

Additional Fragments of The Instructions of Shuruppak

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[The discovery of two cuneiform fragments of the "Instructions of Šuruppak" in the British Museum makes it possible to eliminate from my 1974 edition the presumed gap in lines 26-29 and to improve the text of several lines. This article provides copies of the new fragments and an emended text of lines 14-27 and 88-91.]

In his article "Notes on the Instructions of Šuruppak", *JNES* 43(1984)281-298, M. Civil added the following sources to my edition of 1974¹:

AbS-T 305 (OIP 99, 323), joins OIP 99, 256.
3N-T 919,485 (SLFN, p. 64²).
MM 477 (Abbey of Montserrat, Barcelona), copy p. 288 in Civil's article.
3N-T 756 (IM 58682).
3N-T 917,382 (SLFN, p. 66).
MDP 27,260
Sb 12325 (Susa).
MDP 27,186.

In addition to Civil's texts note 3N-T 907-264 (SLFN, p. 66).

Furthermore note 3N-T 918,422 and N 4148, both published in B. Alster, *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs*, (Mesopotamia. Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology 3), Copenhagen 1975, p. 139, as well as the small fragment 3N-T 907-282 (SLFN, p. 86), which I have treated in *RA* 77(1982)191.

While these tablets are mostly small fragments, W. G. Lambert has made a most welcome discovery of a large tablet from Sippar in the British Museum, inscribed with an Akkadian translation of the Sumerian text of the Old Babylonian version of The Instructions of Shuruppak, similar to the already known Akkadian fragment KAR 27, but well preserved. W. G. Lambert kindly informs me that it contains approximately lines 30-90 of the composition.³

1. B. Alster, *The Instructions of Šuruppak* (Mesopotamia. Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology 2). Copenhagen 1974.

2. SLFN = J Heimerdinger, *Sumerian Literary Fragments from Nippur* (Occasional Publications of the Babylonian Fund). Philadelphia 1979. - In Civil's article, p. 281, n. 3, 46 is a misprint for 64.

3. Apart from my own edition and M. Civil's study the reader is referred to Cl. Wilcke's study, *ZA* 68(1978)196-232, with many outstanding contributions to the interpretation of The Instructions of Shuruppak.

A 1 = BM 82952. Copy by the author (fig. 1). An Old Babylonian fragment from the Sippar collection in the British Museum. No edges are preserved. This is a fragment of a multi column tablet originally inscribed with the entire composition. Obv. = 17-32, rev. = 246-256⁴.

