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	MVN 13: 692 obv. 14	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 6/xii	ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	Nisaba 15/2: 372 s. ii 3	Irišaḡrig
ŠS 6/xiii	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ka gub-ba	RA 47: 11 obv. 5	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 7/–	ki ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki} -ta	MVN 15: 284 obv. 2	Puzriš-Dagān
ŠS 8/iv	ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	CUSAS 6: 1560 t. rev. 6	GARšana
ŠS 9/xi/11–20	bala ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	PDT 2: 960; AUCT 3: 413; PDT 2: 806; SAT 3: 1882	Puzriš-Dagān
IS 1/xi/25	bala ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	Hermitage 3: 398 rev. 10	Puzriš-Dagān
IS 2/ix/9 and 24	bala ur-mes ensi ₂ I. ^{ki}	SET 57; SET 58	Puzriš-Dagān

Table 3 (continued)

Date	Governor	Reference	Provenance of source
IS 2/x/3–26 ²	bala ur-mes ensi₂ I.^{ki}	TCL 2: 5514, TAD 7, PDT 1: 342, MVN 13: 128, MVN 13: 124, MVN 13: 585, Nisaba 15/2: 865	Puzriš-Dagān
IS 9/iv/25	wa-qar-tum e₂-gi₄-a ur-mes ensi₂	UET 3: 1383 obv. 2	Ur
No year date or date not preserved			
[]/–	[. . .] ur¹-mes ensi₂ I.^{ki}	MVN 6: 304 obv. i 11'	Ĝirsu
[]/–/29	ki ur-mes ensi₂ I.^{ki}-ta	AUCT 2: 353 obv. 7	Puzriš-Dagān
[]/[]/[]	ur-mes ensi₂ I.^{ki}	Trouville 25, SACT 1: 189; YBC 13087 (BDTNS 014269) rev. i 30'; MVN 5: 293 obv. 4–5	Puzriš-Dagān
[]/[]/[]	ki ur-mes e[nsi₂] I.^{ki}-ta	CUSAS 40/2: 1597 obv. 2	Unkn. Prov.
–/xi/26	lu₂ ensi₂ I.^{ki}	TUT 200 rev. 6	Ĝirsu
–/viii	1768.0.0 ensi₂ I.^{ki}	YOS 4: 56 obv. 4	Unkn. Prov.
–/–	šu-gid₂ ki ur-mes ensi₂ I.^{ki}-ta	ARRIM 1:28 no. X73-840 rev. 9	Puzriš-Dagān
–/–	ur-mes ensi₂ I.^{ki}	<i>Studies Milano</i> : 350 no. 14 rev. 2	Irisaĝrig (?)

Note: I. = **iri-saĝ-rig₇**.

After his turn of office at Irisaĝrig, Nannazišaĝal briefly acted as governor at Ĝirsu (AS 3/vi until AS 4/x, Waetzoldt 2006: 180), partly overlapping there with Ur-Lamma and Šarakam, respectively. In this action, one recognizes King Amar-Suena as the driving force behind the exchange of his highest officials at various places, and his intention must have been to rely on loyal persons in the most important cities.

Urmes, Part One (2042–2038 BCE)

The **zabar-dab₅** Nannazišaĝal was followed in office by Urmes (AS 3/ii–AS 7/v), a man then already known in Irisaĝrig as a high official. Five years earlier he accounted for transfers of sheep to the crown in the same way as the governor had (see Table 3, § 46/iv), and queen Šulgi-simti dedicated to him a bird in Irisaĝrig (OIP 115: 89 rev. 6–9, § 46/xii/22). Urmes was another intimate of the royal family, married to Waqartum (or Baqartum), a royal princess (**dumu munus lugal**) who is first attested in Irisaĝrig in Amar-Suena 7/xii/2 (UCTIS 38; seal BDTNS 205346, IS 2/x). Waqartum is named the “bride” (**e₂-gi₄-a**) of “governor (**ensi₂**) Urmes” only in the year Ibbi-Suen 9 (UET 3: 1383 obv. 2), i.e., 24 years after Urmes had become gov-

