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Volume 2

A COW OF SÎN

Niek Veldhuis

PREFACE

The present study grew out of an essay on 'A Cow of sîn' I finished in 1984, as a student of Dr. H. L. J. Vanstiphout, at the Institute of Semitic Studies, Groningen State University.

For some reasons this book differs considerably from my original essay. First of all I wanted to present the results of my research to a public of both specialists and non-specialists. Therefore, philological discussions are kept to a minimum. I am aware that I can only do so, thanks to previously published specialized philological studies on these texts. Secondly, a number of publications appeared in recent years, providing new materials and new insights. Lastly, a critical reading of my own work, urged me to look for a more comprehensible and transparent organisation of the text. Wether I succeeded in doing so, the reader will have to judge.

Dr. Vanstiphout suggested me the subject of my essay. He also agreed in helping me with writing this definitive version. He has guided me in his very own way, which all of his students know so well. I am glad to get the oppotunity to express my gratitude for his teachings and his inspiring ideas. His open but critical attitude towards new and unexpected interpretations, is characterized by one of his favorite sayings: the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In this intellectual atmosphere I felt at home.

I wish to thank Prof. Dr. M. Stol (Amsterdam) and Dr. M. E. Vogelzang (Groningen) for critically reading the manuscript and for their valuable remarks. A special word of thanks I owe to the editor, Drs. G. Haayer, who encouraged me to publish this study in the series *Library of Oriental Texts*. I hope that the reader will join me in the pleasure I had in reading and analyzing 'A Cow of Sîn'. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Nijmegen, june 1990
Niek Veldhuis

CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

'A Cow of Sîn' is found in four versions on five tablets from various periods and places (see § 1.3). The purpose of this study is to present the text in its different articulations and to study it from a literary point of view, taking into account both poetic (narrative) and pragmatic (being part of a magical ceremony) aspects and the relation between them. The study is meant both for the specialist in Assyriology and for the informed layman in this field.

1.1   'A COW OF SîN' IN MESOPOTAMIAN CULTURE

Among the bulk of clay tablets, unearthed mainly in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Turkey, not a few belong to the magical-medical texts. These magical-medical texts contain magical ceremonies and/or medical prescriptions for all conceivable kinds of afflictions, from impotence to eye-illnesses.[1] A number of these texts are concerned with birth; childbirth ceremonies from various periods and places have been found.

'A Cow of Sîn' is an incantation for a woman in childbirth. It contains a small mythological narrative (about 20 lines) about the moongod and his cow, called Geme-Sîn. Sîn falls in love with his cow because of her beauty and sex appeal. As a 'wild bull' he impregnates her. When the time of pregnancy has gone by the pangs begin and Sîn hears her cries in heaven. Two helping spirits descend to earth and perform a ritual so that Geme-Sîn gives birth easily. The calf is named *būr šizbi*: 'Milk Calf'. The incantation ends with a supplication: may this woman give birth as easily as Geme-Sîn.

In Mesopotamia, unlike in some other cultures, the moongod (Sîn, also called Nanna) is masculine. Because of his horns, which are clearly visible when the moon is waxing, he is often associated with cattle. 'Wild bull' is one of his well-known epithets. On the other hand, in astrological texts the moon is frequently designated as a shepherd, the stars sometimes being his flock.[2] In hymns the moongod is often given a pastoral role, conveying fertility upon his cattle herd.[3] In our text both notions are present: Sîn is bull and herdsman.

The other mythological beings which appear in the narrative are called 'Lamassus' or (in another version) 'Daughters of Anu'. Lamassus appear in Mesopotamian culture in two forms. In the first place, the Lamassu is known as a (female) protective spirit. A god, a temple, or a person can have his own Lamassu. In the second place, the Lamassu appears as a doorkeeper. The colossal sculptures at the doors in the Neo-Assyrian palaces are called Lamassus.[4] The 'daughters of

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[1] See Ritter 1965.
[2] See Thompson 1900 Introduction p.xxiv.
[3] Sjöberg 1960 and most recently Hall 1986.
[4] Oppenheim 1977, p.199 and the article 'Lamassu' in *RlA* by Foxfog, Heimpel, and Kilmer (1983).

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Anu' frequently occur in magical-medical literature.[5] Often there are two of them, sometimes seven, or even 'seven and seven'.

1.2 EARLIER STUDIES

In 1911 Meloni published a fragment of the Neo-Assyrian compendium for a woman in childbirth containing magical ceremonies (incantations and rituals) and prescriptions. The tablet (K 2413) once belonged to the famous library of Assurbanipal in Nineveh. The manuscript contains a version of 'A Cow of Sîn'. At that point, however, the second half of each line is broken away, allowing only a general idea of its purport. The tablet was republished by Thompson in 1923 in his *Assyrian Medical Texts* (no.67/1). In the same year Ebeling published another copy of the same compendium, this one from Assur (VAT 8869: *KAR* 196; republished by Köcher in 1964 as *BAM* 248). In this manuscript the text of 'A Cow of Sîn' is undamaged. Ebeling translated the tablet in *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* (Ebeling 1923). His translation is still highly valuable. It was the first translation of 'A Cow of Sîn', and is still the only full-length translation of the compendium.

An ancient commentary text on this tablet was published by Civil in 1974. The manuscript (11N-T3) was found at Nippur. Unfortunately, the incantation 'A Cow of Sîn' is not commented upon.

Böhl set little value upon the aesthetical quality of 'A Cow of Sîn', not to mention its ethical quality. Nevertheless, he presented a translation in Dutch in the *JEOL* (Böhl 1936). Brongers, who republished this translation, considered the story to be frivolous (Brongers 1951, p.72–73). Regrettably, Böhl's translation is not very reliable, neither is the cuneiform text which is included in his *Chrestomathy* (1947). In the last two decades no less than four translations have appeared:

Labat 1970 (*RPO*), p.286f.; French.
Albertz 1978, p.53; German; ill-based.
Stol 1983, p.29f.; Dutch.
Farber 1987; German; very reliable.

Stol not only translated 'A Cow of Sîn' but nearly all the legible incantations found in this compendium. Many other texts relevant to birth are included in this book, in Dutch translation and with ample references.
Transcriptions and translations of some selected passages were presented by Beckmann (1983, p.187f.). He compared 'A Cow of Sîn' with a Hittite text.

In his introduction to *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk II*, Von Weiher (1983) made some interpretative comments on 'A Cow of Sîn' and on the compendium in general. He assumed that the incantation 'A Cow of Sîn' was meant for an unmarried pregnant woman who was rejected by her family and must cope on her own, not only with the pangs of birth but also with her feelings of guilt. This is based on the passage in the story where the beloved cow is mounted in secret by a wild bull.

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[5] See e.g Landsberger and Jacobsen 1955 text A, Ca–Ce and note 29, with corrections and new references in Landsberger 1958, p.57 and note 6.

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His arguments do not sound convincing to me; the nature of the textual evidence does not allow such inferences.

A general discussion on the organization of the compendium as a whole is to be found in Veldhuis 1989.

As early as 1922 Weidner published a small fragment from Boghazköy, containing some lines of two incantations (Bo 4822: *KUB* IV, 13). As far as I know, Meier (1939, p.198) was the first one to recognize the first of these as a version of 'A Cow of Sîn'. Probably due to its fragmentary state the text has been given little attention (first transliteration in Röllig 1985).

