

# Abu Tbeirah Excavations I. Area 1

## Last Phase and Building A – Phase 1

edited by  
Licia Romano and Franco D'Agostino





Collana Materiali e documenti 44



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*This book is dedicated to Amir Doshi,  
whose friendship is the pillar  
of our work at Abu Tbeirah*





# Table of Contents

1. Foreword (F. D’Agostino - L. Romano)	1	5.3 Results	54
1.1 Registering Systems	5	5.3.1 Archaeological Sites	54
1.2 Acknowledgments	5	5.3.2 Palaeochannels	54
1.3 Members of the Excavation Campaigns at Abu Tbeirah	7	5.3.3 “Hollow Ways”	54
2. Let’s Dig It! The Story of Abu Tbeirah in the Vicinity of Ur (A. Hamdani)	9	5.3.4 Grooves	54
3. Geology and Palaeoenvironment of Nasiriyah Area/Southern Mesopotamia (S. Milli - L. Forti)	19	5.3.5 Crevasse Splays	54
3.1 Geomorphology	21	5.4 Conclusions	54
3.2 Geological Setting	23	References	57
3.3 The Quaternary Deposits	24	6. Abu Tbeirah and Area 1 in the Second Half of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mill. BC (L. Romano)	59
3.4 The Holocene Stratigraphy and Sedimentology of the Southern Mesopotamian Plain	26	6.1 Abu Tbeirah: Overview of the Site	61
3.5 Stratigraphy of the Nasiriyah Sector	31	6.1.1 Post-Depositional Alterations and Taphonomic Agents	64
References	33	6.2 Cemetery and Other Activities	66
4. Palaeoenvironment, Climate and Land Use in Southern Mesopotamia/Nasiriyah Area (A. Celant - D. Magri)	39	6.2.1 Cemetery or Sub-Pavimental Burials?	66
4.1 The Mesopotamian Palaeoenvironment	41	6.2.2 Abu Tbeirah’s Burial Practices	68
4.2 The 4.2 ka BP Event	43	6.2.3 Insights into the ED III - Akk. Funerary Practices	72
4.3 The Abu Tbeirah Plant Remains: Preliminary Insights	45	6.3 Building A	76
References	46	6.3.1 Building Techniques and Materials	77
5. The Environment and Landscape Archaeology of the Abu Tbeirah Region (J. Jotheri)	49	6.3.2 Plan, Circulation System and Natural Lighting	78
5.1 Introduction	51	6.3.3 Fire Installations and Artificial Illumination of the Building	79
5.2 Methodology	53	6.3.4 Sub-Pavement Graves	81
5.2.1 Remote Sensing	53	6.3.5 Dog (Ritual?) Deposition	82
5.2.2 Groundtruthing	53	6.3.6 Rooms Function(s) and Building A Household	83

6.4	Area 1: Towards an Abandonment Time-Line	84	8.2	Room 2	196
6.5	Future Perspectives	86	8.3	Room 3	205
	References	87	8.4	Room 4	206
7.	Area 1: Cemetery and Other Activities (L. Romano - A.K. Ghanim)	93	8.5	Room 5	214
7.1	Mc-fXIII1-4	95	8.6	Room 6	220
7.1.1	Other Activities	95	8.7	Room 7	222
7.1.2	Grave 1	109	8.8	Room 8	225
7.1.3	Grave 2	112	8.9	Room 9	231
7.1.4	Grave 3	114	8.1	Room 10	236
7.1.5	Grave 6	116	8.11	Room 11	238
7.1.6	Grave 11	122	8.12	Room 12	243
7.2	MdXIII5+6+MeXIII5	126	8.13	Room 13	245
7.2.1	Grave 15	126	8.14	Room 14-15	250
7.2.2	Grave 16	133	8.15	Room 16	258
7.2.3	Other Activities	141	8.16	Room 17+19+21	262
7.3	Mb-cXIII5	158	8.17	Room 18	266
7.3.1	Grave 22	158	8.18	Room 20	268
7.4	Mb-dXIII6-7	165	8.19	Room 22	269
7.4.1	Other Activities	165	8.20	Room 23	271
7.4.2	Grave 17	169	8.21	Building A North-Western Outside	277
7.4.3	MdXIII7	173	9.	Micro-Debris Analysis of Building A - Phase 1 Room 23 (S. Cereda)	311
7.5	MdXIII6+MeXIII5+6	174	9.1	Introduction	313
7.5.1	Other Activities	174	9.2	Use of Space and Microscopic Record	313
7.6	MfXIII3-5	179	9.3	Data Acquisition and Processing	314
7.6.1	Other Activities	179	9.4	Results of Micro-Debris Analysis	315
7.6.2	Grave 21	179	9.5	Discussion of Results and Interpretation of Room 23	318
7.6.3	Grave 23	181	9.6	Conclusions	320
7.7	Mg-hXIII5-4	182		References	322
7.7.1	Grave 24	182	10.	Area 1 Pottery - Part 1: A Preliminary Assessment on Typology, Technology and Use (L. Romano - M. Zingale)	323
8.	Building A - Phase 1 (L. Romano - T. al-Hosseini)	189	10.1	Introduction	325
8.1	Room 1	191	10.2	Methodology	326

10.3	Typology	327	12.2.1	Description of the Burials and Preliminary Osteological Information	393
10.3.1	Open Shapes	327	12.3	Sub Pavimental Graves of Building A - Phase 1	398
10.3.2	Closed Shapes	335	12.3.1	Description of the Burials	398
10.3.3	Miscellaneous Vessels	339	12.4	Preliminary Osteological Notes	401
10.3.4	List of Pottery Vessels Considered in the Envelopes	341	12.5	The Isotopic Investigation	402
10.4	Shaping and Manufacturing Process	342	12.5.1	Stable Carbon and Nitrogen Isotopes	402
10.4.1	Insights into the Production of the Main Pottery Shapes	342	12.5.2	Strontium Isotopes Ratio	404
10.4.2	Surface Treatments and Decorations	355	12.6	Concluding Remarks	404
10.5	Use and Re-Use	360		References	405
10.6	Conclusions	362	13.	Faunal Remains (F. Alhaique)	419
	References	365	13.0	General Introduction	421
11.	Area 1 Pottery - Part 2: Clay, Fabrics and Firing Technology (G. Festa - V. Forte - L. Romano)	371	13.1	Area 1 Cemetery and Latest Activities	421
11.1	Introduction	373	13.1.1	Introduction	421
11.2	Mesopotamian Clay Sources	373	13.1.2	Grave 1	422
11.3	Macroscopic Classification of Ceramic Pastes	375	13.1.3	Grave 2	422
11.3.1	Selected Fragments	376	13.1.4	Grave 3	422
11.4	Neutron Investigations: Results and Discussion	378	13.1.5	Grave 6	422
11.4.1	Neutron Diffraction	378	13.1.6	Grave 11	422
11.4.2	Neutron Resonance Capture Analysis	379	13.1.7	Grave 15	422
11.4.3	Classification of the Samples on the Basis of the ND and NRCA	379	13.1.8	Grave 16	422
11.4.4	Autoptic $V/S$ Neutron Classification	382	13.1.9	Grave 17	423
11.5	Insights into the Clay Selection and Firing Process	383	13.1.10	Grave 21	423
	References	385	13.1.11	Grave 22	423
12.	The Human Remains (M.A. Tafuri)	389	13.1.14	Grave 25	424
12.1	Introduction	391	13.1.15	Pit Under Graves 15 and 16 (MdXIII5+6+MeXIII5)	424
12.2	Area 1 Cemetery	393	13.1.16	Mc-f XIII 1-4	425
			13.1.17	MdXIII6+MeXIII5+6	425
			13.1.18	Mb-dXIII6-7	426
			13.1.19	Discussion - Cemetery and Latest Activities	426
			13.2	Area 1 Building A - Phase 1	426