ernor for the first time. When they were named together in the same documents, the royal princess disposed of larger flocks than the governor who was duly listed after her: Waqartum, the royal princess, disposed of 1385 sheep, while the governor's shepherd had only 602 (CUSAS 40/2: 634, undated); and Waqartum supplied the merchant with almost 2 minas of silver and 900 kor of grain, Urmes only 268 kor (Nisaba 15/2: 546, ŠS 9). According to her seal inscription (BiOr 70: 610 no. 2; IS 2/xii), she was the sister of Šu-Suen, who was a royal prince at that time (Sallaberger 2012: 362; Michalowski 2013b: 296–97). So, when Urmes became governor of Irisaĝrig in Amar-Suena's third regnal year, the ruling king was his father-in-law.

Ilalum and Dadani (2038–2036 BCE)

Nevertheless, King Amar-Suena later decided against Urmes and expelled him from his office in his seventh regnal year (Table 3). As we have already noted concerning the career of Urmes' predecessor Nannazišaĝal, Amar-Suena was the most active Ur III king in selecting governors. As governor of Ġirsu, Nannazišaĝal replaced the long-time governor Ur-Lamma in Amar-Suena 3, Šarakam followed (Amar-Suena 6–7) before the grand vizier (**sugal₇-mah**) Urduĝu (aka "Irmu") was installed there (Michalowski 2013b: 310; Allred 2013: 116–17). The appointment of Lugalmelim as governor of Nippur in Amar-Suena year 1, to replace members of the Urmeme family, has generally been seen as a royal act, especially because Lugalmelim had to leave after Amar-Suena's death (Zettler 1984: 4; Michalowski 2013a: 187). More changes in the line of governors date to the year Amar-Suena 7 and they may or may not have been caused by royal intervention; Allred (2013: 118) points to Kazallu, Kiš, and Šuruppak. In other places, such as Umma, the governorship remained in the hands of one family (Dahl 2007). Such royal interventions in the sequence of governors have to be acknowledged as a sign of Amar-Suena's active politics, necessarily testing new ways after the charismatic rule of his predecessor Šulgi, who had remained in office for half a century (also Michalowski 2013a: 187–88; cf. Allred 2013). It remains for modern historians to determine whether these royal interventions are seen more as an innovative way of controlling the provinces than as a sign of weakness.

In an exceptional arrangement, in Amar-Suena 7, the governorship of Irisaĝrig was entrusted to two persons, Ilalum and Dadani (AS 7/vii/1 to AS 9/ii/30), from very different backgrounds.

According to tablets from the royal organization at Puzriš-Dagān, Ilalum was sometimes on duty in Dēr and when already at Irisaĝrig, also in charge of the dog packs, beginning in AS 7/viii (CUSAS 40/2: 740). Ilalum was a high military officer, the commander of the K9 corps of the Ur III army (Tsouparopoulou 2012: 6–8), and

a highly influential general named side by side with the grand vizier (in Ġirsu texts on boats dated Amar-Suena 8, published by Lafont 2010: 170–172).

Dadani, on the other hand, was a scribe, and he appeared in the high social strata with royal relations as an external party in transfers recorded at Puzriš-Dagān. Dadani knew the local administration of Irisağrig since already in Amar-Suena 6 he had taken charge of barley for domestics (MAŠ.EN.GAG) at Anzagara, a city in the Irisağrig region (CUSAS 40/2: 1441). His part of the shared governorship was the administration of the province, since in the now larger stream of documents from Irisağrig he was indicated (but without title) as the destination of royal messengers coming to the city (“when they came to Dadani’s,” **ki da-da-ni-še₃ im-ġen-na-a**); such documents are dated between AS 7/vii and AS 9/ii/2 and this defines quite precisely the 20-month-period of the state control of Irisağrig by the two officials.