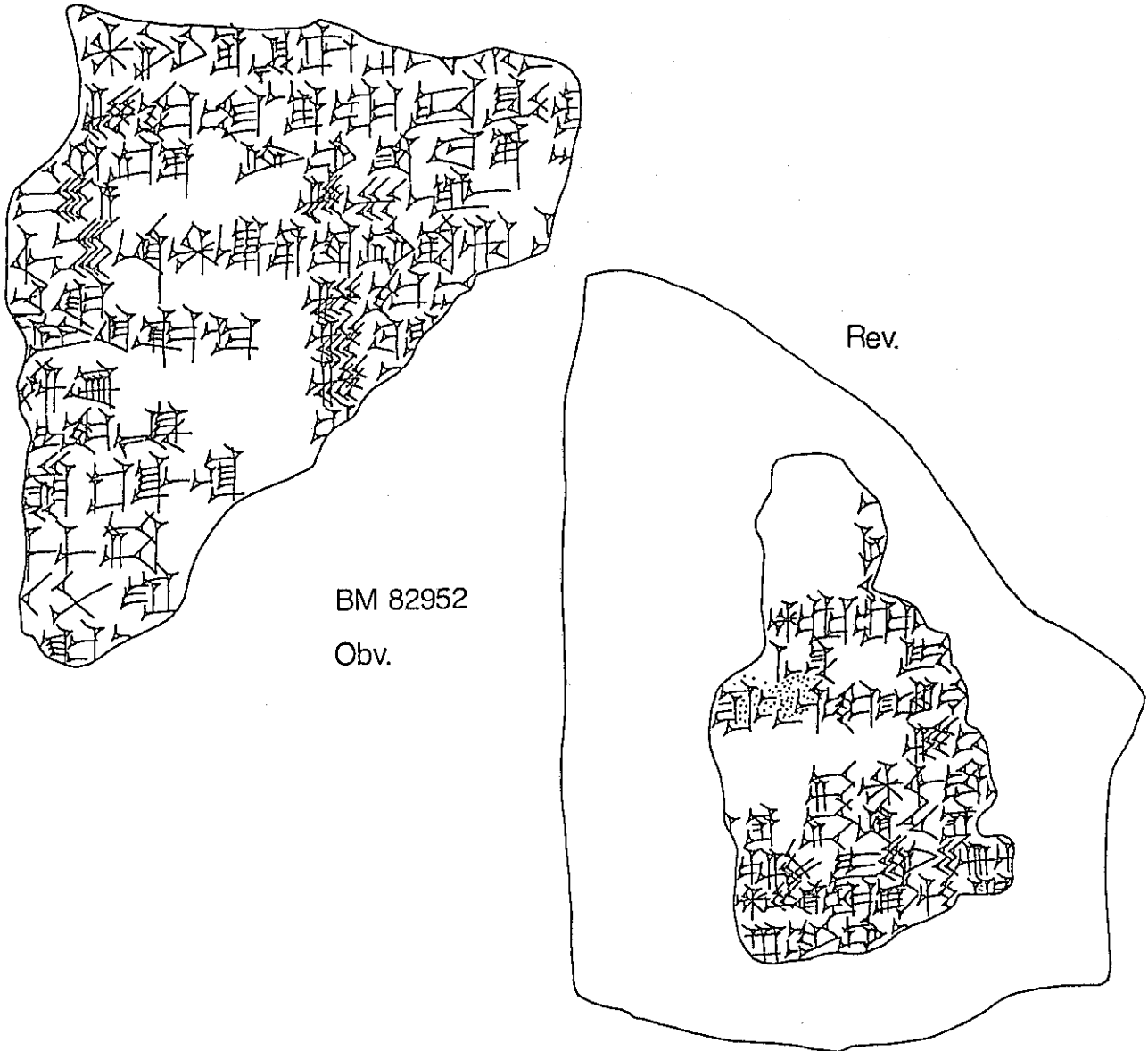
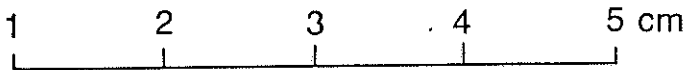


Fig. 1.

4. This fragment, which I identified in the British Museum in October 1984, is important because it shows that the line counting should be decreased by 4 from line 30 onwards. At this point my reconstruction was based on collation of UET VI/2 169, which seemed to indicate that more lines might be missing than shown in Gadd's copy.