In 1965 and 1969 Lambert published two Middle Assyrian tablets, containing new versions of 'A Cow of Sîn'. In his articles Lambert compared the available versions in order to reconstruct the textual history of the narrative, and, by this means, to explain obscure passages. This diachronical approach is followed to an extreme by Röllig (1985). He even gives a translation of a supposed 'original text' which, according to him, lies behind the variants.

Since 1969 no new manuscripts or versions of 'A Cow of Sîn' have come to light. In 1972 Van Dijk drew attention for the first time to parallel materials in other Sumerian and Akkadian incantations for a woman in childbirth. He identified three continually recurring motifs in these incantations: the cow, the boat and the helping spirits, all of them in different variants (compare Van Dijk 1972, p.340 ff. and Van Dijk 1975, p.70 ff.) He analyzed these motifs and published relevant texts in three articles (1972, 1973 and 1975). Other (mostly Sumerian) childbirth incantations with more or less parallel motifs have been published by Cohen (1976), Sigrist (1980), Gertrud Farber (1984), and Krebernik (1984, p.36–47). In many Old Babylonian Sumerian childbirth incantations a cow appears. She is impregnated in a sacred cowshed. Van Dijk suggested a connection with the theriomorphic royal symbolism of the Ur III dynasty (1975, p.71). Stol (1983, p.30) noticed that Geme-Sîn was the name of Šulgi's wife. He suggested that the incantation was composed for her on the occasion of a difficult delivery.

1.3 THE MANUSCRIPTS

The incantation is found in five manuscripts:

Sigl.	Period	Provenance	Edition	Exc./Mus. no.
A	Neo-Assyrian	Assur	*KAR* 196 *BAM* 248	VAT 8869
A′	Neo-Assyrian	Nineveh	Meloni 1911 *AMT* 67/1	K 2413 +
B	Middle Assyrian	Nimrud	Lambert 1965	Rm 376
C	Middle Assyrian	?	Lambert 1969	Ligabue coll.
D	Middle Babylonian	Boghazköy	*KUB* IV,13	Bo 4822

The incantation 'A Cow of Sîn' is only a part of each manuscript. For convenience, the manuscripts are indicated by capitals, the versions of 'A Cow of Sîn' by the corresponding letters in lower case.

a : A   III   10–35
a′: A′ III   4–29
b : B   Obv. 19–36
c : C   51–62
d : D   1′–13′

All manuscripts contain, besides 'A Cow of Sîn', other more or less related materials.

A and A′

Ms. A is a four-column tablet containing incantations, rituals, and prescriptions for a woman in childbirth. 'A Cow of Sîn' is found in the third column. It is followed by two other incantations also mentioning a cow and clearly referring to the narrative (see § 2.5). Unlike most other incantations in this manuscript 'A Cow of Sîn' is not followed by a ritual. Ms. A′ duplicates A and restores parts of the passages damaged in A. Lambert has indentified four unpublished fragments of the Nineveh copy which are: K 3485 + K10443, K 8210, and K 18482. These fragments are known to me from photographs. A few signs belong to 'A Cow of Sîn'. The line numbers of **a′** can now be established with certainty; A′ differs slightly in column division (A′ III 1 = A III 7). The text of 'A Cow of Sîn' on the Nineveh tablet is broken, only the first half of each line is preserved. In Veldhuis 1989 an attempt was made to reconstruct the text of the compendium and to analyze its organization (with a provisional transliteration of the unpublished material).

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B

The place where this tablet was found was rediscovered by Reade and is the area of the Kidmuri temple at Nimrud (Reade 1986, p.218). Ms. B was originally a four-column tablet. Half of the tablet is lost, so that on the obverse and reverse only one column is preserved. The tablet is of Middle Assyrian origin (about 1100 B.C.) and in later times probably belonged to the library of Assurbanipal (Lambert 1965). The text is difficult but clearly contains incantations for different purposes. Text **b** is the last section of the obverse.

C

Ms. C is the private property of Signor Ligabue of Venice (see Lambert 1969). It is a single column tablet and is very well preserved. It dates from the Middle Assyrian period but its provenance is unknown. It contains four prescriptions for a pregnant woman suffering from colic (1–31), and two incantations for a woman in childbirth (33–62). Line 32 is a kind of colophon, indicating that both sections of this tablet are derived from different sources (see Lambert 1969, p.33). Both the prescriptions and the incantations are separated by horizontal lines. The second incantation is 'A Cow of Sîn'.

D

Ms. D is a fragment of a tablet containing parts of two incantations for a woman in childbirth, the first of which is text **d**. The second incantation also mentions a cow. This is a hitherto unrecognized version of an incantation which was already known from the Old Babylonian period and also appears in the Neo-Assyrian compendium (Ms. A/A′I 40–41; see § 4.4). Since no complete transliteration of Ms. D exists it is presented in its entirety in § 4.4.

Ms. D was found at Boghazköy and must be dated to about 1300 B.C. Presumably this is the oldest occurrence of 'A Cow of Sîn', originating far outside the Mesopotamian cultural centers. The tablet is obviously not imported but written by a native scribe, as can be concluded from sign values and grammatical peculiarities (see § 4.4). The text of 'A Cow of Sîn' is followed by a rubric and a short ritual, separated from the incantations by horizontal lines.

R.S. 25–436

According to J.Nougayrol (cited in Caquot 1974 p.386 note 1), a tablet from Ugarit (R.S. 25–436) contains yet another version of 'A Cow of Sîn'. To date this tablet remains unpublished.

1.4 A SYNCHRONIC METHODOLOGY

In this study I will adopt a principally synchronic point of view. That is to say, I will not trouble to trace the history of a literary motif, nor to reconstruct the 'original text'. Indeed, as the quotation marks indicate, I have strong doubts about the usefulness of this concept.

I am interested in the way in which each individual version could be, or might have been, interpreted by a contemporary Mesopotamian reader in his cultural context. The texts were read, or rather recited, by a Mesopotamian magician while treating a woman in childbirth. In principle it would be possible to take another point of reference, namely the interpretation of the woman being attended to. In practice this would be more difficult, since we do not know for which social group these incantations were intended to be used: for the royal family? For each and every woman? Or, more probably, for some elite? Moreover, we do not know to what kind of texts and traditions such a woman had access. The magician, on the other hand, is known to have been a literate person who was at home among the literary and magical traditions of Mesopotamia. Last but not least, the magician was the one who read the text on the clay tablet. We are able to see what he saw: the lay out, the way of writing, the sign plays.

Therefore, my main question can be formulated as follows. What interpretation of each individual version was possible for and available to a Mesopotamian magician, while reciting it for a woman in childbirth?

As a result, and here I will often disagree with previous studies, if a sentence or word can be read unaltered, no matter how improbable in meaning at first sight, I will try to interpret it in that way. Moreover, even an impossible word or a mistake is, as such, a sign and a bearer of meaning. In such cases I will look for an interpretation of this sign which could have been available to the user of the text (a double entendre, a sound play or the like), rather than correcting the text with the help of other versions, which were certainly not available to him.

I do not dogmatically exclude small corrections of the cuneiform text. After all, we normally correct misprints and other mistakes in our contemporary texts, often unconsciously. For instance, text **b**, 24 must be read *pu-zu!-ur*, although the tablet reads *pu-*KA*-ur*. Regrettably, an elaborated theory, deciding in which cases an emendation in a cuneiform text is to be allowed, is still lacking. These remarks are not meant to fill the gap, but rather to make clear my objective in reading these texts, and the questions I am going to ask.