The shared governorship of the general Ilalum and the scribe Dadani ended with the death of their mentor King Amar-Suena (Table 3). His “throne” as the memorial place for the dead ruler appears first on AS 9/ii/9 (SumRecDreh. 20). From that month onwards and for the whole year, Irisağrig provided clay vessels for the brewer, the cook, and the supervisor (**ağrig**) at the burial place (**ki-a-nağ**) of Amar-Suena (Nisaba 15/2: 182, AS 9/ii–xii). The exceptional expenditure of meat for “Amar-Suena,” the divine king, in the month of his death (AS 9/ii) may also be related to a memorial ceremony for the death of the king (UCTIS 71 iv 9–12).

Urmes, Part Two (2036–2018 BCE)

Amar-Suena’s successor, his son Šu-Suen, installed people of his preference in important posts. He returned to some previous holders of office and trusted in their loyalty. At Nippur, he dismissed Lugalmelim and brought Urmeme’s family back into their office (Zettler 1984; Dahl 2007: 25–26). At Irisağrig, he discharged the two officials Ilalum and Dadani, and installed Urmes again, his brother-in-law (Table 3). Šu-Suen had served before as a general in Dēr and he must have been well informed about the situation in Irisağrig. Furthermore, his sister Waqartum probably left for Dēr during Urmes’ dismissal (UCTIS 38, AS 7/xii/1–2).

The two previous deputy governors Ilalum and Dadani disappeared completely from the sources after AS 9/ii; Ilalum also ended his career as commander of the K9 corps (Tsouparopoulou 2012). Already in the same month that Amar-Suena had passed away, a scribe and a royal messenger came to Irisağrig “to seal Ilalum’s house” (**e₂ i₃-lal₃-lum kišeb ra-ra-de₃**, Nisaba 15/2: 145, AS 9/ii/18). Šu-Suen, therefore, had been well prepared to replace some high dignitaries, and he did this with all consequences. Some officials remained in their office, for example, the grand vizier Urduġu at Ġirsu, or the scribe and accountant Babati discussed in §4. These

cases indicate that the king did not simply exchange the elites after the beginning of his rule but carefully selected the persons in question, obviously based on their loyalty.

Twice, an Ur III king intervened and exchanged the governors of Irisağrig before his natural death. Exceptional documentation from Irisağrig is preserved regarding the installation of the new governors in their office. The first series of tablets dated AS 7/vi/30 documents the belongings of the palace after Urmes' dismissal. The second review took place at the reinstallation of Urmes, and is dated to the end of the month when Amar-Suena had died, AS 9/ii/30. In both cases, the new governors may have started their office on the first day of the following month.

4 First Review of the Governor's Belongings After the Dismissal of Urmes (AS 7/vi/30)

Amar-Suena's intervention to dismiss his son-in-law Urmes as governor and replace him with the general Ilalum and the scribe Dadani is first reflected in the chronological coverage of the tablet collection from Irisağrig. The commencement of the two governors in Amar-Suena 7, month vii, meant the real start of the known Irisağrig tablet collection, with its strong focus on the work of the palace kitchen. The governors thus installed a new administration in their palace, whereas before them, such realms were either not documented or the tablets had been destroyed or deposited elsewhere and were not found by the looters.

The first review of the governor's belongings is dated AS 7/vi/30 and dealt with animal herds that were taken over from Urmes, reviewed, and entrusted (**si-il-la**) to various "supervisors" (**šuš₃**) of herds (for his role, e.g., Stępień 1996: 39–40, 206–207). The administrative remarks are mostly self-explanatory, so it suffices to list the pertinent texts first, and then point to some salient features. The following list starts with texts (1) to (5) concerning animals and then adds texts (6) and (7) dealing with other economic sectors.