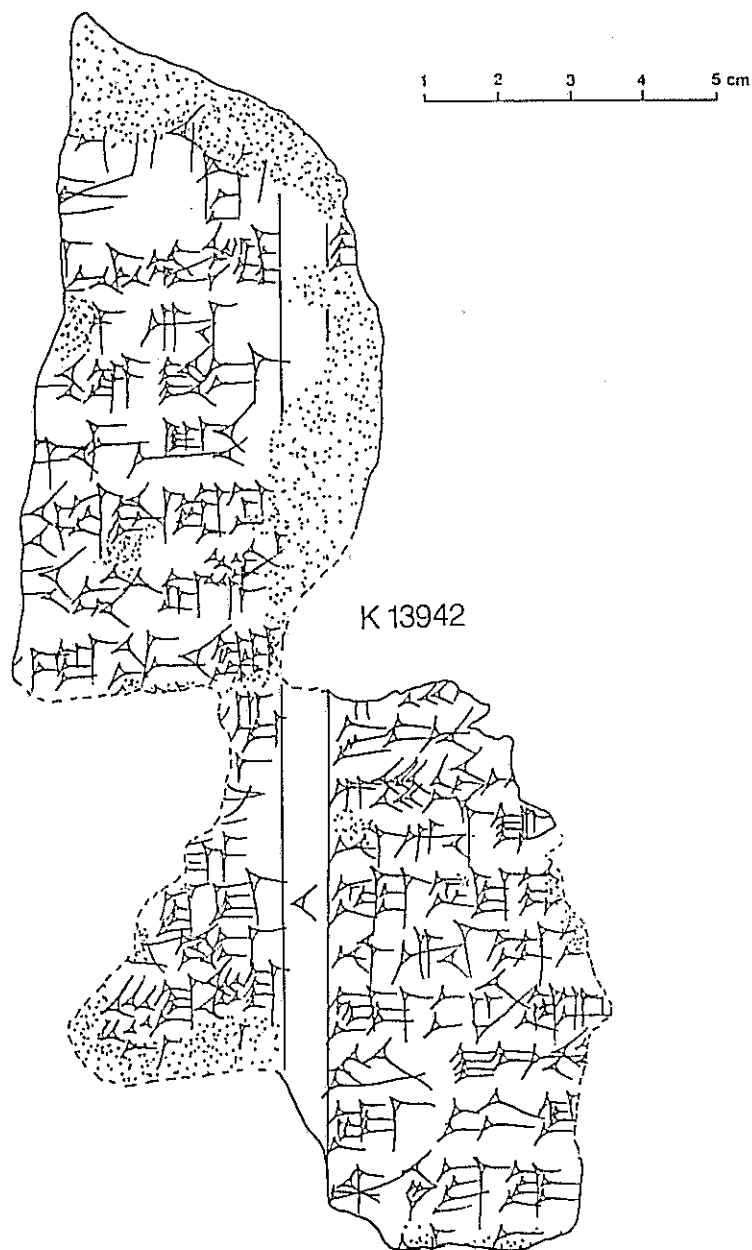


Fig. 2.

B = K 13942. Copy by M. J. Geller (fig. 2).⁵ No edges preserved. Rev. destroyed. Obv. I = 8-24, obv. II = 83-92.

On the basis of these new duplicates, the reconstruction of lines 14-31 should now be revised as follows:

5. I am grateful to Christopher Walker and M. Geller for drawing my attention to this fragment, which has been identified by M. Civil. The tablet has been marked with a K number by mistake, and is supposed to come from Ur. I have asked M. J. Geller to check the possibility of a join between K 13942 and BM 82952. He informs me that there is too much clay between the two pieces to allow for a join along the lines I had suggested.