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CHAPTER 2 TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

In this chapter the texts are given in scriptio continua and in translation. The transcription is given in such a way that, to a certain degree, the structure of the text becomes apparent. This will be useful for the poetical analysis in chapter 3.

2.1 TEXT a

Transcription

¹⁰ šiptu
   iltēt littu ša Sîn Geme-Sîn šumša
¹¹ tiqnāte tuqqunat   ¹² binûtam kazbat
   īmuršima Sîn irāmši
¹³ namru ša Sîn šubaḫi ištakanši   ¹⁴ ušteṣbissima pān sukullim
¹⁵ rē'ûtu illaka arkīša
¹⁶ ina nurub šammēᵃ ire''i šammē   ¹⁷ ina subbê mašqêᵇ išaqqûši mê

¹⁸ ina puzur kaparrī   lā amār rē'î
¹⁹ ana muḫḫi litti ištaḫiṭ mīru ekdu   zibbatušša išši
²⁰ ūmēša ina quttî   arḫiša ina gamāri
²¹ littu igtalitᶜ   ugallitᵈ ²² rē'âša
   appašu qadissu   kaparrū kalîšunu sapdūšu

²³ ana ikkillīša   ana rigim ḫâlīša
   nepalsaḫ Nannāru
²⁴ Sîn ina šamê ištamme rigimša   išši qāssu šamāmē
²⁵ šitta lamassātu šamê ūridānimma
   iltēt šaman pūri našât   ²⁶ šanītum ušappala mê ḫâli
   ilput šaman pūri pūssa   ²⁷ mê ḫâli usappiḫa kala zumrīša
²⁸ šanâ ilput šaman pūri pūssa   ²⁹ mê ḫâli usappiḫa kala zumrīša
³⁰ šallatiššu ina lapāti
³¹ būru kīma uzāli imtaqut qaqqaršu
³² būr šizbi ištakan šum būri

³³ kīma Geme-Sîn išariš īlida
³⁴ līlid ardatum mušapšiqtum
³⁵ šabšūtumᵉ aj ikkali
   erītu līšir

ᵃ**a**′: šammī   ᵇ**a**′: mašqî   ᶜ**a**′: igdalit   ᵈ**a**′: igallit   ᵉ**a**′: šabsūtum

Translation

[10] Incantation: There was a cow of Sîn, Geme-Sîn by name.
[11] With ornaments decorated, [12] tempting of shape she was.
Sîn saw her and fell in love with her.
[13] The brilliance(?) of Sîn he laid (...?) upon her.
[14] He appointed her at the head of the herd, [15] the herdsmen[f] followed her.
[16] In the lushest grasses she grazed, [17] at the abundant well they watered her.

[18] Hidden from the herd boys, not seen by the herdsman, [19] the wild bull mounted the cow, he lifted her tail(?).
[20] When her days came to an end, her months were finished, [21] the cow trembled and terrified [22] her herdsman. His head was bowed, all the herd boys lamented with him.[g]

[23] At her crying, at her screaming in labour, Nannāru[h] was downcast.
[24] Sîn heard her screaming in heaven and lifted high his hand.
[25] Two Lamassus descended from heaven. One of them carried 'oil-from-the-jar',
[26] the other brought down 'water-of-labour'. With 'oil-from-the-jar' she touched her forehead, [27] with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.
[28] Once again she touched her forehead with 'oil-from-the-jar', [29] with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.
[30] When she touched for the third time, [31] the calf fell down on the ground like a gazelle's young.
[32] 'Milk-calf' she called the calf.

[33] Just as Geme-Sîn gave birth normally, [34] may also this girl in labour give birth.
[35] Let the midwife not tarry, let the pregnant one be all right.

[f] Literally: 'the herdship'.   [g] a': the cow trembled severely. The head of her herdsman was bowed, all the shepherd boys lamented with him.   [h] *Nannāru*, meaning 'light', is an epithet of Sîn.

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2.2 TEXT **b**

Transcription

¹⁹ EN$_2$.E$_2$.NU.RU$_3$
²⁰ littu ša Sîn Geme-Sîn
   šiknāte mutturat   minûta kazbat
²¹ ēmuršima Sîn irāmši
   miḫir Sîn namrūte mu-[   ]   ²² ultaṣbissi pānu sukullīša
   lātu illakā ina [arkīša]
²³ ina nurub šammē ira"īši   ina šubbê ša mašqê [išaqqīši]

²⁴ ina puzur rē'î   lā lamād kaparrī
   litta il[taḫit] ²⁵ būru ekdu
   arḫīša ina gamāri   ūmēša ina [quttî]
²⁶ littu iktamiṣi   iḫâl arḫu
   rē'û[   ]   ²⁷ u kaparrū kalâšunu sapdūši
   sa-ap- [   ]
²⁸ našīšu u kaparru ukannaša

   ana[   ]   ²⁹ [ana] rigim ḫîlīša
   ina šamê ištamā rigim[ša]
³⁰ šitta lamassātu šamê ūridāni
   iltīt[   ]   ³¹ [   ] našât mê šulme
³² [   ] ša litti ša [   ]
³³ [   ] imquta ugāršu ana ḫar[   ]
³⁴ [   ] kīma Geme-Sîn lēšera [   ]
³⁵ [   ]
³⁶ [   ] lēšer

Translation

19 Incantation: 20 A Cow of Sîn was Geme-Sîn, great was her stature and attractive her shape.
21 Sîn saw her and fell in love with her.
(...???).
22 He appointed her at the head of her herd; the cows followed [her].
23 He pastured her in the lushest grasses, at the abundance of the well [he watered her.]
24 Hidden from the herdsman, not noticed by the herd boys, the wild bull mounted the cow.
25 When her months were finished, her days [came to an end,] 26 the cow squatted and was taken with labour pains. The herdsman ..... 27 all the herd boys lamented her. (..... 28 .... he bore it, and the herd boy . . .???) At [her crying], 29 [at] her screaming in labour, they heard her screaming in heaven.
30 Two Lamassus descended from heaven.
One of them ... 31 ... she carried 'water of well-being'.
32 .... the cow .... 33 .... he (=the calf) fell on the field ....
34 ....just as Geme-Sîn may she be all right ....
35 ....
36 .... may she be all right.

2.3 TEXT c

Transcription

⁵¹ Gī-Sîn amtu ša Sîn alāda šapšuqat
šerra ⁵² kunnat   šerra kunnat ana qatû napište
maḫiṣ sikkūrum   ⁵³ saniq bābu ana tīnuqi lalû
ēmuršima Sîn ⁵⁴ ira"īši
ana nurub šammē irtana"i   ina saḫḫi[   ] ⁵⁵ iltanaqqi mê

ana muḫḫi litti iltikiṭ būru ⁵⁶ ekdu
ūmēša ana mullê   arḫēša ana [   ]
⁵⁷ taḫtimiš taḫâl būrtu

ina [   ]   ⁵⁸ ina rigmī ḫîlīša
Sîn nannār šamê [ ]
⁵⁹ šitta šina marāt Anim ultu šamê ūridāni
ištēte našât mê ḫili   šanītu ⁶⁰ našât šaman pūri
mê ḫili lilput pūssa   šaman pūri[   ] ⁶¹ kala zumrīša

kīma Gī-Sîn amtu ša Sîn ešriši tūlidu
lū tūlid ⁶² ardatu multapšiqtu
EN$_2$.E$_2$.NU.RU

2.4 TEXT d

Transcription

^{6′} ilput [   ]
^{7′} ina šanî ilput [   ]
^{8′} pāna zumrīšu ina šanî [   ]
^{9′} imqut qaqqaršu [   ]
^{10′} iltakan šum [   ]

^{11′} līlda ardatum [   ]
^{12′} erītum līšer [   ]

^{13′} INIM.INIM.MA šipat mušapšiqti [   ]

Translation

[51] Gī-Sîn, slave-girl of Sîn has trouble in childbirth. The child [52] is stuck, the child is stuck, to bring life to an end. The bolt is drawn, [53] the door is secured against the suckling babe.