13.2.1	Introduction	426	14.3	Raw Materials	442
13.2.2	Room 1	428	14.3.1	Artifacts Patination	443
13.2.3	Room 2	429	14.3.2	Preliminary Data About Chert Petrography	444
13.2.4	Room 3	429	14.3.3	Chert Availability in Southern Mesopotamia	444
13.2.5	Room 4	429	14.4	Blade Production	445
13.2.6	Room 5	429	14.4.1	Knapping Technique	446
13.2.7	Room 6	430	14.4.2	Technical Blades	447
13.2.8	Room 7	430	14.5	Sickle Production	447
13.2.9	Room 8	430	14.5.1	Retouch	447
13.2.10	Room 9	430	14.5.2	The Sickle Fragment from Building A - Room 23	448
13.2.11	Room 10	430	14.6	Conclusions	450
13.2.12	Room 11	430		References	451
13.2.13	Room 12	431	15.	Chipped Stone Artifacts: Use Wear Analysis (D. D'Errico)	455
13.2.14	Room 13	431	15.1	Introduction	457
13.2.15	Room 14 and Room 15	431	15.2	Results from Building A - Phase 1 Chert Tools	458
13.2.16	Room 16	432	15.3	The Sickle Elements of the Bitumen Handle AbT.15.114 (Building A - Phase 1 - Room 23)	459
13.2.17	Rooms 17+19+21	432	15.4	Conclusions	460
13.2.18	Room 18	432		References	462
13.2.19	Room 20	432	16.	Abu Tbeirah: A Philological and Epigraphic Point of View (F. D'Agostino - A. Greco)	463
13.2.20	Room 22	432	16.1	Premise 465	
13.2.21	Room 23	433	16.2	The Water System of Abu Tbeirah	465
13.2.22	Outside Building A North-Western Side	433	16.3	Literary Compositions Describing Routes in the Proximity of Ur	467
13.2.23	Discussion - Building A - Phase 1	434	16.4	Cities in the Vicinity of Ur	468
13.3	Conclusion - Faunal Remains from Area 1	435	16.4.1	Enegir	469
	References	437	16.4.2	Kiabrig	470
14.	Chipped Stone Artifacts: Technological Analysis (D. Moscone)	439			
14.1	Introduction	441			
14.2	Composition of the Lithic Assemblage	441			

16.4.3	Ĝešbanda	471
16.4.4	Ga'eš	472
16.4.5	Aššu/Eššu	473
16.5	Conclusions	473
	Appendix. Fragments of Tablets and Inscribed Bricks from AbT	474
	References	476



## CHAPTER 16

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### ABU TBEIRAH. A PHILOLOGICAL AND EPIGRAPHIC POINT OF VIEW







CHAPTER 16  
ABU TBEIRAH  
A PHILOLOGICAL AND EPIGRAPHIC POINT OF VIEW

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### 16.1 PREMISE<sup>1</sup>

As archaeological work on the field is still in progress in Abu Tbeirah and eloquent epigraphic evidence lacks so far, apart from some uncertain fragments and inscribed bricks (see Appendix below), the following considerations must be regarded only as an appraisal of the information we can get from the epigraphic sources, mainly from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, related to the geographical area where Abu Tbeirah lays, and in no way they intend to represent a direct proposal of identification of the city with an ancient toponym.

Our task is here much simpler: we would like to highlight some specific clues the site offers in order to put forward some considerations about its ancient geographical and historical setting, as this comes out from the written documentation on the area (see also § 3) - its proximity to the ancient capital city of Ur (a distance almost equivalent to that between Ur and Eridu) being the most evident aspect - and in doing so to point out the "political" background of the Sumerian city. On the base of this description a group of toponyms is sorted out as possible candidates of the ancient name of our site.

<sup>1</sup> F. D'Agostino is the author of § 16.4 and Appendix, while A. Greco of §§ 16.2 and 3; 16.1 and 5 are common work of the two authors. Bibliographic abbreviations follow CDLI Abbreviation List for Assyriology: [http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/abbreviations\\_for\\_assyriology](http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/abbreviations_for_assyriology). Literary composition, if not differently stated, are cited by number according to ETCSL (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/edition2/etcsllibcat.php>).

The size of Abu Tbeirah (see § 6.1), however, hints to a significant geographical, political and economic role played by this city in the region in the period of its *floruit* (2450-2000 BC, see § 6.1), and this aspect must always be kept in mind in the following considerations.

### 16.2 THE WATER SYSTEM OF ABU TBEIRAH<sup>2</sup>

Already T. Jacobsen noted in 1960 that "a systematic survey of all existing settlements (tells) in a region [...] will therefore show that they are grouped in linear patterns representing the lines of the major water courses of the region in antiquity".<sup>3</sup> In fact, although Abu Tbeirah lays just beyond the area surveyed by Wright (10 km southwest of Nasiriyah) in the late 60s of the past century,<sup>4</sup> a sequence of ancient sites extending north-east from Ur, along what can have been the course of an ancient canal, can be traced, as Fig. 16.1 will show (see also § 4).

Wright's survey seems to indicate that the canal system eastward of Ur appeared in ED period (ca. 2900-2350 BC) and disappeared in the OB period (ca. 2000-1500 BC). At that time, two main canals lapped the city of Ur, one north and one south. The comparison between Wright's maps and modern satellite imagery could suggest that the northern canal may have continued north-

<sup>2</sup> For the inner canalization system of the city see D'Agostino - Romano 2018: 35 ff. and below.

<sup>3</sup> Jacobsen 1960: 174.

<sup>4</sup> See *e.g.* D'Agostino - Romano 2014: 165.

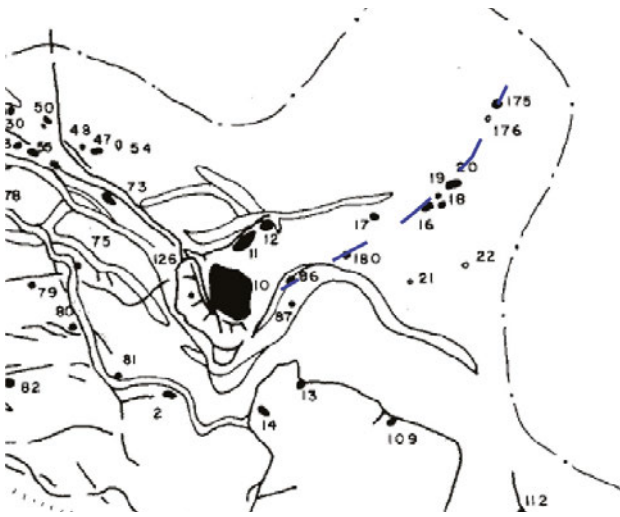


Fig. 16.1 Map of the southern Sumer survey area (modified from Wright 1981: 299).

eastwards, a supposition that still requires a confirm, but which is supported by the presence of various sites grouped along the north-east axis in that lapse of time. Therefore, it is not to be excluded that the canal running north of Ur may have been the water course crossing Abu Tbeirah.<sup>5</sup>

Hypothetically, considering that the distance of 16 km between Abu Tbeirah and Ur can approximately correspond to 2 day trip towing a boat (considering an average speed of 8.1 km/day),<sup>6</sup> Abu Tbeirah might have represented a stage in the routes crossing the territory surrounding Ur toward east. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC the territory of Ur boarded north-east with that of Ĝirsu/Lagaš, respectively modern Telloh, laying ca. 65 km north-east of Ur, and modern Tell al-Hiba, ca. 25 km south-east of Telloh. An administrative text from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, TCTI 2, 3317, seems to refer to two different routes connecting Ur with ‘northern’ cities: a route extending north-east, towards the territory of Ĝirsu, and a route extending north-west, towards the city of Uruk. It indeed records the employment of 6 male workers for towing a boat during 15 days from Ĝirsu to Ur and then from Ur to Uruk.

<sup>5</sup> D’Agostino - Romano 2014: 164.

<sup>6</sup> Measure danna at a cubit of 50 cm, see Powell 1987-90: 467 ad §1.2.1; Algaze 2008: 61.

### TCTI 2, 3317 (Ĝirsu, AS 8/xi)

o.	o.
1. 6 ĝuruš u <sub>4</sub> 15-še <sub>3</sub>	6 workers for 15 days
2. ma <sub>2</sub> zi <sub>3</sub> -da gid <sub>2</sub> -da	to tow a boat (loaded with) wheat
3. Ĝir <sub>2</sub> -su <sup>ki</sup> -ta	from Ĝirsu
4. Uri <sub>3</sub> <sup>ki</sup> -še <sub>3</sub>	to Ur,
5. Uri <sub>3</sub> <sup>ki</sup> -ta	(then) from Ur
r.	r.
1. Unug <sup>ki</sup> -še <sub>3</sub>	to Uruk;
2. ugula Ur- <sup>d</sup> Lama	the supervisor was Ur-Lama
3. dumu Ur- <sup>d</sup> Nun-gal	son of Ur-Nungal
4. ĝiri <sub>3</sub> Ur- <sup>d</sup> Lama dumu	the ‘conveyor’ was Ur-Lama son
Urdu <sub>2</sub> -ĝu <sub>10</sub>	of Urdūgu
5. iti še-sag <sub>11</sub> -ku <sub>5</sub>	month: xi
6. mu en Eridu <sup>ki</sup> ba-huĝ	Year: AS 8

In that period, the main water courses crossing the area between Ur and Lagaš were the Nannagugal canal, which may have represented the territorial border,<sup>7</sup> and the Nun canal, a branch of the Tigris, which from the area of Apisal,<sup>8</sup> north of Ĝirsu, ran southwards along the provincial border to reach eventually Ur.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a marshy area laid in the southern territory between the two canals, which, according to Carroué,<sup>10</sup> was drained and restored for cultivation by Ur-Namma, who brought them back inside the borders of Ur.<sup>11</sup>

As said above, our intent is to describe the topographical evidence that can be gathered from texts regarding the territory near Ur in order to sort out the sites which can represent, for their specific setting, the geographical and cultural characteristics of the site of Abu Tbeirah. In order to do so, we are going to utilize mainly the information from the literary texts mentioning routes, or geographical aspects, involving the Sumerian Capital of Ur.