14. dùr^{úr} gù-di na-ab-šám-šám [múru^l-zu ša-ra-ab-si-il
 L dùr^{úr} gù-di na-[a]b(?))-šám-šám ...^l múru(?) ša-ra-ab-si-il(?)
 Ur 1 dùr^{úr} gù-di na-ab-šám-šám [múru^l-zu ša-ra-ab-si-il
 T 1 m]úru-zu ša-
 B múr]u-zu ša-ra-ab-si-il
15. gán kaskal-[la] nam-bí-ib-gá-gá nam-šilig gú-gá-àm
 L gán [...] nam-ba-[e]-gá-g[á] nam-šilig[
 Ur 1 gán kaskal-[la] nam-bí-ib-gá-gá [na]m-šilig ga-gá-àm
 T 1 n]am-šilig gú-gá-
 B šil]ig gú-gá(?))-á[m]
16. a-šà kaskal anše-ka nam-ba-e-ur_x-ru zi-bulug-àm
 L a-šà [x^l anše-ka (?) nam-ba-e(?))-úr-ru [x^l [
 Ur 1 a-šà kaska[^l] [x^l anše-ka nam-ba-e-[ur_x-r]e zé ù-bulug-ga-àm
 T 1]e^lur_x-ru zi bulug-àm
 B]ù-bulug-x (= gu₇?).
17. gán š[à...] pú na-an-ni-dù-e-en un-e ša-re-eb-hul-hul
 L gán š[à...] pú na-[...]-dù-un a-e ša-
 Ur 1 gán [...] [x^l pú na-an-dù-ù [...]e ša-re-eb-hul-hul
 T 1]-dù a un-e ša-re-eb-h[ul-
 A]-an-ni-dù-e-en un-e ša- [re]-
 B]-hul
18. é sila(?))-dagal (?))-la(?) nam-bí-ib-lá-e-en kēš-da gál-la-àm
 L é x(= sila?) x(= dagal?) x(= la?) nam-bí-ib-lá-e-en kēš-
 Ur 1 -l]a(?) nam-bí-ib-lá-e [kēš-d]a gál-la-àm
 T 1 -b]i-ib-lá-e kēš-da gál-la-àm
 A]nam-bí-ib-lá-e kēš-da gál-l[a-
 B -à]m
19. šu-du₈-a nu-e-tùm lú-bi ša-ba-e-dab₅-bé
 L šu-du₈-a nu-e-tùm lú-bi ša-b[a-
 Ur 1 šu-[dù-a šu nam]-mu-un-ti [lú-bi] ša-ba-e-dab₅-bé
 T 1]-tùm lú-bi še-ba-e-dab₅-bé
 A -m]u(?))-te-gá-e lú-bi ša-ba-e-da[b₅-
 B]-bé
20. za-e šu-du₈-a nam-mu-ak (+ Ur 1: [l] ú sag bí-ib-sal-la-e-a)
 L za-e šu-du₈-[a] nam-mu-ak
 Ur 1 za-[e šu]-dù-a nam-mu-e-[... l]ú sag bí-ib-sal-la-e-a
 T 1]-mu-e-[tùm]
 A]-du₈-a nam-mu-ak-
 B]-e

21. lú-ra igi-du₈-a na-an-ak-e uru₂-bi ša-re-e[b]-su-su
 L lú-ra igi-du₈ na-a[n]-ak-e-dè
 Ur 1 lú-[ra] igi-du₈-a na-an-[...]bi ša-[...]ʃx¹-su(!)-su(!)
 T 1 -d]u₈ na-an-ak uru₂-bi ša-
 A]igi-du₈ na-an-ak-e uru₂-bi sa-re-e[b]-
 B]-su-su
22. ki du₁₄-da-ka nam-bi-duʃx¹-dè
 L ki du₁₄-da-ka nam-
 Ur 1 ki d[u₁₄-d]a-ka ...
 T 1] nam-bi-du-
 A -d]a(!)-ka nam-bi-du-
 B]ʃx¹-dè
23. du₁₄-dè lú ki-inim-ma nam-ba-e-ku₄-ku₄
 L du₁₄-dè lú ki-inim-ma(?)
 Ur 1 du₁₄-dè lú [...]]-ku₄
 T 1]ʃx¹ʃx¹ inim-bi [x]
 A]lú ki inim-ma nam-ba-e-
 B]-ku₄-ku₄
24. du₁₄-dè ní-zu nam-b[a...
 L du₁₄-dè ní-ba (read -zu?)
 Ur 1 [d]u₁₄-dè ní-
 A]ní-zu nam-b[a-
 B traces
25. du₁₄ n[am-a]k-dè-en s[ag(?)...
 L du₁₄n[am-a] k-dè-en[
 A -a] k-dè-en s[ag(?)
- 26/30. [x (x)] ká é-gal-la [x]-àm ba-ra-si-ga(?)
 Ur 1]-na(?)
 Ur 2]-àm ba-ra-si-g[a]
 T 1]ʃx¹ - ʃx¹ -si-ga(?)
 A [x (x)] ká é-gal-la [
- 27/31. du₁₄-dè bar-bar-ta gub-gub-[ba] in-nu-uš sila-kúr-ra [dab₅]-*ma-ni-ib
 Ur 1 -r] a(?) nam-ma-ni-ib
 Ur 2 du₁₄-dè bar-bar-ta gub-gub-[ba] in-nu-uš sila-kúr[
 T 1]-ra na-mu-KU(?) -dè
 A] bar-bar-ta [/ si]la-kúr-ra[

