

Inscriptions from Umma and Lagash

Lagash and Umma were two Sumerian cities located 18 miles apart. These documents were found on a clay cylinder and date from about 2500 BCE.

The names of the rulers of Lagash are confusing. At the time of the events recorded here, Entemena was king of Lagash. His uncle, Eannatum, had been king earlier and was responsible for the treaty between Umma and Lagash mentioned in these documents. Enannatum was Eannatum's brother and succeeded him on the throne. Entemena, Enannatum's son and Eannatum's nephew, was king of Lagash at the time of the dispute described in the documents.¹ Eannatum raised the power of Lagash to its greatest height, conquering all the cities of Babylonia. The Elamites were always invading the fertile plains of Babylonia, so Ennatum ascended the eastern mountains and subjugated Elam.²

I: By the immutable word of Enlil, king of the lands, father of the gods, Ningirsu and Shara set a boundary to their lands. Mesilim, King of Kish, at the command of his deity Kadi, set up a stele [a boundary marker] in the plantation of that field.

Ush, ruler of Umma, formed a plan to seize it. That stele he broke in pieces, into the plain of Lagash he advanced. Ningirsu, the hero of Enlil, by his just command, made war upon Umma. At the command of Enlil, his great net ensnared them. He erected their burial mound on the plain in that place.

II: Eannatum, ruler of Lagash, brother of the father of Entemena [who put up this inscription] ... for Enakalli, ruler of Umma, set the border to the land. He carried a canal from the great river to Guedin . He opened the

field of Ningirsu on its border for 210 spans to the power of Umma. He ordered the royal field not to be seized. At the canal he inscribed a stele. He returned the stele of Mesilim to its place. He did not encroach on the plain of Mesilim. At the boundary-line of Ningirsu, as a protecting structure, he built the sanctuary of Enlil, the sanctuary of Ninkhursag.... By harvesting, the men of Umma had eaten one storehouse-full of the grain of Nina [goddess of Oracles], the grain of Ningirsu; he caused them to bear a penalty. They brought 144,000 *gur*, a great storehouse full, [as repayment]. The taking of this grain was not to be repeated in the future.

Urlumma, ruler of Umma drained the boundary canal of Ningirsu, the boundary canal of Nina; those steles he threw into the fire, he broke [them] in pieces; he destroyed the sanctuaries, the dwellings of the gods, the protecting shrines, the buildings that had been made. He was as puffed up as the mountains; he crossed over the boundary canal of Ningirsu.

Enannatum, ruler of Lagash, went into battle in the field of Ugigga, the irrigated field of Ningirsu. Entemena, the beloved son of Enannatum, completely overthrew him. Urlumma fled. In the midst of Umma he killed him. He left behind 60 soldiers of his force [dead] on the bank of the canal "Meadow- recognized-as-holy-from-the-great-dagger." He left these men- their bones on the plain. He heaped up mounds for them in 5 places. Then Ili Priest of Ininni of Esh in Girsu, he established as a vassal ruler over Umma.

III: Ili, took the ruler of Umma into his hand. He drained the boundary canal of Ningirsu, a great protecting structure of Ningirsu, unto the bank of the Tigris above from the banks of Girsu. He took the grain of Lagash, a storehouse of 3600 *gur* . Entemena, ruler of Lagash declared hostilities on

¹ Based on: George A. Barton, "Inscription of Entemena #7" in, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad* (New Haven, CT; Yale Univ., 1929), 61, 63 and 65. Copyright 1998 by David W. Koeller.

<http://www.thenagain.info/classes/sources/ummalagash.html>

² George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, 7th Edition, p. 62-63

Ili, whom for a vassal he had set up. Ili, ruler of Umma, wickedly flooded the dyked and irrigated field; he commanded that the boundary canal of Ningirsu; the boundary canal of Nina be ruined.... Enlil and Ninkhursag did not permit [this to happen]. Entemena, ruler of Lagash, whose name was spoken by Ningirsu, restored their canal to its place according to the righteous word of Enlil, according to the righteous word of Nina, their canal which he had constructed from the river Tigris to the great river, the protecting structure, its foundation he had made of stone...

Thutmose III, The Napata Stela, (aka The Gebel Barkal Stela)³

Thutmose III (c.1504-1450 BCE), king of Egypt, led many campaigns into Canaan and Syria.⁴ The Napata Stele is a standing stone inscribed with Thutmose's description of his major accomplishments as king.

...Listen, O people! He gave to me the foreign countries of Retenu⁵ on the first campaign. They came to meet my Majesty with millions of men, hundreds of thousands of the best from all foreign countries, who manned their chariots with 330 chiefs, every one there with his army. They were ready in the Wadi Qanu, massed together. An excellent exploit was made by me among them. My Majesty attacked them, they immediately fled and fell in droves. They entered Megiddo; my Majesty enclosed them for a period of 7 months, before they came out, imploring my Majesty with the words: "Give us your breath, our lord! The desert dwellers of Retenu will not rebel again."

Then he caused that enemy together with the chiefs who were with him, to be brought before my Majesty, all their children, with many gifts of

gold and silver, all their horses that were with them, their great chariots of gold and silver, (also) those painted brightly, all battle tunics, their bows and their arrows, all their weapons. This was what they had come to war with and threatened my Majesty. They brought it as tribute to my Majesty. They stood on their walls in order to give praise to my Majesty, begging that the breath of life may be given them. Then my Majesty made them swear an oath of loyalty, in these words: "We shall not do evil again to Menkheperre [Thutmose III], may he live forever, our lord, for the period of our life, for we have seen his power. He gave us the breath of life, according to his wish." It was my father Amen-Re, lord of thrones of both lands, who has accomplished it, not the arm of men.

Then my Majesty caused them to be given free passage (lit. the road) to their cities. They all left on donkeys, for I had taken their horses. I captured the inhabitants for Egypt and their possessions as well...My Majesty subdued every land, Retenu is under my sandals, the Nubians are slaves of my Majesty. They pay me (tribute) as one (man), being taxable millions of times in numerous things of the top of the earth, much gold from Wawat, its amount without bounds. One built there for the palace every year Eight-boats and many transporters for the crews, beside the tribute, the Nubians bring ivory and ebony. Precious wood from Kush was brought to me as beams of doum palms and wooden things without number as acacia wood from the Southland.

³ http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/napata_stela.htm

⁴ <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/history18-20.htm#Thutmoseiii>

⁵ *Retenu*: southern Syria