<sup>7</sup> Already Pettinato 1970-71: 320.

<sup>8</sup> Identified with modern Muhallaqiya. Despite its proximity to Ĝirsu, at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC Apisal fell in the territory of the city of Umma. See Steinkeller 2001: 54.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 55-56.

<sup>10</sup> Carroué 1993: 59.

<sup>11</sup> So, a waterway led from Ĝirsu to Ur and from Ur to Uruk: the bifurcation north of Abu Tbeirah of the canal running through the city may well account for this reconstruction of the canal system of the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC. Traces of a marshy environment in the territory of Abu Tbeirah were recently discussed in D’Agostino - Romano 2018.

## 16.3 LITERARY COMPOSITIONS DESCRIBING ROUTES IN THE PROXIMITY OF UR

In the last 60 years, several scholars analyzed the topography of the area surrounding Ur. Among them, we mention here specifically the works of Jacobsen,<sup>12</sup> Nissen and Adams,<sup>13</sup> Wilcke,<sup>14</sup> Wright,<sup>15</sup> Carroué.<sup>16</sup> More specifically, Wilcke and Carroué analyzed Sumerian literary compositions which depict routes involving the city of Ur. Among those compositions, the ones which may involve toponyms representing the geographical area in the immediate vicinity of Ur and can more straightforwardly be put in relation with the ancient site of Abu Tbeirah, topographically and politically, are represented by the *Temple Hymns* (TH A and B, for the *sigla* see below), the *Lamentation over the destruction of Sumer and Ur* (LSU), *Šulgi D* (ŠD),<sup>17</sup> *Šulgi X* (ŠX),<sup>18</sup> the *Nanna's Journey to Nippur* (NanJ).

The *Temple Hymns* (TH A, for the composite texts see ETCSL 4.80.1) describes a route going from south to north which involves several temples, holy quarters and cities of the Mesopotamian region; its origin possibly dates back to the early part of the Sargonic period.<sup>19</sup> A variant of this same composition, labelled here *Temple Hymns B* (TH B), following the *siglum* by Wilcke,<sup>20</sup> can be ascribed to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC or the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC.

The *Lamentation over the destruction of Sumer and Ur* (LSU, ETCSL 2.2.3) reflects the advance, and possibly the itinerary, of Elamite troops at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC from Gu'aba, in the territory of Ġirsu/Lagaš, the eastern border, toward Ur.<sup>21</sup>

*Šulgi D* (ŠD, ETCSL 2.4.2.04) concerns the military campaign of Šulgi against the Gutians and describes a route between the cities of Ur and Larsa,<sup>22</sup> while *Šulgi X* (ŠX, ETCSL 2.4.2.24) might be the continuation of *Šulgi D* with the description of the return journey.<sup>23</sup>

*The Nanna's journey to Nippur* (NanJ, ETCSL 1.5.1) quotes just few cities in the god's journey from Ur to Nippur. Here, a lacuna affects the sequence between Ur and the city of Eneġir, while two names before Nippur are lost. It is interesting to stress here, however, that according to Wilcke, *Nanna's Journey to Nippur* was originally composed during the time of Ur-Namma.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond the afore-mentioned ones, a further composition that needs to be recalled is represented by the so called *Zami Hymns* (ZH), which dates back to the Early Dynastic period; it quotes several deities and relevant cult places, although the list does not seem to reflect a proper geographical order.<sup>25</sup>

Tab. 16.1 reports the stages quoted or inferable in the above mentioned literary compositions lying

of the whole section [of the first Kirugu] that dealt with Sumer provides the opportunity to move from the general to the particular, from the land of Sumer to the center, to the primary topic of the text: the city of Ur. Eventually, the text returns to the topic of Sumer, which now includes Ur as the center".

<sup>22</sup> According to Frayne, the composition describes Šulgi gathering troops from various cities; Frayne 1983: 96. As noted by Wilcke (1972: 42) the sequence of cities in this composition can be traced through the list of city-gods invoked by the king during his journey: Gilgameš (who is indicated as brother and friend of Šulgi; thus he might have been quoted for his role, without any hints to specific places), Nanna (Ur), Ningublam (Kiabrig), Ningišzida (Ġešbanda), Ninazu (Eneġir), Enki (a mention that, according to Wilcke, didn't imply a travel stage at Eridu, but rather that Enki supported the king from Eridu at the place where the Eridu and Iturungal canals met), Utu (Larsa).

<sup>23</sup> On this regard, see Frayne 1983: 93 and 96-97.

<sup>24</sup> Wilcke 1974: 180.

<sup>25</sup> Biggs 1974: 45 ff.; Sallaberger - Schrakamp: 2015: 65, define it as an important literary source for the geographical horizon of the Fara Period, though, of course, not all the mentioned place names can be identified with certainty.

<sup>12</sup> Jacobsen 1960.

<sup>13</sup> Nissen - Adams 1972.

<sup>14</sup> Wilcke 1972.

<sup>15</sup> Wright 1981.

<sup>16</sup> Carroué 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Klein 1981: 50 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Klein 1981: 124 ff.

<sup>19</sup> See Wilcke 1972: 46-48 (also for the different recensions) and ETCSL 4.80.1.

<sup>20</sup> Wilcke 1972: 45 ff.

<sup>21</sup> The first part of the composition can be interpreted as focusing on the loss of power of the Ur kingdom in the northern territories, describing a route running from north-west to south-east, for which see Wilcke 1972, 43; but see also Michalowski 1989, 10 ff. (taking into account the reluctance of the Author to 'summarize' a literary text): "This synopsis

TH 1	TH 2	NanJ	Šulgi D	Šulgi X	LSU	ZH
						Nippur
Eridu	Eridu					Kullaba
Nippur	Nippur					Eridu?
Keši	Keši					Ku'ara
Ur	Ur	Ur	Ur	Ur	Ur	Ur
Ku'ara	Ku'ara	Enegir	Kiabrig	Enegir	Kisig	Eridu
Kiabrig	Kiabrig	Larsa	Ĝešbanda	Larsa	Eridu	Zabalam
Ga'eš	Enegir	Uruk	Enegir		Ku'ara	Sippar
Larsa	Ĝešbanda	Šuruppak	(Eridu)		Ĝešbanda	Kutha
Enegir	Ga'eš		Larsa		Enegir (Egida)	Kiš
Ĝešbanda	Larsa				Kiabrig	Adab
					Aššu	Keš
					Ga'eš	
Uruk	Uruk			Uruk	I-Nun Nanna	Uruk
					Edana Nanna	Karkara
					Niĝin	Ereš
					Kinirša	Umma
					Lagaš	Lagaš
					Gu'aba	Niĝin
						Ĝirsu
						Kiabrig
						Enegir
						Eššu
						AB.KID:KID
						etc.

**Tab. 16.1** List of ancient cities quoted in literary compositions.

in area comprised between Ur and Uruk in the south of the region.<sup>26</sup>

#### 16.4 CITIES IN THE VICINITY OF UR

So far, the ancient cities quoted in the literary compositions were connected with the sites surveyed by Wright along the axis north-west of Ur, very likely on the banks of an ancient canal flowing west of Ur and connecting the two cities of Uruk and Eridu. This is completely meaningful, since, as clearly shown in the table above, the sequence of cities mostly follows the direction Ur-Larsa/Uruk.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, literary sequences not necessarily reflect a linear geographical order, as the starting sequence of TH Eridu-Nippur-Keši-Ur easily shows. The only composition which may suggest a route extending north-east<sup>28</sup> of Ur is LSU, since, as already seen, it possibly describes a sequence of cities going from the territory of Lagaš to that of Ur. Various cities quoted in LSU<sup>29</sup> can be considered satellites of Ur<sup>30</sup> or cult centres situated in the general environs of Ur.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it seems plausible that, given the size of the ancient site and its proximity to Ur, one of the cities mentioned by the compositions might be the ancient name of

<sup>26</sup> For a complete schema, see Wilcke 1972: 40-41.