Translation

14. Do not buy an ass which brays, it will split(?) your midst(?).
 15. Do not place a field on a road, it is...

16. Do not plough a field on the road of asses, it is...
17. Do not make a well in the midst of a field, the people will make it bad for you (var. L: the water will make it bad for you, T 1: the people will make the water bad for you).
18. Do not extend your house toward a public square, there will be...
19. Do not vouch (for someone), that man will have a hold on you.
20. Do not make a pledge (+ UR 1: the man will make a "narrow" head).
21. Do not make an inspection(?) upon a man, the flood will give it back(?) to you.
22. Do not loiter where there is a dispute.
23. Do not enter as a witness in a dispute.
24. Do not let yourself... in a dispute.
25. Do not cause a dispute...
- 26/30. [A dispute] at the gate of the palace [is fire], it cannot be calmed down.
- 27/31. Stand aside from a dispute, as to a... take(?) another road.

14. In my edition, p. 34, *egir-zu* probably has to be corrected to [m]úru-zu (Ur 1 can be both, but T 1 is rather [m]úru). For *múru* the equation *qablu*, "midst" is well known. With great reserve I would suggest that it is here used elliptically for *qablitu* (elsewhere *en-nu-un-múru-ba*, "the midnight watch", and that the meaning is "it will tear your midnight watch apart (= disturb)". I am aware of the grammatical problem involved here, namely that we would expect a present-future verbal form (-si-il-le). Cf. Wilcke, *ZA* 68(1978) 203, takes it as verb of the past tense⁶: "Deine Rücken hat er dir...". It is difficult to find this convincing. Why should one give someone the advice not to buy an animal because it has already done something to the man? Similar problems occur in the following lines (with Wilcke's translations): Line 58: *ur₅-tuku na-an-bad-e lú-bi ša-ba-e-^lx^l-kúr*, "Du sollst einen Gläubiger nicht fortschicken(?!) Der Mann hat es für dich geändert", on which he comments as follows (p. 216): "Der Gläubiger hat eine Wende (zum Guten) gebracht". Line 158: *dumu engar-ra-ra níg nam-mu-ra-ra-an e-pa₅-zu šè-im-ra*, "Du sollst den Sohn eines "Bauern" nicht schlagen - er hat deine Bewässerungsgräben angelegt".⁷ In both cases the reference to benefits done in the past as a motive for treating someone leniently seems suspicious in the practically disposed morality code of Shuruppak's instructions. Further, line 54: *gemé - zu-úr giš na-an-dù zu-úr šu-m[u]-ru-in-ša₄*, "Du sollst deine Sklavin nicht beschlafen! Sie hat dir...!" The solution may depend on the theory that the Sumerian verbal system distinguishes aspect rather than tense. Hopefully the Akkadian translation of The Instructions of Shuruppak will tell exactly how some of these lines are to be translated.

This line, and many others, particularly in the first part of The Instructions of Shuruppak, represent the oldest known examples of a pattern well known from ancient Near Eastern didactic literature, The Old Testament, The Book of Jesus Sirach, and the Syriac version of The Instructions of Aḥiqar, a counsel of wisdom containing advice about good behaviour, and followed by a motive clause.⁸ The motive clauses are

6. I am reluctant to use the terms *hamtu* and *maru* about the Sumerian verbal forms, for the reasons stated by G. Steiner, *RA* 75(1981)1-14.

7. There is no evidence for a verb *ra* meaning "angelegt". It could be a shortened form of *eš gán ra*, "to throw the measuring cord", but why should a peasant's son do this? What we really expect is rather "do not throw anything towards a peasant's son, he will throw it into your canal".