Sîn saw her and [54] pastured her. Among the lushest grasses he always pastured her, in the meadows .... [55] he always watered her.

The wild bull mounted the cow. [56] When her days were fulfilled, her months [finished,] [57] the cow bent down and was taken with labour pains.

[At her crying], [58] at her screaming in labour, Sîn, the light of heaven, [heard her screaming.] [59] Two are the daughters of Anu, they descended from heaven. One of them carried 'water-of-labour', the second [60] carried 'oil-from-the-jar'.

With 'water-of-labour' he must touch her forehead, with 'oil-from-the-jar' [he must sprinkle?] [61] her whole body.

Just as Gī-Sîn, the slave-girl of Sîn, gave birth normally, may also [62] this girl in labour give birth. Incantation.

Translation

[6'] She touched ....
[7'] a second time she touched ....
[8'] the front(?) of her body, for the second time she ...
[9'] He fell on the ground ....
[10'] She called him ....
[11'] May this girl give birth ....
[12'] This pregnant one may give birth normally ....
[13'] Inim.inim.ma, incantation for a woman in labour.

2.5   TWO RELATED INCANTATIONS FROM MS. A

On tablet A are found two other incantations which also mention 'a cow of Sîn', without, however, telling the full story. They are interesting enough to give them here in translation. In the manuscript they immediately follow text **a**.

Ms. A III 36–IV 1

36 Incantation: Narundi Naḫundi nanamgišir ⁱ
37 There was a cow of Sîn, Geme-Sîn by name.
38 At her crying, at her screaming in labour
39 Nannāru-Sîn heard her screaming.
40 'Who is it Narundi, who is it Naḫundi?'
41 'A cow, o lord, she has trouble in delivery!
42 O lord, sprinkle water from your Banduddu-bucket over her!'
43 Let the face of the cow Egi-Sîn be 'opened'.
44 May he come out like a snake, may he glide like a little snake.
45 May he not draw back his cheek, just as someone who falls down from a wall.
    End of the incantation.

46 Its ritual: dust from a crossroads, dust from the first threshold
47 dust from the upper and the lower 'box'
48 dust from the 'box' of the door: a very big stem of reed
49 you must cut off top and bottom.
50 The above mentioned kinds of dust you will throw into oil,
51 you will recite over it this incantation seven times.
52 The big stem of reed you will fill and her bulging belly
53 you will rub from top to bottom.

54 Incantation: The big cow of Sîn, of Sîn I am.
55 I am pregnant and I am butting all the time.
56 With my horns I root up the soil.
57 With my tail I whirl up dust clouds.
58 At the quay of death the ship is held fast^j,
59 at the quay of distress the cargo boat is held fast.
60 .... Ea, lord of incantation!
61 [At the quay of death] let them loosen the ship,
62 [at the quay of distress let] them untie the cargo boat!
    (some lines lost.)

Column IV:

[1] Let the child come out rapidly and see the light of the sun! End of the incantation.

[i] Compare I58; Narundi and Naḫundi are Elamite gods, probably the sun and the moon; see Civil 1974, p. 334, 27. For references concerning these gods see Van Dijk 1975, p. 53 with additional note on p. 79 and Van Dijk 1982. Nanamgišir is mumbo-jumbo Sumerian. [j] This boat-motif is present in many Sumerian and Akkadian incantations for the same purpose. See Van Dijk 1975, p. 73f.; Cohen 1976, p. 133f.; translation of an important Sumerian example in Römer 1987.
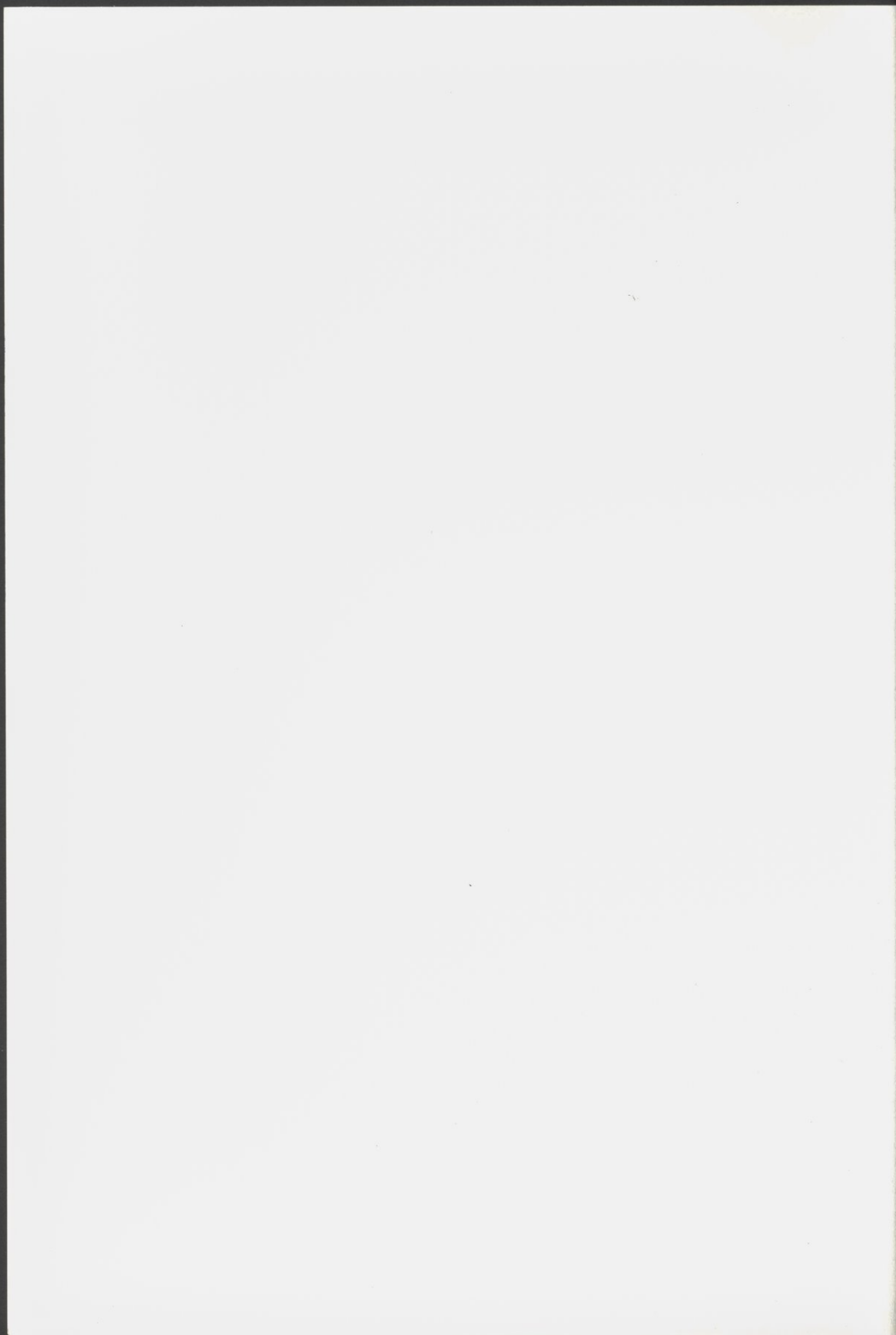
CHAPTER 3   ANALYSIS

3.0   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will present an analysis of the narrative incantation 'A Cow of Sîn'. This includes a study of texture (§ 3.1) and structure (§ 3.2). The structure of the narrative will be shown to be reflected in several ways in the texture. That is to say: texture and structure are integrated into a finished whole (§ 3.3).