(1) Nisaba 15/2: 32 (AS 7/vi/30): Cattle of the (governor's) cattle pen
13 cattle herds of 44 to 154 animals under their cowherds (**unu₃**):
954 "different cows and oxen, cows of the cattle pen reviewed" (**ab₂ gud ḥe-a | ab₂ e₂-tur₃ si-il-la**), Bazanum as supervisor (**šuš₃**)
from Urmes, Šu-Eštar, the supervisor "took them over" (**i₃-dab₅**)
carried out (**giri₃**) by Babati, the scribe, and by Lugalmelim, the governor of Nippur

(2) CUSAS 40/2: 878 (AS 7/vi/30): Cattle of the Emaḥ (temple)

2 cattle herds of 74 and 76 animals under their cowherds

150 cows and oxen available, “cows of the Emaḥ (temple) reviewed” (**ab₂ e₂-maḥ si-il-la**)

overseer: Urmes; from Urmes, Bēli-dān took them over

carried out (**ġiri₃**) by Babati, the scribe, and by Lugalmelim, the governor of Nippur

(3) Nisaba 15/2: 31 (AS 7/vi/30): Goats

11 goat herds with their own herdsmen (**na-gada**), 4,554 “goats reviewed” (**ud₅ si-il-la**), Babalum as supervisor (**šuš₃**)

from Urmes, Babalum, the supervisor “took them over” (**i₃-dab₅**)

carried out (**ġiri₃**) by Babati, the scribe, and by Lugalmelim, the governor of Nippur

(4) CUSAS 40/2: 1576 (AS 7/vi): Cattle

Mother cows and milk calves without numbers, “a replaced difference” (**la₂-i₃ su-ga**) of Puzur-Ḥaya, the house manager (**šab₃ra**; rest unclear)

Šu-Eštar, the supervisor (**šuš₃**) “took them over” (**i₃-dab₅**)

carried out (**ġiri₃**) by Babati (without title)

(5) CUSAS 40/2: 1573 (AS 7/—): Tag of basket for tablets

“Basket for tablets, those of the 3,680 available plow oxen are placed therein”

(**bešeġ dub-ba | gud-apin gub-ba 3680-ka | i₃-ġal₂**)

Šu-Eštar, the supervisor (**šuš₃**) “took them over” (**i₃-dab₅**)

carried out (**ġiri₃**) by Babati, scribe, and [Lugal]melim, [governor of Nippur]

(6) Nisaba 15/2: 33 (AS 7/vi): Personnel

6 men from the previous group plus their two sons

“inspection of the people who were transferred, concerning . . . men” (**gurum₂ aka dib-ba lu₂ TAG-ke₄-ne**), overseer (**ugula**): Ur-Dumuzi (without title)

(7) CUSAS 40/2: 577 (AS 7/vi): Inventory of the millhouse

“property entrusted” (**e₂ šu šum₂-ma-a**) to Abūšuni, “overseer of the millers” (**ugula kinkin**)

carried out (**ġiri₃**) by Babati, . . . scribe (**dub-sar lu₂-na-a**) and Lugalmelim, governor of Nippur

All the animal herds of Urmes, the former governor, were re-allocated to royal herdsmen, but not entrusted to Ilalum the general or Dadani the scribe, who thus acted as a kind of deputy governor in Irisaġrig. The royal officials Babati and Lugalmelim sent to perform the review are worth to be discussed shortly.

Babati, the “scribe,” may confidently be identified with the high official and maternal uncle of Šu-Suen. The seal inscription dedicated to Šu-Suen and naming Babati’s titles “accountant, royal controller” (**bešeĝ-dub-ba ša₃-tam lugal**), his high positions as general and governor, and the identification as the brother of Abī-simti, Amar-Suena’s wife, is known from seal impressions on tablets dated to the years Šu-Suen 3 to 8 (RIME 3/2.1.4.32). Importantly, one tablet on which this seal is rolled stems from the looted Irisaĝrig collection (Nisaba 15/2: 467, dated ŠS 8). Babati’s servant seal dedicated to Amar-Suena named him only “scribe” (**dub-sar**) and was rolled on tablets dated between Amar-Suena 5 and 9 and stemming from Puzriš-Dagān and Umma. The complementary chronological distribution of the two seals of Babati, the titles reflecting a career from “scribe” to “accountant and royal controller,” and the task of the scribe Babati leading a royal investigation at Irisaĝrig on the dismissal of Urmes, are facts that, seen together, indicate that he is the same person, Babati (*pace* Michalowski 2011: 147–49, written before the publication of the Irisaĝrig data).

