museum number: IM65236
excavation number: ND9368
provenience: Nimrud (SW 37)
date: NeoAssyrian (ca. 800BC)
description: Stylized tree with one set of upward-curving branches

iṣu GIŠ "tree; wood"

MSL 3:19 61. *i-ṣu$_2$* GIŠ = *gi-iš-šu* (S^a)
MSL 3:19 62. **gi-iš** GIŠ = *gi-iš-šu* (S^a)
MSL 3:123 303. **gi-iš** GIŠ = *iṣ-ṣu* (S^b A)
MSL 14:363 199. *i-iṣ* GIŠ *ge-šu* = *i-ṣu* (Ea A = *naqu* IV)
MSL 14:363 201. **ge-eš** GIŠ MIN (= *ge-šu*) = *i-ṣu* (Ea A = *naqu* IV)
Idu II 185. **gi-iš** GIŠ = *i-ṣu*
Emar S^a Vocabulary 205. GIŠ = *i-ṣu$_2$-u$_2$*
MDP 18 53 2 GIŠ.ID$_2$.TUL$_2$.LA$_2$ **hi-eš**-tu-ul-la (pronunciation) = *u$_3$ i-ṣi$_2$ a-pu-ni*

CT 18 3 8. *ne-e-ru* = *i-ṣu*
CT 18 3 9. *a-nu* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*)
CT 18 3 10. *ne-ma-šu* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*)
Malku II (synonym list)
132. *a-nu* = *i-ṣu*
133. *ne-ma-šu* = *i-ṣu*
CT 18 3 12. *ka-lu-u$_2$-tum* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*)
CT 18 3 13. *a-ka-lu-u$_2$-tum* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*)
CT 18 3 14. *da-ki-ru-u$_2$* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*)
CT 18 3 15. *mi-ri-šu* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*)

lugal ud me-lam$_2$-bi nir-gal$_2$
81 im-hul u$_x$-lu-da giš-a mu-un-du$_3$ = *im-hul-lu me-hu-u$_2$ i-na iṣ-ṣi re-ti-šu$_2$* "il empala le vent méchant et le sirocco sur un poteau"
87 giš-mah-bi dub$_2$-bi-a mu-un-bal-e ^{giš}tir-ra guru$_5$-uš am$_3$-me = *iṣ-ṣa ṣi-i-ra iš-da-nu-uš-šu$_2$-nu uš-ta-nab-lak-kat qišta ukappir* "Il arracha les arbres très hauts de leurs troncs, rasa les forêts"

Liturgies exorcistiques agraires (Textes de Tell Haddad IX)
Revers Colonne iii 13 **mi-iš** te-e-ra ur-ba e-ku-te pa-bi i-it-ku-re "Il coupe l'arbre du bosquet avec ses racines, il en ronge les branches"

Another meaning of GIŠ is "heaven" (although AN is more usual). A connection between "tree" and "heaven" can be established by the Mesopotamian idea of the transference of kingship (or shepherdship).
"The heavenly origin of kingship is already attested in the earliest Mesopotamian cultures. In both Sumerian and Babylonian mythology, it is expressed allegorically with the image of a tree planted upon earth by the mother goddess, Inanna/Ishtar. The sacred tree, usually represented in the form of a stylized palm tree growing on a mountain, is the most common decorative motif in Assyrian royal iconography" (Parpola 1999).

As a matter of course, Enlil, the supreme god of Sumer and Akkad, is the obvious person to grant kingship. The "Letter from Ibbi-Suen to Puzur-Šulgi hoping for Išbi-Erra's downfall" furnishes a clear, albeit abusive, example:
"Today Enlil loathes Sumer and has elevated to the shepherdship of the Land an ape which has descended from those mountain lands. Now Enlil has given kingship to a dishonest man, a seller of asafoetida – to Išbi-Erra, who is not of Sumerian origin" (etcsl).
Moreover, considering the above and the fact that one of Enlil's most common epithets reads kur-gal, "great mountain" (his most famous sanctuary is the e-kur "the house of the mountain" in Nippur), it is obvious to translate e-kur-giš as "the house of the mountain and the tree".
In conclusion, the syllabic variations in both GIŠ "heaven" and e-kur-giš are not out of place in the *iṣu*-section.

NSCFIG3
Ekur, the ziggurat of Enlil at Nippur

šamu GIŠ "sky, heaven"

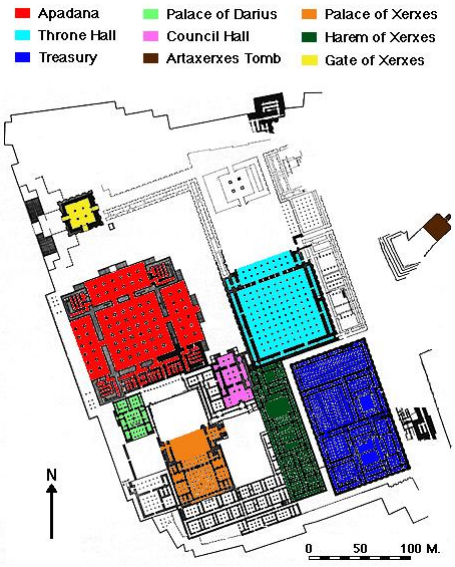
MSL 2:141 14. GIŠ = *ša-mu-u₂* (Ur-e-a = *naqu* Rezension C)
Idu II 176. **gi-iš** GIŠ = *ša₂-mu-u₂*
Emar S[a] Vocabulary 206. GIŠ **ne₂-eš** = *ša-mu-u*

Malku II (synonym list)
99. *bu-ru-mu* = *ša₂-mu-u*
100. *aš₂-ru* = *ša₂-mu-u*
101. *ir-mi* [ilu]*A-nim* = *ša₂-mu-u* (*ermu Ani* "Anu's canopy")

MSL 13:151 13. e₂-kur-GIŠ. e-gur-**na-aš**-ki = *bi-it mu-li-li* "the house of Enlil" (Ka₂-gal = *abullu* Boghazköy I)

Languages that have adopted the Sumerian writing system, can use the sign GIŠ in writing the word "tree", yet to be pronounced as *iṣu* (Akkadian), *izu* (Eblaite), *malu* (Elamite), *taru* (Hittite, Luvian), *ᶜṣ* (Ugaritic). Syllabic writing, however, enables them to write their own words in cuneiform script. For example:
Akkadian
The translations of lines 81 and 87 of lugal ud me-lam₂-bi nir-gal₂: *iṣ-ṣi*, *iṣ-ṣa*
Eblaite
395. GIŠ.ŠINIG = *i-zu ba-ne*(*-um*)

411. GIŠ.URUDU.URUDU = *i*$_3$*-zu gu*-PI
Elamite
Darius I Susa f (DSf) 44 *ma-lu*
CT 18 3 16 *hu-uk* = MIN (= *i-ṣu*) NIM(Elam)
Luvian
KBo XXIX 6 Rs 12 *ta-a-ru*
KBo XXIX 38 Rs 14, 16 *da-ru*
Ugaritic



PAAI_Persepolis_Plan_72dpi

PF 1246 GIŠ še-iš-ki-ra "woodworker"
PT 1957:1 GIŠ še-iš-ki-ip "wood carvers"
PF 864 GIŠ ku-ti-ip "carriers of wood"
PT 1957:1 bat-ti-kur-raš GIŠ-na "sculptures of wood"
PT 1957:2 GIŠ maš-da-ki-ip "wood-…"
PF 1487 ma-lu-ip "woodworkers"
PT 1963:5 GIŠ še-iš-ki-ip "woodworkers"