

A median (?) votive inscription on silver vessel — Below presented unique inscription is found on the rims of a carinated bowl and on an animal ryhton possibly of a lion. These objects and a group of other gold and silver coins, including a golden statuette were confiscated from the antiquities traders in 1993. The exact provenance is unknown, but as far as the sayings goes they were found in a cave in Iran about five years ago and have found their way in galleries and auction sellers in the major cities of USA and UK. The actual number of objects unearthed from this cave is also unknown but it is highly possible that they were part of a large hord which must have been immensely dispersed to all directions of the world. Both of the objects bore the same unique inscription. The lion ryhton measures 29 cm in length, 16 cm in diameter, and inscription's length ca. 15 cm¹. Here it is given No. 2 in auto-graph copy.

The inscription reads as follows: m. Am-pi-ri-iš ŠUNKI Sa-ma-tur-ra] [sak] [Da]-ba-[la-na] « Ampiris, king of Samaturra, son of Dabala ». The other inscribed item (No. 1) is a vessel made of silver and measures: 16 cm in length, and 16 cm diameter of the rim. Its inscription is intact and helps us to restore the lion ryhton which is corroded towards the end:

m. Am-pi-ri-iš ŠUNKI Sa-ma-tur-ra šak Da-ba-la-na. « Ampiris king of Samaturra, son of Dabala ». No doubt these two inscriptions are identical although they appear on two different types of object. It may be assumed that they are written with hammer strokes. The use of ŠUNKI / EŠŠENA (Sumerian) « king » makes one surmise an origin in western or southern Iran somewhere under the influence of Elamite writing. The *-na* in the last PN is very likely to be the Elamite possessive suffix. The fact that the objects in questions cannot precisely be determined as having been written under the Elamite influence, but on the other hand one can deduct the following result for the name Am-pi-ri-iš in comparison with the names being pure Elamite and Akkadian i.e.: the name Am-pi-ri-ya² is very much the same as Am-pi-ri-iš except the last syllable which has been identified as Ham-friya / Hamfriya³, since -riš/ri-iš is an Elamite suffix which can be seen also as -ru-iš and -ra-iš⁴

and along with many other occurrences⁵ ending with -ri-iš. These names seem to have been influenced by Akkadian and Elamite as can be observed in the personal names as follows : Ad-da-ir-nu-ri-is, an Akkadian name Attar-nūrī⁶ and Na-pu-it-ri-iš/Naputriš (Elamite)⁷. The names which might have been of Elamite origin are given in Mayrhofer in page 309 (No 11.3..2.5) among which Annukrus 'An-nu-ik-ri-iš (8.71), Ḫal-da-iš (8.421), Ḫal-te-ka-du-iš (8.427), Hi-iš-be-iš (8.518), Ke-ik-du-iš (8.819) are to be mentioned ending with the final -iš. Through the examples we have mentioned above in a few occurrences this final -iš was dropped (i.e. Attar-nūrī may lead us to a reading (H)ampir(i) in Elamite⁸. As for the title ŠUNKI « king » which undoubtedly attributed to Elamite⁹ can be seen as part the personal names : i.e. Šunki-baba, Šunki-na-ki, Šun-kišip (H. Koch, p. 342), Šunkuršip (H. Koch, p. 353) and can also be read *Zunki see especially a name with LUGAL in LUGĀL-na-ki (H. Koch, p. 342)¹⁰. The toponym which occurs as Samaturra otherwise is not attested¹¹ nor father of Ampiriš, Dabala¹² is known and can be compared with the names Da-ba-ra and Dabauša (Mayrhofer, p. 145 Nos.8.317 and 318) and regarded of Elamite origin, but the names An-me-na and Man-za-na are considered to be Elamite by Mayrhofer¹³ thus leads us for a possibility that the last personal name could be spelt as Dabalana. Special mention has to be made also on the occurrences of the names ending with double consonant-components of the deity names composed of -na-na (see note 12) which no doubt makes part of the personal name.