Lugalmelim, on the other hand, was always identified in the reviews as the governor of Nippur. The city was a royal capital and situated close to Irisaĝrig; king Amar-Suena had Lugalmelim installed there as governor instead of a member of the Urmeme family. Lugalmelim’s involvement in reviewing the estate on the dismissal of a colleague can be regarded as a lesson in loyalty to the ruling king.

The review pertained not only to the large holdings of animals, but also the personnel (Text 6), and the kitchen, including all the commodities and tools stored there at the moment of the review. In this regard, the documents concerning the first and second review are invaluable sources for the holdings of a governor and the equipment of a provincial palace.

Text 7 (CUSAS 40/2: 577) offers a precise description of the millhouse in the governor’s palace in Irisaĝrig. It first lists 120 liters of large legumes and 817 liters of small legumes (beans and peas², [**gu₂ gal**] and **gu₂ tur**), then between 1.5 and 34 liters of five different spices (obv. 1–8). Then follow the tools: 12 saddle mills made of different fabrics (obv. 9–13), measuring containers, namely a *bariga* of 60 liters and 2 wooden vessels each of 20 and 10 liters (obv. 14–rev. 2), 5 wooden mortars and 2 wooden troughs to produce *baba* groats and coated with bitumen (rev. 3–4). The list concludes with 50 clay vessels: 5 long pithoi (^{duš}**lahtan**) each with a capacity of 420 liters, 1 additional pithos, 14 roundish pithoi (^{duš}**KU-kur-du₃**), and thirty vessels of 20 liters or less (rev. 5–9).

The administrative implementation of the royal decree to change the governor led to a complete review of the holdings. In this respect, they are comparable to the reviews of goods when the governors of Umma, Ur-Lisina, and of Ġirsu, Ur-Lamma, left office (Maekawa 1996; Maekawa 1997; Heimpel 1997; Koppen 2002; Stępień 2012). These lists, then, document the complete facilities of such a workshop and

can serve as a perfect illustration of work and life in a palace. Given the central role of food production in the economic system captured by the Irisağrig archive, this leads to a much better understanding of workflows and the quantities handled there.

5 Second Review of the Governor's Belongings on the Reappointment of Urmes (AS 9/ii/30)

The textual documentation concerning the second review of the governor's palace is even more impressive in detail and extent than the first. It concerns the belongings transferred to Urmes when his brother-in-law Šu-Suen appointed him again as governor after the death of Amar-Suena. Urmes would remain a loyal official and stay in office until the end of the dynasty's rule under Ibbi-Suen.

First, there are some bullae, tags fixed onto a bag containing tablets, indicating that the contents included the “property entrusted” (**e₂ šu šum₂-ma**) to the respective official (Table 4). Each official sealed the bulla with his own seal to acknowledge the transfer of the institutional goods he had to work with. The review implicitly documents the various tasks of officials: there was a “scribe of flour” working between the millhouse and kitchen, a “scribe of copper sickles and picks” responsible for the agricultural tools, a “scribe of pithoi”(?) as overseer of the jars in the storehouses, as well as shepherds. The governor's flocks available to them were labeled as “deficit,” i.e., the number of animals that the shepherd owed to their owner. The bullae include the second revision of the overseer of the millers, Abūšuni (see above §4, Text 7). The texts are either dated explicitly to the last day of the second month of Amar-Suena 9, the month when that king had died, or do not indicate the day. Notwithstanding these small differences in formulation, all the bullae refer to the revision of the governor's palace at Irisağrig on the same day before the reappointment of Urmes.