Yet, an incantation is not just a poem, it is part of a magical ceremony which is intended to influence the future. A poem creates a fictional world whereas magic is intended to intervene in our world. A different literary treatment of this tension generates an entirely different text, as will be shown in the comparison of the two best preserved versions: **a** and **c** (§ 3.4).

Stimulating analyses of Mesopotamian incantations have already been produced by Michalowski (1981) and Reiner (1985). Michalowski dealt with a Sumerian incantation against Gall. In the chapter 'Lyric Poetry' Reiner analyzed the Akkadian incantation 'The Heart Grass' (p. 94–100). The results of their analyses will be discussed briefly in § 3.5. In this concluding paragraph, some suggestions will be presented for a literary theory of incantation which takes into account the relation between the literary and the incantational character of the text.

3.1   TEXTURE

We will begin our analysis of the text on the level of texture, the most concrete and material level. Texture is the sum of the formal literary devices present in a text. It embraces both the audible patterns and the material or visible aspects of a text put down in writing. In the discussion of the visible aspects[1] we will first concentrate on the lay-out, and secondly on the writing itself: use of logograms and sign plays.[2] Thirdly, we will discuss the audible aspects of the texts when read aloud: word plays and sound patterns. Lastly, we will treat parallelism as a formal device in the construction of (literary) texts, belonging to a border area between texture and structure.

3.1.1   Lay-out

It is important to realize that 'A Cow of Sîn' never stood on its own; in all its versions it is a part of a larger whole since it is included in one or another collection of magical-medical materials. 'A Cow of Sîn' is transmitted in five manuscripts. On all the tablets discussed here, the various sections of the manuscript are clearly

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[1] On the visible aspects of cuneiform writing see Vanstiphout 1988.
[2] On the tablets themselves, colour, condition etc. see Lambert 1965 (tablet B) and Lambert 1969 (tablet C). On the other tablets I have no relevant information.

separated by horizontal lines, so we have no trouble in delimiting the text of 'A Cow of Sîn'. Apart from these lines, the writer of tablet C seems to have paid hardly any attention to lay-out. The space available on the tablet is used as efficiently as possible. 'A Cow of Sîn' is the last section of this single-column tablet. It begins on the reverse, continues on the top-edge of the tablet, and the last four lines are put on the left edge. The lines are just filled up, irrespective of whether it is a narrative or a syntactical unit.

In the other versions of 'A Cow of Sîn' the end of a line is, with a few exceptions, the end of a sentence, which is not the case with the ritual prescriptions in the same manuscripts. This in itself indicates that these incantations claim some poetic quality.[3]

The two Neo-Assyrian manuscripts (A and A') are four-column tablets. Both manuscripts are library copies (from Assur and Nineveh respectively); as are all library copies from this time, they are beautifully executed in lay-out as well as in writing. The columns are separated by a vertical line. A few times the boundaries of the column are transgressed and the line is continued on the edge.

On tablet B, originally a four-column tablet, the text of 'A Cow of Sîn' is the last section of the obverse. According to its editor (Lambert 1965), this manuscript is written in a large, beautiful script, but nevertheless very difficult to read because of 'faults which occur all too commonly on tablets of this type: badly written signs and frequent erasures' (p. 284). 'A Cow of Sîn' in this manuscript has a header: $EN_2.E_2.NU.RU_3$('incantation'), placed above the text in the middle of a separate line. The last half of the concluding line (which is badly damaged) is probably empty, so indicating in the lay-out the end of the text

3.1.2 Writing[4]

In the text of 'A Cow of Sîn', at least in some versions, a sophisticated use is made of the possibilities of the cuneiform writing system in making graphical puns and double entendres. Furthermore, the versions differ in the general way of using the writing system, which is not unimportant for our understanding of the texts.

A striking characteristic of the writing of text **c** is the large number of logographs. From a total of 86 words 37 are written logographically (compare text **a**: 31 logographs from a total of 135 words).[5] Logographs may be used for different reasons. A high proportion of logographs can be observed in technical texts, such as astrological reports. The comparatively small (and technical) vocabulary of these

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[3] See Reiner 1985, p.95 on a similar text.

[4] The reader not familiar with cuneiform writing must bear in mind some important implications of the principally polyvalent character of this system. Each sign has a range of possible functions and values. The most important functions are the phonographic and the logographic functions. In the former the sign represents a syllable, in the latter an entire word. Most signs have more than one possible value in both functions. The correct reading can only be deduced from the context. On the other hand, a word can always be written in different ways.

[5] Words cannot be counted as easily as these figures may suggest. Nevertheless, they give an indication of the proportional difference.

texts, written by specialists for specialists, leads to a preference for logographic writing. In the same way, the rituals in magical-medical texts usually contain proportionally more logographs than do the incantations. The rituals are replete with technical terms for rubbing and mixing, for ingredients, utensils, etc. Generally speaking, a logograph is a kind of short-hand: it takes fewer signs to write the same thing.

'A Cow of Sîn' on tablet C is written in such a short-hand fashion. This agrees with what we have noticed about the lay-out of this text (§ 3.1.1): the space on the tablet is used as efficiently as possible. In these more material features we can already observe that text **c** seems to claim no literary quality, or at least does not present itself as a poetic text. In this respect **c** stands apart from the others.

The cuneiform writing system opens up many possibilities for sign plays and double entendres. In the first place, a text can make multiple use of a sign, in the same or in different functions. In the second place, a pun can be based on the various possible readings of a sign (or a group of signs).

An example of the first possibility is found in text **a** line 21. In line 21 (only 8 signs) the sign AB_2 is used three times. Throughout the text this sign is used for its logographical value, read as *littu* (cow). In this line it is used once as a logograph and twice as a phonograph, with the value *lit*: *littu*(=AB_2) *ig-ta-lit*(=AB_2) *u₂-ga-al-lit*(=AB_2).
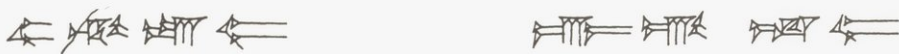
Line **a**: 21 as copied by F. Köcher (*BAM* 248).

So, the polyvalence of the writing system is used here to repeat the sign AB_2, normally used for *littu* (cow), a central word in the whole text (see § 3.3). That this repetition is not merely a coincidence can also be concluded from the grammar. The word *igtalit* is grammatically incorrect, the correct form is *igtalut* (or *igdalut*), as Lambert (1969, 39) has pointed out. Here the inter play of signs and sound is given priority over grammatical accuracy. Moreover, in line 18 the sign AMAR is used as a phonograph with value *zur*: *ina pu-zur*(=AMAR) *ka-par₂-ri*. The same sign is used in line 32 in the name of the calf: AMAR.GA, to be read as *būr šizbi*. AMAR means calf, the form of the sign is much like AB_2, with two small wedges added.
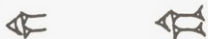
The signs AB_2 and AMAR.