Whatever the correct spelling of the name may have been, there is enough proof that the name must be read as it is inscribed on these silver wares¹⁴. There is, however a few scattered examples of the names ending with the final -ba[-la] and -la¹⁵ which can be used for the argument of the dropping -na of the second name¹⁶ on the assumption that the -na could have been Elamite possessive suffix.

As for the authenticity of the objects under question can be ascertained from the way how the cuneiform signs are made – in this case the variations in overall shapes and proportions of some signs – especially EŠŠENA/ŠUNKI and the place name Samaturra suggests that the person who punched the inscriptions was not completely efficient with the cuneiform script¹⁷. The

perfect writing of the sign -ra is a good criterion to date and can suggest a date as late as Achaemenid period and a plausible date would be the period of Medians which falls to the rise of Achaemenids (Neo-Elamite) ca. plus/minus 7th century B.C. Of course the archaeological evidence is also important and should be taken into consideration, to my personal opinion the inscriptions are authentic¹⁸.

1. See Pierre Amiet, « Rhytons du musée du Louvre » (La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France) 2-1983-XXXIII^e année, Revue bimestrielle publiée sous les auspices du Conseil des Musées nationaux, p. 85-88, Plts : 1-10. Prof. W. Lambert has suggested that he had seen similar objects with the similar inscriptions around London.
2. Cf. H. Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft in Persischen Reinland zur Zeit der Achämenider* (TAVO 8, 1990) p. 313 ; M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana. Das altiranische Namen gut der Persopolis — Täfelschen* (1973), p. 125 (8.56).
3. See note 2.
4. See Mayrhofer, ... p. 79 (2.296 ; 2.308, 2.272).
5. See Na-pa-ri-iš (Koch, 351) ; and Za-a-tar-ri-iš (Koch, 361).
6. See Koch, p. 313.
7. Koch, 351 ; Mayrhofer, p. 211 No 8.1239 as Naputriš. The number of Elamite names ending with ri-iš occurs very frequently and have in their structure Elamite influence i.e. Na-pa-ri-iš (see note 5 also), Na-ap-ri-iš are pure Elamite names (see Mayrhofer p. 210 (No 8.1221 and 8.1232 respectively).
8. The name Am-pi-ri-iš does not occur (see W. Hinz-H. Koch, *Elamisches Wörterbuch* (two volumes) CAMI 17, 1989).
9. See Mayrhofer, p.190 (No 8.962) d Man-ŠUNKI and LUGĀL-na-ki (Koch, p. 342).
10. See Mayrhofer, p. 228 and 309 ; Koch, p. 353 (LUGĀL-ši-ip). However in one Elamite cylinder seal Šunki is used part of a PN : m ŠUNKI-šu-ip sak d Šá-maš-ad-da-na (cf. Edith Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections* Vol. 1 No 812).
11. A personal name **Samaezza** (Sa-a-ma-iz-za) does occur (Maryhofer, p. 229 No 8.1454) and cannot be solved until another example can be observed in the same context).

12. The -na ending of the name can be compared with the following examples and well known in Elamite commonly : i.e. Sun/Su-un-na-na and Sun-qa-na and La-ba-na-na which were constructed with the components of the doubled syllables of the deities (see Mayrhofer p. 306) for the list of such names.

13. Mayrhofer, p. 125 (8.69) and 190 (8.962).

14. The fact that the objects vary in size and shape, it has been reported to me that the inscription that was punched was solely this one, therefore one may think of a possibility that these were specially made for Ampiriš who might have been a wealthy authority of Samaturra who was not known yet widely. Still the readers who might have come across such objects should look at them with caution.

15. These names are Du-ib-ba-[la] and Iz-za-la (Maryhofer, p. 32 No 2.153).

16. A complete list of Elamite names ending with -na in M. Maryhofer p. 38 (No 2.215 and 216).

17. i.e. the signs am, pi, sa, ba and especially ŠUNKI show variations in both of the identical inscriptions. So many different ways of writings belonging to day-to-day practice cannot have taken place otherwise. It may imply only when there was a long span of time between the preparation of them.

18. There are speculations about their authenticity but these people would not like to be known.

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