<sup>27</sup> With regard to the sites north-west of Ur, along what may have been a canal connecting Eridu and Uruk in late 4<sup>th</sup> - early 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, see Wright 1981: 327 and Benati 2015: 12.

<sup>28</sup> A similar sequence may be also suggested by ZH, which however does not describe any specific route nor a linear geographical sequence.

<sup>29</sup> As in Wilcke (1972), Tab. 16.1 inverts the sequence of the quoted cities, showing Ur as starting point of the journey.

<sup>30</sup> Steinkeller 1995: 278.

<sup>31</sup> Frayne 1997: 102.

Abu Tbeirah: what follows is a list of information on these toponyms.

#### 16.4.1 ENEGIR

Among the cities in the vicinity of Ur behind the name of which could hide the identity of Abu Tbeirah, the city of Eneġir is the most often cited in the documentation at our disposal, the cult place of the god Ninazu<sup>32</sup> and his spouse Niġirida, whose temple is E<sub>2</sub>-ġid<sub>2</sub>-da.<sup>33</sup> See most clearly in TH 179-185:

Eneġir<sup>ki</sup> a-pa<sub>4</sub> gal a-pa<sub>4</sub> piš<sub>10</sub> <sup>d</sup>Ereš-ki-gal-la-ka / Gu<sub>2</sub>-du<sub>8</sub>-a ki-en-ġi-ra ġu<sub>2</sub> si-a nam-lu<sub>2</sub>-ulu<sub>3</sub> / E<sub>2</sub>-ġid<sub>2</sub>-da ġiisu-zu nun kur-ra-ke<sub>4</sub>-ne kur-ra ša-mu-ni-in-la<sub>2</sub> / nun-zu a en gal-la šita ki gal-la <sup>d</sup>Ereš-ki-gal-la-ke<sub>4</sub> tud-da / ġu<sub>3</sub> nun za-na-ru-ba šu tag-ga amar ad-ba sa<sub>6</sub>-sa<sub>6</sub> / <sup>d</sup>Nin-a-zu inim šudu<sub>3</sub>-da-ke<sub>4</sub> / e<sub>2</sub> Eneġir<sup>ki</sup> muš<sub>3</sub>-za e<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-ġub bara<sub>2</sub>-za dur<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-ġar

“O Eneġir, big libation pipe, libation pipe at Ereškigal’s quay; o Gudu’a of Sumer where mankind gathers; o Eġida, your shadow was spread over all the princes in the foreign land! Your prince, the seed of the great lord, the priest of the underworld generated by Ereškigal, who plays the *zanaru*-instrument with the princely sound (whose voice is pleasant like that of the calf), Ninazu, (the one of) the word of the prayers (for the dead), a temple of Eneġir, a house, established in your holy space and took (his) residence in your sanctuary!”<sup>34</sup>

As cult place of the god Ninazu, Eneġir was obviously connected to the underworld:<sup>35</sup> the description of Eneġir as “big pipe, pipe of Ereškigal’s quay” in the cited passage, where the “pipe” is to be interpreted as the clay tube down which offerings to the dead of a liquid nature were poured (see above), is a clear reference to the representation of the city as the *axis* between the world of the living and the one of the dead.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Wiggermann 1998-00a.

<sup>33</sup> George 1993: 94 *ad* 392; see also *implicite* Ninazu A (ETCSL 4.17.1), ll. 20 ff., where the temple is described as kur and Nanna’s Journey, referring to Niġirida, Krebernik 1998-00.

<sup>34</sup> See also *Šulgi* X, 80-132, where Ninazu blesses Šulgi before the king enters in front of Nanna in Ur, and *Nanna’s Journey*, where in the trip of the god to Nippur one finds the sequence Eneġir - Ur (198), followed by Larsa - Eneġir (209), during the procession; still *e.g.* LSU 206, Michalowski 1989: 91 and below in the text.

<sup>35</sup> On this regard, see Lambert 1980: 61, and Wiggermann 1998-00a: 329 ff.; this connection is known since the ED period, see NTSS 168, XI, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Lambert 1980: 61. See also the Ur-Namma inscription to

In LSU, ll. 206-209, one reads (after Kiabrig, below *ad* 2, and before Ġešbanda, below *ad* 3):

<sup>d</sup>Nin-a-zu E<sub>2</sub>-ġid<sub>2</sub>-da-ke<sub>4</sub> <sup>ġeš</sup>tukul ub-ba i-ni-in-ġub / <sup>d</sup>Nin-hur-saġ E<sub>2</sub>-nu-tur-ra-ke<sub>4</sub> <sup>u</sup> u<sub>4</sub> hul ba-an-da-dal / tu<sup>mušen</sup>-ġin<sub>7</sub> ab-lal<sub>3</sub>-ta ba-da-an-dal edin-na bar bi<sub>2</sub>-ib-ġub / a iri<sup>ki</sup> ġul-la e<sub>2</sub> ġul-la-ġu<sub>10</sub> ġiġ-ga-bi im-me

“Ninazu of Eġida put his weapon in a corner. Ninhursag of Nutur flew away the horrible storm flying as a pigeon out of a window and went out to the plain, crying in pain: ‘O, my destroyed city! O, my destroyed temple!’”

There are different proposals of identification of this city: Išan Khaiber, north-west of Ur;<sup>38</sup> Mašar, about 25 km north-north-west of Ur;<sup>39</sup> Umm al-Wawiya, south of Larsa and Uruk;<sup>40</sup> Diqdiqah, a mound situated 2.4 km north-east from the Ziqqurat of Ur.<sup>41</sup> Except for that of Diqdiqah, all the proposals agree in locating it north-west of Ur.

In the ED III the spelling of the city occurs as EN.GI<sub>4</sub>.KI; later, in the Sargonic and Ur III sources it occurs as EN.DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG<sup>ki</sup>, to be replaced from the Old Babylonian period by the writing IM<sup>ki</sup> (see also below).<sup>42</sup>

Though there are no direct references indicating that Eneġir lays on the banks of a canal, the sequence in *Nanna’s Journey to Nippur*, that is Eneġir, Larsa, Uruk, and Shuruppak, can suggest that Eneġir was on a branch of the Euphrates. Even if we do not have any clue as to the distances to the other cited places, the above mentioned list

Gilgameš of Eneġir (written EN.DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG<sup>ki</sup>), where the identification of this city with the underworld is related to the king of Uruk as judge of the Netherworld, RIME 3, 2.1.1.47 (commentary on p. 82 f. for the writing).

<sup>37</sup> According George 1993: *s.v.* and Michalowski 1989: 91, this is the only attestation of this temple name, but the toponym Nutur(a) is often cited in Ur III texts, *e.g.* most recently BPOA 7: 2202, 2511 (always in connection with <sup>d</sup>Nin-hur-saġ and <sup>d</sup>Šul-pa-e<sub>3</sub>), see Sallaberger 1993: 59 and fn. 246, for the possibility that this could represent a by-name of the temple of the same goddess E<sub>2</sub>-ġa-nu<sub>11</sub><sup>mušen</sup> in Ġešbanda, and *ibid.*: 189, fn. 896; also Frayne 1997: 102, and see also below, fn. 57 (does it belong here the PN Nin-nur, CTNMC 54, o. VI, 20?).

<sup>38</sup> Wright 1981: 340; Frayne 1983: 96.

<sup>39</sup> Frayne 2008: 10.

<sup>40</sup> Nissen - Adams 1972: 40.

<sup>41</sup> Steinkeller 1981: 86.