Another group of documents from the review contains tablets relating to the personnel that was handed over to the new governor Urmes who became their employer and master. The subscript is always the same:

(8) Subscript of review documents dated AS 9/ii/30 and listed in Table 5:

“Inspection of the people that were transferred (**gurum₂ aka dib-ba**),
(people and overseers):

Urmes, governor; carried out by the scribe Šarakam and the general Ur-Engaldudu.”
ur-mes ensi₂ | ġiri₃ ^dšara₂-kam dub-sar | u₃ ġiri₃ ur-^den-gal-du-du šagana

Table 4: Sealed bullae for bags of tablets written for the review on Urmes’s reappointment on AS 9/ii/30.

Date in text	Contents	Person involved	Reference
AS 9/ii/30	property entrusted (e₂ šu šum₂-ma)	Abūšuni, “overseer of the millers” (ugula kinkin₂); impression of his seal	Nisaba 15/2: 152
AS 9/ii/30	“deficit of balanced account” (la₂-i₃ niḡ₂-ka₉-aka)	Šu-Mama, “scribe of . . . (ḡiŠ.PAP. GI.PAP)”; impression of his seal	Nisaba 15/2: 153
AS 9/ii/30	“deficit” of 1,212/1,332 (383 + 409/529 ⁹ + 420) sheep and goats	no subscript, seal not identified	Nisaba 15/2: 149 (“tablet”)
not dated	“deficit”, numbers as in Nisaba 15/2: 149	deficit of the shepherds of Sumerian sheep, “property” (niḡ₂-šu) of Urmes	Nisaba 15/2: 1043
AS 9/ii	“deficit” of 273 (85 + 182) sheep and 6 goats	deficit of the shepherds of fat-tailed sheep, ‘x’ [. . .], overseer: Iddin-ilum; seal of Daya (da-a-a)	Nisaba 15/2: 162 (?) ¹⁰
AS 9/ii	property entrusted (e₂ šu šum₂-ma)	Ašgi-bāni, “scribe of flour” (dub-sar zi₃) received it; impression of his seal	Nisaba 15/2: 154
AS 9/ii	[. . .]	Ippalis scribe of copper sickles and picks (uruda₃KIN uruda₃ha-bu₃-da); impression of his seal	Nisaba 15/2: 155
AS 9/ii	[. . .]	Adda [?] , “man of pithoi” (lu₂ laḫtan₂[?]); impression of his seal	BDTNS 198867

The scribe Šarakam and general Ur-Engaldudu appear only in these documents in Irišaḡrig (Table 5). They must have been royal officials who came for the revision. As at the first review on AS 7/vi/30 with scribe Babati and Lugalmelim, governor of Nippur, these were a scribe and a person with a high political rank. This pairing resembles, as a third pair, the governors of Irišaḡrig who acted in the interim period after Urmes’ dismissal, i.e., scribe Dadani and general Ilalum. In the administrative practice of the Ur III state, scribes were concerned with precise documentation whereas governors and generals could enforce royal orders with their soldiers.

⁹ The first number in line 2 (before “49”) was either “6×60” or “8×60”; these two numbers can easily be confused by modern editors.

¹⁰ Nisaba 15/2:162: The artifact is known only from a transliteration and the form of the object is not noted; the edition indicates only “obv.” and “rev.” Often bullae were not identified in transliterations, however. The contents regarding fat-tailed sheep can be seen as a complementary parallel to the documents regarding Sumerian sheep.

Table 5: Personnel entrusted to the governor Urmes and inspected by Šarakam and Ur-Engaldudu on AS 9/ii/30 (Subscript: Text 8).

Date in text	Contents	Reference
AS 9/ii/30	Employees for 30 plow oxen (ġiri₃-si₃-ga gud-abin 30); Tuda, administrator (šabra)	Nisaba 15/2: 165
AS 9/ii/30	Employees for 10+x plow oxen; Lugaligihuš, scribe of oxen (dub-sar gud-kam)	Studies Milano: 351 no. 16
AS 9/ii/30	Servants and children of Nūr-Ea [NB: these five persons were not transferred]	Nisaba 15/2: 151
AS 9/ii.ʹ30 ¹	Employees of Luli. . . tum, royal princess; overseer: Adalal, groom (šuš₃)	Nisaba 15/2: 146
AS 9/ii/30	Domestics (MAŠ.EN.GAG- e-ne), overseer (ugula): Puzur-Mama, colonel (nu-banda₃) Šarrum-ilī, healer (a-zu)	Nisaba 15/2: 150
AS 9/ii/30	Harp musicians . . . (nar E ₂ .BALAĜ ¹ x NUNUZ ² ʹx ¹ KA amar-ku₅); overseer (ugula): Ilī-kibrī (?) [includes persons dedicated as votive gifts, mostly identified as sons of single women]	BDTNS 192184
AS 9/ii/30	Domestics (MAŠ.EN.GAG- e-ne), people of Maškan-pūša (note other scribe(s) in charge of the transaction) ¹¹	Nisaba 15/2: 164