Also in **a**,18 we find the sign BAR with the phonological value *par₂*: *ka-par₂*(=BAR)-*ri*. In the preceding line (**a**,17) this same sign is used with the value *maš*: *maš-qe₂-e* (exactly the same occurs in the parallel lines 23-24 of text **b**). In **a'** these two identical signs are placed exactly above each other. Moreover, the lines **a**,16–18 begin with the same sign (AŠ=*ina*).

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Another example of sign repetition can be observed in the lines **a**,12–14. These lines all end with the sign IGI, but with different values:

12 *i-ra-am-ši*(=IGI)
13 *iš-ta-kan-ši*(=IGI)
14 *su-kul-lim*(=IGI)

The last example from text **a** is the sign ŠAB. It occurs six times in this text, with three different (but cognate) phonological values:

sap	22 *sap-du-šu₂*	they lamented with him
	27 *u₂-sap-pi-ḫa*	she sprinkled
	29 (idem)	(idem)
šap	26 *u₂-šap-pa-la*	she brought down
	34 *mu-šap-šiq-tum*	woman with labour pains
šab	35 *šab-šu-tum*	midwife

In text **d** two lines open in nearly the same way:

10 *il-ta*(=TA)-*kan₂*
11 *li-il-da₂*(=TA)

As an example of the second possibility, a double entendre is found in line 13 of text **a**. Unfortunately the meaning of this line is obscure. If, however, our grammatical interpretation (in which we follow most other translators) is correct, then the word *namru* is wrong. *Namru* (brilliance?) is the direct object ('the brilliance of Sîn he laid upon her'), so it should be in the accusative: *namra*. But *nam-ru* can also be read logographically as NAM.ŠUB = *šiptu* (incantation).[6] *Šiptu* is not the correct reading of these signs but the competent reader, viz. the magician, will not have failed to appreciate this hidden meaning. After all, he himself is at the very moment of reading 'laying an incantation upon her.' Which shows, incidentally, that texture cannot be treated apart from pragmatics.

We can interpret the strange form in **a**,30 *šal-la-ti-iš-sŭ* ('for the third time') in a similar way. The correct form must be *šalšūtišu*. But the first two signs also have the logographical value GAL₄.LA = *ūru* or *biṣṣūru*, meaning vagina.[7] In context this reading is impossible (as the rest of the line would make no sense), but it makes it clear why this little textual 'mistake' is tolerated in both text **a** and **a′**.

Yet another way of using the peculiarities of the cuneiform system can be found in the opening line of **a**. Text **a** begins with DIŠ-*et* AB₂. This can be read in two ways: *ištēt littu* or *iltēt littu*, both meaning 'one cow'. The reading *iltēt* is perhaps the best one since it makes an efficient sound play with *littu*. Only by this sound play can we understand why the word *iltēt*, being otherwise superfluous, is added (compare the beginning of text **b**: *littu ša Sîn*). Because of its logographic writing (DIŠ) the sound play is hidden, to be recognized only by a clever reader. The same is to be

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6 Reading already suggested by Böhl 1936.
7 Reading proposed by Albertz 1978, p. 231 n. 267. See Röllig 1985, p. 268.

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found in line 25 (DIŠ-*et*: *ištēt* or *iltēt*; compare **b**, 30: *iltīt*). In this example we have already transgressed the boundary between sign play and sound play, which is, after all, an artificial one.

3.1.3 Sounds

Another aspect of texture is sound. In the texts we can observe different ways of using sounds and sound patterns.

1 *Straight sound play*: two words are nearly the same in sound, in such a way that the one reminds the reader of the other. So *šaman pūri* (one of the medicines used for the cow) is a pun on the word for heaven (*šamû* or *šamāmū*) as well as on the word for calf (*būru*). A straight sound play suggests that the relation in sound is reflected by a relation in meaning. Formally we can distinguish two types of straight sound play. Firstly the double entendre: a sound play with a word or expression not present in the text. The second word or expression is present in a hidden way. Secondly, a sound play between two words both present in the text.[8]

2 *Sound association*: characteristic sounds in a word recur in another word in the same or in another sequence. For instance, assonance or alliteration, words from the same root (**a**, 11: *tiqnāte tuqqunat*), or words from roots sharing the same radicals (**a**, 12 *īmuršima Sîn irāmši*; roots respectively ’MR and R’M). The similarity between the two words is less strong than in the straight sound play; the difference between ‘sound play’ and ‘sound association’, however, is but one of degree.

3 *Recurring sound patterns*: a special pattern of phonemes can be observed throughout the text, or in a certain section of the text. So, in all texts we hear the echo of the word *littu* (cow) in recurring patterns like i-l-t, l-i-t and l-i-d. Here the relation between the words is not symmetrical; in *iltaḫiṭ* (**b**, 25) we hear the echo of *littu*, not the reverse. A recurring sound pattern at least suggests a relation between the systems of sound and meaning: the word that is echoed apparently has central meaning in the whole structure.

4 *Rhyme and sound parallelism*: sentences or grammatical units showing a comparable fabric of sound. Not words but grammatical units are linked in this way. Often ‘sound parallelism’ is (partly) due to grammatical parallelism, for instance **c**, 55 *irtana”i* (...) *iltanaqqi* (same grammatical form with *-tan-* infix, and therefore the same vowels).

All these devices together, whether or not a direct relation with meaning can be detected, make the text into a whole with respect to sound, and so contribute to its literary quality. We will now give some examples of each device .

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8 This use of sound play and double entendre in magical texts is labelled ‘associative magic’ by Farber (1986), who gives some examples from various texts.

1   Straight Sound Play

1α   Double Entendre

All texts: *littu – ālittu*

Why is the woman in the narrative represented by a cow? *Littu* (cow) is a pun on *ālittu* (woman in childbirth). The pun is implicit; the word *ālittu* never occurs in 'A Cow of Sîn'.[9]

All texts: puns on *Lamaštu* and/or *Ardat Lilî*.

In **a** and **b** helping spirits appear, called Lamassus. The word *Lamassu* strongly reminds us of another female demon called *Lamaštu*: the demon which threatens the life of newborn children and women in labour.[10]   In **c** these spirits are called *marāt Anim* (Daughters of Anu; see § 1.1). But Lamaštu is also traditionally called a Daughter of Anu. Thus, in a different way, the same paradox is present in their name.

Another dangerous female demon is *Ardat Lilî*.[11]   We find a pun on her name in the supplication of **a** (**a**, 34): *līlid ardatum* ('may the girl give birth').

1β   Sound Play

a and **c**: *šaman pūri – šamû – būru*

Two medicines are brought down from heaven to facilitate the birth.   In **a** and **c** one of them is called 'oil-from-the-jar': *šaman pūri*. *Šaman pūri* functions here as a double pun: on *šamû* (heaven: the origin of the help) and on *būru* (calf: the goal of the help).

b, 25–26: *arḫu*

Arḫu is another word for cow. It is used only once, in **b**, 26. There it is placed in a chiastic position to the homonym *arḫu* = 'month'.

arḫīša ina gamāri   ūmēša ina [quttî]
littu iktamiṣi   iḫâl arḫu

When her months were fulfilled, her days [came to an end],
the cow squatted and was taken with labour pains.