<sup>42</sup> Carroué 1993: 35 ff., esp. p. 38, Tab. III; Wiggermann 1998-00a: 333.

and the sequence in the *Temple Hymns*, e.g. Larsa, Eneġir, Ġešbanda, and Uruk, seem to suggest a location not far from Uruk and Larsa.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Eneġir was probably included in the geographical horizon of Presargonic Lagaš, even if ambiguity in the spelling must be taken into consideration. In fact, as said above, in the ED IIIa/b the name of the city is written EN.GI<sub>(4)</sub>.KI, a writing which is in itself ambiguous.<sup>44</sup>

Anyway, Eneġir was clearly considered a place under the direct influence of Ur, if we have to believe to Šulgi D, 373-374, where the citizens of the two cities, jointly, accompany the king Šulgi to Nippur to visit Enlil after the revenge on the enemies of Sumer:

a-ne-ne dumu Eneġir<sup>ki</sup> dumu Urim<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>-ma-me-eš<sub>2</sub> / en-da  
 868 869 gisal ZA x mu-da-la<sub>2</sub>-ne

“it is indeed they, the citizens of Eneġir and the citizens of Ur, who immerse the oars in<sup>2</sup> the ... together with the lord”.<sup>45</sup>

In Ur III the writing is EN.DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG.KI, for which see e.g. AuOr 7, 160 (ŠS, date broken, Drehem), r. I, 12<sup>2</sup>-14<sup>2</sup>: 2 udu [x] / <sup>d</sup>Nin-[šubur<sup>2</sup>] / ša<sub>3</sub> Ene[ġir] (EN.DI[M<sub>2</sub>.GIG.KI]) ša<sub>3</sub> min<sub>3</sub> TUR [x]; for the integration as Nin-šubur of the worshipped god see UET III 267 (IS 13/viii/-, Ur), r. I, 15: 2 sila<sub>3</sub> ninda <sup>d</sup>Nin-šubur Eneġir<sup>ki</sup> (= EN.DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG.KI) and Studies Levine 132-138 r. I, 26-29: 1 udu / 1 sila<sub>4</sub> / <sup>d</sup>Nin-šubur / ša<sub>3</sub> Eneġir<sup>ki</sup> (= EN.DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG.KI) in a list of sheep for Ninšubur, Ninazu, and Ereškigal in Eneġir, followed by offerings for Ningēšzida in Ġešbanda (see below *ad* 3). Always from Drehem see A 5503, ŠS 9/xii/17, o. 4: 3 udu niga 4-kam us<sub>2</sub> / ša<sub>3</sub> Eneġir<sup><ki></sup> (EN.DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG)

<sup>43</sup> Nissen - Adams 1972: 51: “The lists seem to contradict one another as one puts Eneġir between Ur and Larsa, whereas the other places it between Larsa and Uruk. This could be explained if the point where the two branches of the Euphrates joined is placed not near Larsa but in the area between Larsa and Uruk (cf. above). Since Eneġir is reached before Larsa on the way upstream from Ur, and since it is at the same time between Larsa and Uruk, it then may have been located right at the confluence of the two branches of the Euphrates”.

<sup>44</sup> See EDATŠ, 11 ff. and Sallaberger - Schrakamp 2015: 202 *ad* fn. 67, with bibliography, for different hypotheses of interpretation.

<sup>45</sup> See also Ninazu A, where it is said (repeated twice at ll. 16-17), en <sup>d</sup>Nin-a-zu Urim<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>-ma tud-da <sup>d</sup>Nanna he<sub>2</sub>-e-da-hul<sub>2</sub>, “O Ninazu, begotten in Ur, may Nanna be happy with you!”.

/ ki-a-nag A-bi<sub>2</sub>-si<sub>2</sub>-im-ti (in Ur). During the Third Dynasty of Ur the city seems to be devoted to the cult of the dead, a sort of gate to the Netherworld (for which see TH 179 ff. cited above).

#### 16.4.2 KLABRIG

The god of the city of Kiabrig (written KI.ABRIG<sub>x</sub>[NUN.DU] or KI.AB<sub>2</sub>.RIG<sub>7</sub>)<sup>46</sup> is Ningublaga, son of Nanna,<sup>47</sup> dwelling in the temple (e<sub>2</sub>) Ġa<sub>2</sub>-bur-ra<sup>48</sup> with his spouse Nin-(e)-igara.<sup>49</sup> It must be stressed that very few, beyond the literary tradition, is known about this city;<sup>50</sup> the toponym is cited in the following literary passages. In LSU, ll. 200-205, before Eneġir (above *ad* 1), after Aššu (below *ad* 5), one finds:

Ki-abrig<sub>x</sub>(NUN.ME.DU)<sup>ki</sup>-ga ab<sub>2</sub> lu amar lu  
 a-ri tur<sub>3</sub> dugud-gin<sub>7</sub> ba-gul / <sup>d</sup>Nin-gublaga-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 Ġa<sub>2</sub>-bur-ta ġiri<sub>3</sub> kur<sub>2</sub> ba-ra-an-dab<sub>5</sub> / <sup>d</sup>Nin-i<sub>3</sub>-ga-  
 ra<sub>2</sub>-ke<sub>4</sub> ni<sub>2</sub>-te-na er<sub>2</sub> ġig mu-un-še<sub>8</sub>-še<sub>8</sub> / a iri<sup>ki</sup> gul-la e<sub>2</sub> gul-  
 la-ġu<sub>10</sub> ġig-ga-bi im-me / ġe<sub>6</sub>-par<sub>4</sub> ku<sub>3</sub> nam-en-na-ba šu ba-  
 e-la<sub>2</sub>-la<sub>2</sub> / en-bi ġe<sub>6</sub>-par<sub>4</sub>-ta ba-da-an-kar ki-erim<sub>2</sub>-e ba-ab-de<sub>6</sub>

“Kiabrig, once full of numerous cows and calves,<sup>51</sup> crumbled like an heavy stall. Ningublaga from the (temple) Ġabur moved away his foot, Ninigara wept bitterly all alone, crying in pain: ‘O, my destroyed city! O, my destroyed temple!’. Its sacred chamber of the *en*-ship was violated, its priestess was

<sup>46</sup> See Edzard 1976-80: 586 (“in Südbabylonien”): in ŠD between Ġešbanda and Ur, in TH between Ku’ara and Ga’eš or Eneġir, in LSU between Aššu and Eneġir (occurrences in Hh after Kinirša and Kimaš only for alliteration) - see fn. 47 and below in the text. Writing: ki-ab<sup>2</sup>abrig<sub>x</sub>(NUN.DU)<sup>ki</sup>, ki-ab<sub>2</sub>-rig<sub>7</sub><sup>ki</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Cavigneaux - Krebernik 1998-00b: 374 (*ad* § 2 for the writing of the name); see also Michalowski 1989: 90 f. *ad* l. 200.

<sup>48</sup> George 1993: 86 *ad* 294. According to Charpin 1986: 221 f., this temple might have been destroyed as a consequence of the fall of Ur (see below in the text) and never built again in Kiabrig, while the worship of Ningublaga continues at Ur in a temple with the same name, see George 1993: 86 *ad* 295 (admittedly, having not yet found the site of Kiabrig, this is merely a truism); see the negative considerations of Michalowski 1989: 90 (with further bibliography).

<sup>49</sup> Cavigneaux - Krebernik 1998-00: 348; see also Michalowski 1989: 90 f. *ad* l. 202.

<sup>50</sup> Carroué 1993 places it in the very proximity of Ur, since Ningublaga was considered among the deities of the city of Ur during Ur III times (see preceding footnote).

<sup>51</sup> This is a hint to Ningublaga as *Rindergott*, for which see Cavigneaux - Krebernik 1998-00b: 374 and e<sub>2</sub>-gu<sub>4</sub>-du<sub>7</sub>-šar<sub>2</sub> as an epithet of Ġabura in TH, l. 147 and *passim* - see also below.

taken out of the chamber and brought to an hostile place!?. In TH, between Ga'eš (or Enegir) and Ku'ara, ll. 147-157:

E<sub>2</sub>-gu<sub>4</sub>-du<sub>7</sub>-šar<sub>2</sub> <sup>na4</sup>nir<sub>2</sub> ku<sub>3</sub>-ga lugal-bi u<sub>5</sub>-a / ġeš-bur<sub>2</sub> mah il<sub>2</sub>  
dumu nun-na / u<sub>2</sub> li du<sub>10</sub>-bi ku<sub>3</sub> du<sub>10</sub>-ba ġal<sub>2</sub>-la / Ġa<sub>2</sub>-bur-ra  
tur<sub>3</sub> ku<sub>3</sub> ab<sub>2</sub> <sup>u2</sup>musur niġin<sub>2</sub>-na / nun-zu am gal am-si a<sub>2</sub>-ni-še<sub>3</sub>  
hul<sub>2</sub>-la / sumun<sub>2</sub> si mu<sub>2</sub> si muš<sub>3</sub>-a-ni-še<sub>3</sub> hul<sub>2</sub>-la / maš-maš  
eme ha-mun dungu an-na bi<sub>2</sub>-DU / u<sub>4</sub> an-na gu<sub>3</sub> mur ak u<sub>4</sub>-  
de<sub>3</sub> ki šu ra-ra šum<sub>2</sub>-mu / <sup>d</sup>Nin-gublaga dumu <sup>d</sup>Nanna-a-ke<sub>4</sub>  
/ Ki-abrig<sup>ki</sup> muš<sub>3</sub>-za e<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-gub bara<sub>2</sub>-za dur<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-ġar

“O E-gu-du-šar (place with innumerable perfect oxen) of pure *nir*-stone, where its master sits, the son of the prince lifts the lofty ... (and) in which the sweet pure oil is the sweetest! Ġa-bura (precinct of big bowls), pure stall where cows wander (eating) ...-plants, where your prince, a great wild bull, an elephant as for his strength, (and) the wild cow (Nin-igara<sup>52</sup>), a well-formed horn as for her radiance, rejoice. The incantation priest of different languages - he put clouds in the sky, the storm roaring in the sky, the storm giving ... to the earth, Nin-gublaga, the son of Nanna, o Ki-abrig, a house established in your holy space and took (his) residence in your sanctuary!”