The general review on AS 9/ii/30 included the governor's silver, as is evident from an account concerning the overseer of the merchants, written exactly a year later (Text 9).¹¹

(9) Nisaba 15/2: 195 obv. 1–6, dated ŠS 1/ii/30

“3 *mana* 22 shekels 112.67 grains (= 1,689 g) of silver: the rest of the accounting carried out by the scribe Šarakam and the general Ur-Engaldudu on day 30, month ii.”

3½ **ma-na** 2½ **giġ₄** 22½ **še ku₃-babbar** | — | **si-i₃-tum niġ₂-ka₉-aka** | **ġiri₃ dšara₂-kam dub-sar** | **u₃ ġiri₃ ur-^den-gal-du-du šagana** | **iti šu-ġar-gal u₄ 30 ba-zal**

The account then included one expenditure of one mina of silver to buy copper, received by the overseer of the craftsmen Bazae (or Baze), a person attested during the early years of Šu-Suen. Most of the silver, more than 2½ *mana*, was transferred to the governor's treasury under the responsible accountant, Enuā, the “scribe of silver” (**dub-sar ku₃-ga**). He appeared more often in transactions with the merchants active in Irisaġrig (see Garfinkle, this volume).

¹¹ Unfortunately, the subscript cannot be verified on the published photo. The edition reads viii 4–6: **nu-banda₃ šu-ištar₂ | ur-mes ensi₂ | [ġiri₃] ur-mes dub-sar**.

The two final documents (Texts 10 and 11), dated the same day (AS 9/ii/30), and referring to the scribe Šarakam and the general Ur-Engaldudu, who carried out the review, relate to two workshops in the governor's palace. In both cases, the material present in the workshop was entrusted to the responsible overseer, and in this way comparable to Text 7 from the first review, concerning the millhouse and its overseer Abūšuni (note the same phrase **e₂ šu šum₂-ma**).

First, the material at hand in his workshop was officially handed over to the overseer of the fullers, the craftsmen who finished textiles after weaving by repairing them and washing them with a soap-like mixture:

(10) Nisaba 15/2: 148, dated AS 9/ii/30

40 liters of lard, 192.5 kg of gypsum and 4,580 liters of alkaline salt:

property entrusted (**e₂ šu šum₂-ma**), Mamaiš-tikal, overseer of the fullers received it; carried out (**giri₃**) by the scribe Šarakam and the general Ur-Engaldudu.

(see edition at https://www.i3-mesop-oil.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/single_text/nisaba-15-2-0148/)

The last preserved document concerns the transfer of the oil mill, the workshop where the sesame harvested on the fields of Irisağrig was milled by some twenty female oil millers.

(11) CUSAS 40/2: 428, dated AS 9/ii/30

2,290 liters of sesame, 480 kg of sesame press cake,

29 millstones for sesame equipped with hand stones, one millstone of basalt equipped with a hand stone, six old basalt saddle mills equipped with hand stones, 3+x wooden mortars, x wooden pestles, (. . .), various vessels, 15-liter vessels:

property entrusted (**e₂ šu šum₂-ma**), Adalal received it;

carried out (**giri₃**) by the scribe Šarakam and the general Ur-Engaldudu.

(see edition at https://www.i3-mesop-oil.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/single_text/cusas-40-2-0428/).