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[9]   In the commentary on tablet A (11N-T3, Civil 1974; see § 1.2) an explicit example of this pun is found (l.21): 'my cow is barren (*lā ālitti*)'. The sound play is supported by a sign play: AB₂-*ia la a-lit*(=AB₂)-*ti* (see § 3.1.2). Very probably this line belongs to the second incantation on tablet A and can be identified with A:I 43 (see Veldhuis 1989).

[10]   See the article Lamaštu in *RlA* (Farber 1983), and Wiggermann 1983.

[11]   See Farber 1987a.

2 Sound Association

Actually the texts are replete with what we have labelled 'sound association'. In the category 'assonance and alliteration' we will not try to be exhaustive but rather confine ourselves to some examples from all texts.

2α   Words from the same Root

a, 11: *tiqnāte tuqqunat*: 'she was decorated with ornaments' (root TQN).

a, 17 (probably paralleled in **b**, 23): *mašqê išaqqûši*: 'they watered her at the well'. Both words are derived from the root ŠQ', meaning 'to water'.

a, 21: *igtalit ugallit*: 'she trembled and terrified (someone)' or: 'she trembled and made (someone) tremble' (root GLT). Text **a'**, 15 has: *igdalit igallit*: she trembled violently.

c, 56 and 57: *būru* and *būrtu* (bull and cow)

2β   Words from Roots with (nearly) the same Radicals

a, 12 (parallel **b**, 21) *īmuršima* (..) *irāmši*: 'he saw her and loved her' (roots: 'MR and M'R). Text **c** has a variant: *ēmuršima* (..) *ira''īši*: 'he saw her and pastured her' (roots: 'MR and R"; compare **a**, 18: *amār rē'î*; the same roots).

a, 24 (parallel **b**, 29): *ina šamê ištamme*: 'he heard in heaven'. Both have the root ŠM', but are different in etymology.

a, 26–27: *ušappala* (...) *usappiḫa*: 'she brought down (...) she sprinkled' (roots ŠPL and SPḪ).

2γ   Assonance and Alliteration

a, 22: *(appašu) qadissu kaparrū kalîšunu (sapdūšu)*: '(his head) was bowed, all the herd boys (lamented with him)'. A threefold alliteration with /qa/and /ka/.

b, 22: *lātu illakā*: 'the cows went'.

c, 60: *šanītu našât šaman (pūri)*: 'the second carried oil (-from-the-jar)': /šan/– / naš/– /šam/

c, 61: *(mê) ḫîli lilput pūssa*: '(with water)-of-labour he must touch her forehead'. Both /li/ and /pu/ are repeated.

d, 7' and 8': *ina šanî*: 'for the second time'.

d, 13' (subscription): *šipat mušapšiqti*: 'incantation for a woman in labour' (all phonemes of *šipat* recur in *mušapšiqti*).

3 Recurring Sound Patterns

3α littu

In § 3.1.2 we have already mentioned the sound play *iltēt littu* ('one cow'; **a**, 10). The phonemic cluster l-i̯-t (and variations) can be observed throughout all the texts.

a : 21 *igtalit*
   21 *ugallit*
   33 *īlida*
   34 *līlid*

b : 24 *iltaḫiṭ*
   30 *iltīt*

c : 55 *iltikiṭ*
   61 *tūlidu*
   61 *tūlid*

d : 10′ *iltakan*
   11′ *līlda*

In a covert way this sound pattern also occurs in words like *ištakanši* (**a**, 13). The Akkadian phoneme /š/ lays between /s/ and /l/. The sequence *-št-* often (but not always) changes into *-lt-*. Both spellings seem to be equally distributed, *-št-* and *-lt-* must have sounded alike; compare **a**, 32 *ištakan* and **d**, 10 *iltakan* (the same word). In text **a** we find this phenomenon seven times:

10 *iš/ltēt* (DIŠ-*et*)
13 *ištakanši*
14 *uštesbissima*
19 *ištaḫiṭ*
24 *ištamme*
25 *iš/ltēt* (DIŠ-*et*)
32 *ištakan*

Grammatically this is perfectly normal but the high occurence of this phenomenon in a relatively short text (7 times in 26 lines) is very remarkable. The rest of tablet A shows 10 examples of *-š/lt-* in about 155 legible lines, one of them in a line parallel to 'A Cow of Sîn' (III 39; see § 2.5). Moreover, in text **a** we never find the spelling *-lt-*. The rest of tablet A shows a normal distribution: 4 times *-lt-* and 6 times *-št-*.[12] We may conclude that in text **a** this pun of *-š/lt-* and *littu* is intentional but is intentionally hidden as well.[13] In the other versions we meet the same phenomenon but less pronounced:

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[12] Logographically written words are not counted. Spelling *-lt-*: I64; II46; III49; IV17. Spelling *-št-*: II48; III39; III57; IV12; IV13; IV35.
[13] Another device for hiding this same pun was pointed out in § 3.1.2.

b : [29] *ištamā*
c : [52] *napiš/lte* (ZI-*te*)
    [55] *iš/ltanaqqi* (NAG.MEŠ)
    [59] *iš/ltēte* (DIŠ-*te*)

3β Sîn

In text **a** the name of the other personage, *Sîn*, is also played upon in recurring phonemic clusters.

[10] *Geme-Sîn*
[12] *īmuršima*
[12] *irāmši*
[13] *ištakanši*
[14] *uštesbissima*
[17] *išaqqûši mê*
[20] *(ūmēša)*
[24] *šamê ištamme*
[24] *rigimša*

In all these instances we find a combination of a sibilant (/š/ or /s/), a nasal (/m/ or /n/), and the vowel /i/ (occasionally /e/). At every place where Sîn is explicitly named (lines 10, 12, 13, and 24) such a sound play is present, most strikingly in line 12: *īmuršima Sîn irāmši*.

Moreover, after line 24 where Sîn is mentioned for the last time, no such combination of phonemes can be observed.

The sound pattern referring to *littu* in text **a** functions a little differently. The word *littu* occurs three times (10, 19 and 21) and is also always accompanied by a sound play (e.g. 21: *littu igtalit ugallit*). However this phonemic cluster is present throughout the whole text, whereas the word *littu* is no longer used after line 21. On the level of meaning this is a significant difference. Sîn plays no part in the end of the story. Presumably the Lamassus are sent down by him but Sîn himself is no longer present. The cow, of course, is still there. Although not mentioned explicitly (which is in itself also very functional, as we will see later) she is not absent. On another level the sound plays refer to the woman in childbirth (*ālittu!*), who is apparently also not absent.

Therefore the assumption arises that, at least in text **a**, there is a close and multilayered relationship between systems of sound and systems of meaning.

4 Rhyme and Sound Parallelism

A sentence or a pair of sentences is often a complicated fabric of sound. In this category we do not look at words but at sentences or grammatical units. Again we will confine ourselves to a few examples.

4α Repetition (**c**, 51–53)

For an example of the repetition of a characteristic sound we may look at the first lines of **c** where /k/ and /q/ play a prominent role.

51 *šapšuqat*
52 *kunnat*
    kunnat
    qatû
    sikkūrum
53 *saniq*
    tīnuqi

4β Parallelism (**a**, 16–17)

These lines show parallelism in meaning (see § 3.1.4) and both begin with *ina* + adverbial clause. This is mirrored in the parallelism in sound.

ina nurub šammē ire"i šammē   ina subbê mašqê išaqqûši mê

In the lushest grasses she grazed, at the abundant well they watered her.