Finally, the following passage of Šulgi D hints to the god Ningublaga, without citing him nor his temple directly (ll. 299-303):

am gal-še<sub>3</sub> tu-da piriġ ne<sub>3</sub>-ba gub-ba / ibila kalag-ga šul  
<sup>d</sup>Suen-na / dumu ur-saġ <sup>d</sup>Aš-im<sub>2</sub>-babbar-[ra] / sumun<sub>2</sub> zi za<sub>3</sub>  
gab<sub>2</sub>-bu-ni-a ba-X X [X] / Šul-gi sipa zi ki-en-ġi-ra ġiri<sub>3</sub>-a  
ba-da<sup>2</sup>-DU<sup>2</sup>

“Begotten (to be) a wild bull (*šul* Nin-gublaga), a lion standing firmly in its strength, powerful heir of Suen, the young, first-born of Ašimabbar, at whose left side the faithful wild cow (*šul* Nin-igara) [sits<sup>3</sup>], accompanies Šulgi, the faithful shepherd of Sumer”.

The vocation of Ki-abrig in the Sumerian (literary) tradition seems to be tied directly with cattle and cattle breeding.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> No attestation of this epitheton for the paredra of Nin-gublaga is known to me, even if it would be not too strange for the spouse of a *Rindergott* considered am gal; for the interpretation of sumun<sub>2</sub> as referring to Nin-igara see also below, Šulgi D, l. 302.

<sup>53</sup> See also Sallaberger - Schrakamp 2015: 209 and fn. 81 (with bibliography), for references of the city in Early Dynastic and Sargonic time; see also Carroué 1993: 46 ff. *ad* 3.2.1 for a hypothesis of localization.

### 16.4.3 ĠEŠBANDA

Ġešbanda, in Ur III also spelled Nišbanda (see below), is the city of the god Ningēšzida<sup>54</sup> and his spouse Ninazimua,<sup>55</sup> where their temple, with the same name as the city itself (see LSU 210 below), was to be found.<sup>56</sup> It should be noted that the little city of Ġešbanda, which represents the main center of the cult of Ningēšzida, is very rarely attested in the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC.<sup>57</sup>

The proposed localization seeks the city in the vicinity of Ur, between Enegir and Kiabrig or in the area of Ku'ara, proposal based mainly on its patron deity and the literary tradition:<sup>58</sup> Tell Umm al-Dhab, near Tell al-Ubaid, with caution, has been proposed as an appropriate candidate.<sup>59</sup>

In the literary tradition Ġešbanda can be found in LSU (after Enegir, before Ku'ara), ll. 210-213:

Ġeš-ban<sub>3</sub>-da e<sub>2</sub> er<sub>2</sub>-re ġal<sub>2</sub>-la-ri gi er<sub>2</sub>-ra ba-an-mu<sub>2</sub>  
/ <sup>d</sup>Nin-ġeš-zi-da Ġeš-banda<sub>3</sub> ġiri<sub>3</sub> kur<sub>2</sub> ba-ra-an-  
dab<sub>5</sub> / <sup>d</sup>A<sub>2</sub>-zi-mu<sub>2</sub>-a nin iri-a-ke<sub>4</sub> er<sub>2</sub> ġig mu-un-  
še<sub>8</sub>-še<sub>8</sub> / a iri<sup>ki</sup> gul-la e<sub>2</sub> gul-la-ġu<sub>10</sub> ġig-ga-bi im-me

<sup>54</sup> See in general Wiggermann 1998-00b: 368 *ad* §1 for spelling and meaning of the name; also known as <sup>d</sup>Ġeš-banda<sub>3</sub> (*ibid.*, 372).

<sup>55</sup> See Cavigneaux - Krebernik 1998-00a and Wiggermann 1998-00b: 369 *ad* §2.

<sup>56</sup> To the best of my knowledge the expression \*e<sub>2</sub> Ġeš-banda does not appear in the documentation, see George 1993: 95 *ad* 408.

<sup>57</sup> Wiggermann 2000b: 372 *ad* § 4: “a very small town that could hardly sustain an extensive cult” (*ibid.* for the many cities where the cult of this important god is attested) - it is much probable that in post Ur III time the cult of Ningēšzida was transferred to Ur.

<sup>58</sup> The relationship with Enegi is also stressed by the fact the Ningēšzida is the son of Ninazu and Ningirida (Wiggermann 2000b: 369 *ad* §2, and above in the text).

<sup>59</sup> Tell al-Ubaid is on the ancient course of the Euphrates river, recognized as Nutur, cult centre of Ninhursag, 6 km NW upstream of Ur, occupied since Eridu/Early Ubaid to Ur III, abandoned and never reoccupied again, see already Sallaberger 1993: 59, for which see also above, fn. 36; Carroué 1993: 50 (Tell Umm al-Dhab on the consideration that Ningēšzida is a recent innovation, hence it is to be expected archaeologically few remains of his sanctuary in his city – but see the definition of ki ul, “primeval place” for Ġešbanda in TH below); Frayne 1997: 102. Note that Tell al-Ubaid has been proposed also as the modern name of Ku'ara, for which see Steinkeller 1980 and Sallaberger - Schrakamp 2015: 198, fn. 15.

“As for (the temple) Ĝešbanda, the house established for lamentation, reeds of lamentation grew;<sup>60</sup> Ningišzida from the (temple) Ĝešbanda moved away his foot, and Ninazimua, the Lady of the city, burst into bitter tears, crying in pain: ‘O, my destroyed city! O, my destroyed temple!’”.

In the TH, ll. 187-196, after Eneġir (see above) and before Uruk, we read:

ki ul kur sig galam-e ġar-ra / itima ki huš š<sub>3</sub> tum<sub>2</sub>-ma ri-a / su-zi a-ra<sub>2</sub> mah lu<sub>2</sub> nu-pa<sub>3</sub>-de<sub>3</sub> / Ĝeš-ban<sub>3</sub>-da<sup>ki</sup> si-ġar igi-te-en gan<sub>2</sub> ki-gal ġiri<sub>3</sub> nu-e<sub>3</sub> / bar ġi<sub>4</sub>-a nim-ma<sup>ġeš</sup> eš<sub>2</sub>-ad-ġin<sub>7</sub> rib-ba / š<sub>3</sub>-zu ki u<sub>4</sub> e<sub>3</sub> nam-he<sub>2</sub> daġal šum<sub>2</sub>-mu / nun-zu nun šu sikil gid<sub>2</sub> ku<sub>3</sub> an-na-ke<sub>4</sub> / siki ul he-nun bar-ra ġal<sub>2</sub>-la en<sup>d</sup> Nin-ġeš-zi-da / <sup>d</sup>Nin-ġeš-zi-da-ke<sub>4</sub> Ĝeš-ban<sub>3</sub>-da<sup>ki</sup> / muš<sub>3</sub>-za e<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-ġar bara<sub>2</sub>-za dur<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-ġar

“Primeval place, low<sup>3</sup> mountain established for admiration; chamber, wild place lying in a meadow; terror-inspiring (place), whose lofty paths none can run; Ĝešbanda, bond, meshed net, of the Underworld from which none can get out: your elevated<sup>7</sup> exterior is big like a snare; your interior, where the sun rises, offers enormous plenty. Your prince is the holy prince who stretches out his pure hand toward the heaven, with luxuriant and abundant hair at his back, lord Ningišzida; Ningišzida a house has established in your holy space and took (his) residence in your sanctuary?”.