This document listed first the sesame seeds and the remains from the pressing found in the sesame oil mill during the review, and then all tools: millstones for the first pressing, wooden mortars and pounders to obtain the oil that was then poured into the prepared vessels. This inventory for an oil mill is the best source available for such technology in the Ur III period.¹² Adalal was the main overseer of

¹² This text is discussed together with other sources concerning sesame oil mills in Chapter 2.2.6 of the forthcoming monograph *Vegetable Oils and Animal Fats. Resources, Production, and Uses in*

the female oil millers in the governor's palace in Irisağrig, often acting side by side with Būr-Mama. The mill produced oil from sesame harvested from the provincial fields, and the oil millers received monthly allotments, and also food and drink from the kitchen for their work. The sesame oil was distributed for anointing both to the personnel and guests, including royal messengers staying overnight in the governor's palace.

6 Conclusions

The assemblage of tablets from Irisağrig is unique in terms of terminology and administrative reach, concentrating on the governor's palace and the province. Although more general classifications of Ur III tablets have been proposed (e.g., Steinkeller 2004; Garfinkle 2015), each archive presents its own characteristic features. Administration may have been a state concern under the kings of Ur, but every institution interpreted this differently and developed its own characteristics.

Among the provinces of the Ur III empire, Irisağrig played a special role with governors closely related to the king (§3), and with the regular presence of the king twice a year in months iii and xi (§2 above). The king could interact directly with the messengers coming from and going to Elam and the Zagros regions, and stopping at Irisağrig. The Irisağrig texts provide fascinating evidence about the administrative measures taken when the king of Ur exchanged a governor of a province, a fact known for some time (summaries by Allred 2013, Michalowski 2013a). Amar-Suena most actively exchanged governors, and he even replaced his son-in-law Urmes for a twenty-month interregnum starting in his regnal year 7, month vii. Two officials, a scribe and a general, led the province for twenty months, when directly after Amar-Suena's death, within the same month, his son and successor Šu-Suen re-appointed Urmes as governor of Irisağrig to start his work in the ninth regnal year of Amar-Suena, month iii. Reviews of the holdings of the governor, including personnel, animal herds, and workshops in the palace building complex in Irisağrig were held at both appointments (§4 and §5). Again a scribe and a general conducted the review to hand over the complete holdings of the governor to the successor. The royal appointments may have followed political considerations, but the office was handed over in administrative detail and legally binding (see Stępień 2012). In Irisağrig, the major managers of the province and the governor's palace were also considered when a new governor was appointed. The documents concerned

Early Mesopotamia, edited by Grégory Chambon, Paola Paoletti, and Walther Sallaberger. Other aspects concerning sesame oil at Irisağrig are treated in Chapter 2 of this book.

people and animal herds in the province, silver, and the workshops in the governor's palace. So the Irišaĝrig tablets provide a most welcome perspective on the political elite directly under the king and the administrative organization of the Ur III state (supplementing the data presented by Stępień 2012, mainly for Umma). The 20-month “interregnum” in the last two years of Amar-Suena before the king's death falls precisely in a period of many uncertainties and difficulties regarding the political influence of Amar-Suena and Šu-Suen and the continuity of tablets (summarized e.g., by Michalowski 2013a: 187; Lafont 2017; D'Agostino and Pomponio 2023: 135–37).

The multi-faceted interactions between different actors that can be observed at Irišaĝrig, the king and his family, messengers, governors, scribes, generals, and managers allow a more detailed understanding of how the Ur III state functioned. This micro-historical study discussing the appointment, dismissal, and re-appointment of Urmes as governor of Irišaĝrig, has touched on different fields of politics, society, law, administration, and economy, and more investigations of this kind may open new horizons concerning the general nature of the Ur III state and kingship (from, e.g., Michalowski 1991 to Garfinkle 2022). The two crucial dates of AS 7/vi/30 and AS 9/ii/30 provided the starting point for this investigation, and surely the observation of chronology and rhythms such as the biannual royal visits in months iii and xi will lead to more insights into the study of this fascinating tablet collection.

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