8. Recently these motivation clauses in The Old Testament have been extensively studied by B. Mogensen, *Israelitische leverejler og deres begrundelse* (Bibel og historie 2). Copenhagen 1983 (286, pp., in Danish). Cf. further: W. Baumgartner, "Die literarischen Gattungen des Jesus Sirach", *ZAW* 34(1914)161-199. B. Gemser, *The Importance of the Motive Clause in Old Testament Law* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum I). Leiden 1953, pp. 50-66; W. Richter, *Recht und Ethos. Versuch einer Ortung des Weisheitlichen Mahnspruches*. München 1966; R. Sonsino, *Motive Clauses in the Biblical Legal Corpora in Light of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Literature*. Diss. Pennsylvania 1975; H. J. Postel, *The Form and Function of the Motive Clause in Proverb 10-29*. Diss. Iowa 1976 (the last two titles have not been accessible to me).

mostly based on reflection or consequence, and in The Old Testament literature - on religious matter. It is worth mentioning that translations along the lines suggested by Wilcke, reflections referring to what benefit somebody has done in the past, are misplaced in this cultural context.⁹ In all likelihood the motive clauses are to be seen as indicative of the origin of this type of instruction, namely the oral advice given by an elderly man to a younger pupil, as in fact illustrated by The Instructions of Shuruppak.

15. nam-šilig gú-ga-àm, cf. line 252: nam-šilig gum-gá-am. No satisfactory explanation has as yet been given. Cf. D. Foxvog, *Or* 45(1976)372, and Cl. Wilcke, *ZA* 68(1978)213. I still believe that šilig is = šagapūru, as in line 66.

16. zi bulug-àm, var. zé ù-bulug-ga-àm. No satisfactory explanation has as yet been given. Cl. Wilcke, *ZA* 68(1978)213, understands bulug as "Grenze". The variation bulug and ù-bulug may be seen in the light of bulug, with alternating forms mu-lu-ug and ù-mu-lu-ug (SLTNi 35 II 15), meaning "chisel" or "pin (axle)". Cf. *The Sumerian Dictionary of the University Museum*, Philadelphia, PA 1984, s. v. bulug. zi can mean "life" or "throat". A "chisel-throat" is not very convincing. Note that this is not a genitival compound, but one formed like ú-lipiš-gig (line 160).

18. kéš-da gál-la-àm has not yet been satisfactorily explained. D. Foxvog, *Or* 45(1976)372, suggests: "it will cause obstruction". None of the following equations seem to help: é kéš-da = rikis bīti (AHw s. v. riksu 7 B 3), ¹⁰ kéš-da = mihir nāri, "water reservoir", sēr-da = serdu (cf. AHw and CAD s. v.).

19. Cf. *Proverbs* 22, 26, 27: "Do not be of those who make bargains, who pledge themselves as surety for loans. If you have nothing to pay with, why have your bed taken from under you?" Cf. further *Proverbs* 6, 1-5.

20. In contrast to my earlier view (edition, p. 80), I would now tentatively understand sag sal lit. as "making a narrow, slender hear" (sal = raqqi). In addition to the references quoted there, add now M.W.Green, "The Uruk Lament", *JAOS* 104(1984)271: 3.22: lú-zu-ù-ne gaba-sig i-ak-ne sag i-sal-sal-e-ne, which she translates, "But the sensible shall beat their breasts, they shall droop(?) their heads". The context suggests an act of mourning. In our text M.W.Green suggests that shame is implied. It could also be an expression of bad temper. Note that the entire second part of line 20 is omitted in all sources except Ur 1.