It must be stressed that a correlation between Eneġir and Ĝešbanda can be detected also in the Ur III administrative documentation, where Ĝešbanda is often cited together with Eneġir, for which see *e.g.* Studies Levine (broken date), r. I, 22-33: 1 udu / 1 sila<sub>4</sub> / <sup>d</sup>Nin-a-zu / 1 udu <sup>d</sup>Ereš-ki-gal / 1 udu / 1 sila<sub>4</sub> / <sup>d</sup>Nin-šubur / š<sub>3</sub> Eneġir<sup>ki</sup> (=EN. DIM<sub>2</sub>.GIG.KI) / 1 udu / 1 sila<sub>4</sub> / <sup>d</sup>Nin-ġeš-zi-da / š<sub>3</sub> Ĝeš-banda<sub>3</sub><sup>ki</sup>.<sup>61</sup>

#### 16.4.4 GA’EŠ

Ga’eš was an Ur III centre near Ur,<sup>62</sup> attested both with the writing Ga-eš<sup>ki</sup> and Ga-eš<sub>5</sub><sup>ki</sup>. In the Ur III documentation the toponym mostly occurs in the year names of the 36<sup>th</sup> year of reign of Šulġi and of the 9<sup>th</sup> year of reign of his son Amar-Suena, mentioning the installation of an En-priestess

in the local temple. The name of the temple is Karzida, dedicated to Nanna of Ga’eš,<sup>63</sup> occurring in the above mentioned year names together or at the place of Ga’eš itself.<sup>64</sup> Ga’eš was involved in Nanna’s festivals of the Akiti, which started in Nanna’s temple in Ur and then followed in Ga’eš, hinting to the fact that the two centres were likely directly connected through a canal, which was used by the procession to reach the festival stage in Ga’eš.<sup>65</sup> In the Larsa Period, Ga’eš is finally quoted as birthplace of the ruler Sîn-iddinam.<sup>66</sup>

Carroué suggests a location of Ga’eš a few kilometers (north-)east from Ur,<sup>67</sup> followed by Stone - Zimanski, who have recently proposed an identification with Tell Sakhariyah, east of Ur.<sup>68</sup> A. Al-Hamdani, in § 2 of this volume, defends convincingly the hypothesis that Tell Abu Tbeirah could be Ga’eš.

The city is also attested in the literary tradition. The section concerning Ga’eš in LSU, ll. 188-194, starts after a sequence of cities in the eastern territory of Ĝirsu/Lagaš, which are followed by the mention of the Nun-canal of Nanna, i<sub>7</sub> nun <sup>d</sup>Nanna,<sup>69</sup> and the settlement E-dana of Nanna;<sup>70</sup>

<sup>63</sup> George 1993: *ad* 108; the name of the temple is synonymous with the city, see the comment of Stone - Zimanski 2014: 57: “That Ga’eš was overwhelmingly ceremonial is suggested by the fact that it was sometimes simply called Karzida, equating the temple with the place itself”; the same is true for Ĝešbanda, *e.g.* LSU, l. 210, cited without determinative, see above *ad* 3.

<sup>64</sup> For the complete year names and variants see Frayne 1997: 105 and 241. For the 9<sup>th</sup> year of reign of Šulġi, mentioning Nanna of Karzida, the holy area of Ga’eš, see Frayne 1997: 98.

<sup>65</sup> Sallaberger 1993: 170-172.

<sup>66</sup> Frayne 1990: 167.

<sup>67</sup> Carroué 1993: 51 and 63.

<sup>68</sup> Stone - Zimanski 2014. It must be noted that the name of the temple of Ga’eš, meaning “the reliable port, or the reliable docking”, nicely recalls the importance of the harbor of Abu Tbeirah as highlighted in D’Agostino - Romano 2018 (the religious and cultic relation between Ur and Ga’eš resembles the one between Nippur and Tummal, see Sallaberger 1993: 171 and fn. 800).

<sup>69</sup> Steinkeller considers the Nun canal as a branch of the Tigris, which from north of Ĝirsu ran southwards along the provincial borders to reach Ur, Steinkeller 2001: 55-56. Hypothetically, the specification Nanna might refer to the stretch of the canal course in correspondence with the territory of the capital Ur.

<sup>70</sup> E-dana Nanna might have been a specific geographical

<sup>60</sup> ETCSL 2.2.3, *ad* l., reads gul, “destroy” (for the reading here accepted see Michalowski 1989: 91 and 145).

<sup>61</sup> As said above, the city can be spelled Nišbanda in Ur III, starting from AS 8 (JCS 23, 114, 31, Drehem) to IS 8 (MVN 13, 17, Ur).

<sup>62</sup> Already Unger 1957-71: 132. It is not to be excluded that Ga’eš was already known in ED II administrative texts, see Sallaberger - Schrakamp 2015: 59.



it ends eventually before the section devoted to Aššu.

Ga-eš<sup>ki</sup> ga-gin<sub>7</sub> ur-re ba-an-de<sub>2</sub> i<sub>3</sub>-gul-gul-lu-ne / alan dim<sub>2</sub>-ma ulutim<sub>2</sub> sa<sub>6</sub>-ga-bi im-ze<sub>2</sub>-er-ze<sub>2</sub>-re-e-ne / a iri gul-la e<sub>2</sub> gul-la-gu<sub>10</sub> gīg-ga-bi im-me / ġi<sub>6</sub>-par<sub>4</sub> ku<sub>3</sub> nam-en-na-ba šu ba-e-la<sub>2</sub>-la<sub>2</sub> / en-bi ġi<sub>6</sub>-par<sub>4</sub>-ta ba-da-an-kar ki-erim<sub>2</sub>-e ba-ab-de<sub>6</sub>

“They destroy Ga’eš (as) a dog crashes (lit. pours) down the milk;<sup>71</sup> they smash its beautifully fashioned statues – she (the en-priestess) cries in pain: ‘O, my destroyed city! O, my destroyed temple!’ – the holy Ġipar of its en-ship was violated, its priestess is taken out from the Ġipar and brought to a foreign place!”

In TH, ll. 158-168, dedicated to e<sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup>Nanna Ga-eš<sup>ki</sup>-a, after Kiabrig (see above *ad* 2) and before Larsa, one reads:

eš<sub>3</sub> e<sub>2</sub>-NUN (= agrun) gal tur<sub>3</sub>-e ri-a / iri ban<sub>3</sub>-da su<sub>3</sub>-ra<sub>2</sub>-aġ<sub>2</sub>  
<sup>d</sup>Suen-na / Kar-zi-da ša<sub>3</sub>-zu ki u<sub>18</sub>-ru-na temen-zu ku<sub>3</sub> šen /  
 eš<sub>3</sub> ġe<sub>6</sub>-par<sub>4</sub>-zu sikil-e ġar-ra / ġeš<sup>ig</sup>-zu uruda ni<sub>3</sub>-kalag-ga ki-gal-e ġar-ra / e<sub>2</sub>-tur<sub>3</sub> gu<sub>4</sub> nun ninda<sub>2</sub>-gin<sub>7</sub> si ib<sub>2</sub>-[il<sub>2</sub>] / nun-zu en an-na ul šar<sub>2</sub>-a gub-ba / an-bar sud-a gaba X eš HI bur<sub>2</sub> [X] / Kar-zi-da <sup>d</sup>Aš-im<sub>2</sub>-babbar<sub>2</sub>-re / muš<sub>3</sub>-za e<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-gub bara<sub>2</sub>-za dur<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-in-ġar

“O, sanctuary, big chamber built like<sup>2</sup> a stall, mighty beaming city of Suen, Karzida, your interior is a powerful place, your foundation is holy and clean. O, sanctuary, your Ġipar is established in purity, your door is copper, something (very) strong, established in the Underworld. O, cattle-pen, which rai[s]es the horns like a breeding bull, your prince, the lord of heaven standing in ... joy. ... at midday and ... O Karzida, Ašimbabbar, a house has established in your holy space and took (his) residence in your sanctuary!”

#### 16.4.5 Aššu/Eššu

There is little information so far about the city of Aššu, the city mentioned after Ga’eš in LSU. Sources of that composition attest to both the writing Aš-šu<sup>ki</sup> and Aš-šu<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>,<sup>72</sup> while an old variant spelling may be seen in Eš:šu(.KI), which occurs in ZH in connection with the goddess Namma and led to hypothesize an affiliation of the Ur III ruler Ur-Namma to the city of Aššu/Eššu.<sup>73</sup> However,

place, rather than being a generic reference for a way station, see Michalowski 1989: 89.

<sup>71</sup> See l. 187: 1u<sub>2</sub> kar-ra-bi maš kar-ra-gin<sub>7</sub> ur im-me-da, “the dogs bite<sup>2</sup> its (*šil* of Edana-Nanna) refugees as (if they were) raided goats” (but see Michalowski 1989: 90 *ad* l. 187).

<sup>72</sup> Michalowski 1989: 90.

<sup>73</sup> Frayne 1997: 9.

attestations of this city oddly are still lacking in the extensive corpus of the Ur III documentation.

Differently, the Nanna’s cult place, the Ni<sub>3</sub>-erim<sub>2</sub> nu-dib,<sup>74</sup> likely a holy site in the city,<sup>75</sup> is attested in the Ur III documentation either as a shrine (bara<sub>2</sub> si-ga),<sup>76</sup> or as the place where a warehouse (e<sub>2</sub> kišib-ba) and a granary (guru<sub>7</sub>) was present,<sup>77</sup> or also as a deity receiving offerings.<sup>78</sup> Just before the section devoted to Kiabrig, LSU quotes the house of assembly, e<sub>2</sub> pu-uh-ru-um-ma, l. 199, which is not attested elsewhere.<sup>79</sup> As noted by Frayne,<sup>80</sup> in all likelihood, then, Aššu was a small town in the general vicinity of Ur. LSU, ll. 196-199 (before Kiabrig, after Ga’eš):

Aš-šu<sup>ki</sup> e<sub>2</sub> i<sub>7</sub>-de<sub>3</sub> la<sub>2</sub>-a-ri a-e ba-da-ab-bu / ni<sub>3</sub>-erim<sub>2</sub> nu-dib <sup>d</sup>Nanna-ka lu<sub>2</sub>-erim<sub>2</sub>-e ba-an-dib / e<sub>2</sub> ur<sub>5</sub>-re-am<sub>3</sub> a-na-am<sub>3</sub> ab-ak / e<sub>2</sub> pu-uh-ru-um-ma ša<sub>3</sub> su<sub>3</sub>-ga ba-ab-ġar

“Aššu, the house that stretches out toward the river, was deprived of water. At (the place) of Nanna (where) evil could never pass, the enemy passed. How could the temple be treated like this? (Even) the E-puhruma was reduced to silence!”

#### 16.5 CONCLUSIONS

As said above, the present observations do not intend to offer a solution for an identification of Abu Tbeirah, but they only want to highlight the geographical frame inside which the (mainly literary and religious) Sumerian tradition refers to the area of Ur, where much probably the city must be sought. The size of Abu Tbeirah seems to hint to an important economic, political and religious role played by this city as a settlement in the immediate vicinity of the Capital, but its ancient name will

<sup>74</sup> A. George interprets the temple name as: “(the gate of warriors) through which the wicked cannot pass”, see George 1992: 293.

<sup>75</sup> Michalowski 1989: 90 *ad* l. 196-197.

<sup>76</sup> UET 9, 111, date broken, from Ur.

<sup>77</sup> UET 3, 1088 and UET 3, 1092; both from Ur and dated to Ibbi-Sin’s 6<sup>th</sup> year of reign.

<sup>78</sup> TRU 370, o. 1, and Studies Levine 132-138, r. III, 4; both from Drehem and with broken date.

<sup>79</sup> Michalowski 1989: 90.

<sup>80</sup> Frayne 1997: 9.

be only unveiled when further eloquent epigraphic material will come to light in future excavations.

#### APPENDIX. FRAGMENTS OF TABLETS AND INSCRIBED BRICKS FROM ABT

So far, only a few fragments of tablets, each one too eroded to be interpreted, were found on the site. The first two were unearthed during the 2014 campaign in Area 1, AbT.14.45 and AbT.14.67 in US 242 (see Fig. 7.51): the shape of the tablets, given their bad state of preservation, cannot be used as a clue to their date or type. In 2017 in Area 6 another fragment of a tablet were recovered, AbT.17.108 in US 1544<sup>81</sup>, unfortunately eroded as well and uninterpretable.

The two bricks (for details see below) are inscribed with the so called ‘standard inscription’ of Amar-Suena (2044-2036 BC), the third king of the Third Dynasty of Ur, and are labeled with the *siglum* AbT.17.106 and 107.<sup>82</sup>

#### AbT.17.106 (Fig. 16.2)

Half-brick with standard inscription of Amar-Suena (AS no. 2)

Measur.: 31×16.5×79 cm<sup>83</sup>

Note: the brick was cut in two in order to be laid *in situ*; there is a fracture in the middle of the brick that runs on the left side of the inscription; half of l. 1 is a fragment (restored). Inscription complete (12×7 cm, 9 ll.; 10 AS no. 2).

Lit.: RIME 3/2: 245-247 (1.3.1), with previous literature; Prov.: Adab, Bad-Tibira, Eridu, Ġirsu (Telloh), Isin, Kisurra, Sippar, Tell el-Lahm, Ur.

<sup>81</sup> Its size is 3.3x4.1x1.3, its right lower part is lost and the tablet is heavily eroded; traces of the rolling of a seal on the lower right edge of the rev.(?) that squeezed the right edge of the tablet upwards, can be noted; the form of the tablet and the ductus of the few traces of signs strongly recall Ur III tablets.

<sup>82</sup> It is repeated here the information in D’Agostino - Romano *in press*, where more details can be found.

<sup>83</sup> See D’Agostino - Romano *in press*: 334 f., fn. 9: “The measures of both bricks fall into the average for the same objects with inscription of AS no. 2; cf. Walker 1981: 30, where the average measures for the bricks with this inscription are the following ones: complete bricks: 33/30.5×33/29.5×8/5.5 cm; half-bricks: 34/30×16.5/15.5×7.5/7; for the epigraphic evidence see Stol 2017: 275 *ad* § 3.6.1.”

#### Transliteration:

1. [d]Amar-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU
2. Nibru<sup>ki</sup>(EN.LIL<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>)-a
3. <sup>d</sup>En-lil<sub>2</sub>-le
4. mu pad<sub>3</sub>-da
5. saġ-us<sub>2</sub>
6. e<sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup>En-lil<sub>2</sub>-ka
7. nita kal-ga
8. lugal Urim<sub>2</sub>(ŠEŠ.AB)/<sup>ki</sup>-ma
9. lugal an-ub-/da limmu<sub>2</sub>-ba

#### Translation:

“[A]mar-Suena, whose name has been chosen by Enlil in Nippur, the provider of the temple of Enlil, the mighty man, the king of Ur, the king of the four quarters (of the world)”.

#### AbT.17.107 (Fig. 16.3)

Half-brick with standard inscription of Amar-Suena

Measur.: 31×16.5×7.5 cm

Note: the brick was cut in two in order to be laid *in situ*; it presents two inscription, one on the face (A) and one on the left side (B): the cut has destroyed ll. 1-3 of inscr. A and ll. 2-9 of inscr. B.<sup>84</sup>

Inscription A: incomplete (9.5×7 cm, 6 ll. out of 9 ll., AS no. 2)

Inscription B: incomplete (9.5×7 cm, 2 ll. out of 9 ll., AS no. 2)

#### Transliteration (face)

- (ll. 1–3 lost)
- 1’ mu pad<sub>3</sub>-da
  - 2’ saġ-us<sub>2</sub>
  - 3’ e<sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup>En-lil<sub>2</sub>-ka

<sup>84</sup> See D’Agostino - Romano *in press*: 336: “The bricks during 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia could be inscribed on the face, on the edge, or on either the face and the edge; see further that “[W] here inscriptions appear on the edge of a brick during the third and second millennia BC they are stamped or inscribed in short lines at right angles to the long axis of the brick such that when built into a wall they would appear sideways; this follows the normal pattern of monumental and votive inscriptions down to the end of the Isin II dynasty” (Walker 1981: 11, and also 167f.), as it is the case with our brick. This possibly assumes that the inscribed face of the brick is the upper one, even if it would have been perfectly possible to read a brick inscription though not put in the presumed “right” direction (see Hallo 1982: 114).



Fig. 16.2 AbT.17.106.



Fig. 16.3 AbT.17.107.

4' nita kal-ga  
 5' lugal Urim<sub>2</sub>(ŠEŠ.AB)/<sup>ki</sup>-ma  
 6' lugal an-ub-/da limmu<sub>2</sub>-ba

**Inscr. B. Transliteration** (left side, in opposite direction as A, see comm. above):

1. <sup>d</sup>Amar-<sup>d</sup>[EN.ZU]
  2. Nib[ru<sup>ki</sup>] ([E]N.L[IL<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>])
- (ll. 3–9 lost)

**Translation A+B:**

“Amar-S[uea], whose name has been chosen [by Enlil in] Nip[ur], the provider of the temple of Enlil, the mighty man, the king of Ur, the king of the four quarters (of the world)”.

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