21. Cl. Wilcke, *ZA* 68(1978)214, understands igi-du_g as tāmartu, "visiting gift". The Akkadian translation (in my edition, p. 121) mu-ufm-..., does not support this translation. It is hardly evident why such advice should be included in a precept collection.¹¹ Perhaps to be connected with ¹²igi-du_g-ak-a = āširu (CT 19,13 a II 6, Erimhuš V 148), which AHw translates as "Betreuer", and CAD as "supervisor, helper". Tentatively I would understand igi-du_g-ak as "making an inspection". No satisfactory explanation of the second part of line 21 has been given. If urú = abūbu, "flood", as suggested by Cl. Wilcke (*ZA* 68[1978]214), it is difficult to find the reference in -bi, "its", unless it can be understood adverbially, "like a flood". The verb ša-re-e-[b]-su-su can be ṣubbū, "they will submerge", or riābu, "they will restore to you" (cf. line 46), or it may be a pun on both. However, it is remarkable that the archaic sources leave out lú-ra, "for a man", in the beginning of line 21, but insert lú-ta, "from the man", in the second part of the line (AbS II 6: lú-ta ši-sù,

9. There is one exception, admittedly, namely where a child is advised to consider what benefit his parents have done to him, e. g. *Proverbs* 23, 22: "Listen to the father who begot you"; 22,28: "Do not move back an ancient boundary line which your ancestors established".

10. There is no reason to "correct" the transliteration of text T I (Wilcke, *ZA* 68[1978]214). No signs are missing. In contrast to my edition I now read T I as mu-e-¹³túm¹. This reading is based on my hand-written notes made in University Museum 1971, which differ slightly from my copy (edition p. 147).

11. With igi-du_g, "visiting gift", the verb lá is attested, *BASOR* 94(1944)8-9: e¹⁴reš-ki-gal-la-šè igi-du_g-bi ba-an-lá. Hospitality was a virtue with the Sumerians, cf. VS X 204 VI 7-8 = VS X 205 rev. I 9-10: kaš₄-tur lú-ra giškim mu-un-e₁₁-dè (var. ù-mu-ni-¹⁵x¹) ninda ku-ni-ib / tukum-bi ki-ná nu-tuku ki-ná gar-i, "the traveller who introduces himself, give him bread, if he has no bed, make a bed!".

and Ad II 1-2: 1[ú-ta] ši-su-su). This may speak in favour of Cl. Wilcke's translation: "Die Flut wird es von dem Manne wegschwemmen!" (ZA 68[1978]203), but as he states the meaning is not evident.

26/30. Restore tentatively [du₁₄] ká é-gal-la[izi]-ám ba-ra-si-ga.

27/31. Cl. Wilcke, ZA 68(1978)214, may be right in reading Ur 1: -r]a nam-ma-bi-ib- < DU >, but AbS III 2: du₇ sila kúr da[b₃]-ma does not favour such an emendation (one would then expect na-dab₅ or similar). The OB texts seem to be corrupt. I would suggest that sila kúr-ra dab₅-ma-ni-ib, or something similar, is intended. T 1 is not clear either.

With this line compare W. G. Lambert, BWL 100: 36: *ina pa-an šal-tim-ma pu-tur e tak-pu-ud*, "when confronted with a dispute, go your way; pay no attention to it". Cf. further *Ahiqar III 73*: "Hâte-toi de fuir l'endroit où il y a dispute et ton âme sera dans la calme."¹²

Lines 87-91 of The Instructions of Shuruppak

After line 87, K 13942 inserts na-ri ab-b[a níg kal-la-ám, etc., identical with line 13.

On the basis of K 13942 line 88-91 should now read as follows:

88. ka kaš nag-a [...
 89. lú-tur-mu lú [x] [...
 90. ka kaš n[ag...
 91. ^dnin-ka-si [...

Translation

88. The beer drinking mouth...
 89. My little one...
 90. The beer drinking mouth...
 91. Ninkasi...

Line 224 of The Instruction of Shuruppak

I would now understand munus-bar-šu-gál on the basis of bar-šu-gál = *qabbiru*, a person associated with funerary rites (cf. CAD s.v.).

12. F. Nau, *Histoire et sagesse d'Ahiqar. Trad. des versions syriaques avec les principales différences des versions arabes, arménienne, grecque, néo-syriaque, slave et roumaine*. Paris 1909, pp. 177-178.