1	2	3	4	5	6
/ina/	/ub/	/šam/	/e/	/i/	/šamme/
/ina/	/ub/	/maš/	/e/	/i/	/ši me/

While **a′** virtually duplicates **a** sign for sign, we find in this pair of sentences two variant readings. Text **a′** reads *šammī* and *mašqî* instead of *šammē* and *mašqê*, so the sound pattern differs slightly, but the parallelism remains unimpaired:

1	2	3	4	5	6
"	"	"	/i/	"	"
"	"	"	/i/	"	"

From these slight variants we may conclude that the ancient writers were well aware of the possibilities of sound repetition and the like, and made conscious use of these surface features.

4γ Chiasm (**a**, 22)

In this line a much more complicated phonological pattern can be observed. The first word of line 22 (*rē'âša*) belongs grammatically to the previous sentence.[14]

	appašu	*qadissu*	*kaparrū*	*kalîšunu*	*sapdūšu*
u	×	×	×	×	×
a	×	×	×	×	×
i		×		×	
su or šu	×	×		×	×
ap	×		×		×
ka or qa		×	×	×	

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14 This is not the case in text **a′**, so the phonological structure of the two 'duplicates' substantially differs here.

The diagram shows a perfect symmetry. The first and the last word belong together, as well as the second and the penultimate. *Appašu* and *sapdūšu* share the characteristics /u/, /a/, / šu/-/su/ and /ap/. *Qadissu* and *kalîšunu* share /u/, /a/, /i/, / šu/-/su/ and /qa/-/ka/. The central word, *kaparrū*, contains some characteristics of both pairs.

3.1.4   Parallelism

Parallelism is a very common device in Semitic as in other literatures. Two sentences or clauses are paired by a common syntactical structure and related meaning. Throughout the whole text parallel sentences or phrases can be observed yet this parallelism is not uniform, on the contrary, the device is used in many different ways. By way of an example we will present the beginning of text **a**, which begins with a single, introductory line: 'There was a cow of Sîn, Geme-Sîn by name'. The following two phrases are fully parallel (**a**, 11 and 12): object - predicate :: object - predicate. Another type of parallelism follows: two verbs, identical in form (and very similar in sound), sharing the same subject, which is placed between them (**a**, 12b: *īmuršima Sîn irāmši*: 'Sîn saw her and fell in love with her'). Hitherto this parallelism is not reflected in the layout: the pairs of phrases are unevenly distributed over two lines. But the lines 13–14 and 16–17 form two distichs. It is worth noting that the first is constructed chiastically (Verb in last position: Verb in initial position) and the second fully parallel. Line 15 is a single line again.

This alternation of different types of parallelism can be observed throughout the whole narrative but interestingly the end of this phenomenon coincides with the end of the ritual (**a**, 30–32):

> When she touched for the third time,
> the calf fell down on the ground like a gazelle's young.
> 'Milk-calf' she called the calf.

This is the more remarkable since the ritual itself is very strongly marked by parallelism and even repetition. We will return later to the significance of this observation (§ 3.3 and § 3.4).

3.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEXTS

3.2.0 Introduction

Texture, the subject of the preceding paragraph, is, as it were, the garment in which
a text is wrapped. Now we will turn our attention to the composition and structure
of the text as bearer of meaning. Of course, texture and structure are not indepen-
dent since they are aspects of one and the same text. In the next paragraph (§ 3.3)
we will show them working together.

From a formal point of view the incantation 'A Cow of Sîn' is to be divided into
two parts: the narrative and the supplication. These two parts are connected by
kīma (just as ...) in the supplication: the narrative functions as an argument in the
supplication. The narrative in its turn has a plain tripartite structure: description of
the situation (introduction), problem, and solution. This structure is not formally
indicated by drawings or other signals in the layout. The division in the different
versions can be found in the following table.

	text:	a	b	c	d
I	Introduction	10–17	19–23	51–55a	lost
II	Problem	18–22	24–28a	55b–57a	lost
III	Solution	23–32	28b–33	57b–61a	–10'
IV	Supplication	33–35	34–36	61b–62	11'–13'

The construction of these parts will be discussed in some detail below (§ 3.2.1 to
§ 3.2.4). Since the versions show considerable differences we are forced to treat
the deviations separately, taking text **a** as standard. Thus, each paragraph is ar-
ranged under four headings: 'The Plot'; 'Articulation of Text **a**'; 'The Versions';
and 'Conclusion'. The overall structure is discussed in § 3.2.5.

3.2.1 Part I: The Introduction

α The Plot

Part I describes the situation in which the story begins. This includes the follow-
ing elements: presentation of the cow and her name; the beauty and attraction of
Geme-Sîn; the love of Sîn for her; Geme-Sîn in her herd and the way she is treated
there. So far, nothing has really happened, but the attractiveness of the cow and
the love of Sîn already announce things to come.
Part I itself falls into two sections. The first section focuses directly on the cow.
The second section focuses on the relationship between Sîn and his cow: the love
of Sîn and its impact for Geme-Sîn. These effects are first shaped by two actions
of Sîn:

The brilliance(?) of Sîn he laid (...?) upon her, he appointed her at the head of
the herd (text **a**).

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Unfortunately, the first action is obscure and the translation is far from certain (the parallel in **b** does not clarify the problem). Still, we may surmise that the two sentences are parallel in meaning: twice Sîn does a favour for his cow. Anyhow, the first sentence is clearly referring to the light (*namru*) of the moon. So, on the one hand Sîn acts as a bearer of light and on the other hand as a herdsman. In both functions he expresses his love for Geme-Sîn by doing her a favour.

These favours create a new situation in the herd: pastoral motifs are introduced.

I section 1:   Geme-Sîn

There was a cow of Sîn, Geme-Sîn by name.
With ornaments decorated,
tempting of shape she was.

I section 2:   Relationship of Sîn and Geme-Sîn

Sîn saw her and fell in love with her.
The brilliance(?) of Sîn he laid (...?) upon her.
He appointed her at the head of the herd,
the herdsmen followed her.
In the lushest grasses she grazed,
at the abundant well they watered her.
(text **a**)

β   Articulation of Text **a**

Part I consists of a series of main clauses, placed one after the other. Section 2 begins with: *īmuršima Sîn irāmši* ('Sîn saw her and fell in love with her'). The particle *-ma* (in *īmuršima*) means 'and' or 'so' and connects a sentence to the preceding one. Both grammatically and in content this sentence connects the enumeration of the features of the cow (section 1) and the effects of the love of Sîn (section 2).

Section 1:   Geme-Sîn

This section is descriptive in content, which is reflected in the grammar. The first sentence ('There was a cow of Sîn, Geme-Sîn by name') is nominal, followed by two verbal sentences in the suffix conjugation or stative (used by preference for descriptive sentences). These two sentences are grammatically exactly parallel: a noun in the accusative followed by a stative verbal form of which the cow is the subject (literally translated: 'as to her shape she is tempting'):

tiqnāte tuqqunat	N-acc	V-stative
binûtam kazbat	N-acc	V-stative

With ornaments decorated,
tempting of shape she was.

29

Semantically the second sentence is stronger and more specific. The word *kazbat* means something like 'she is sexually appealing'.

Section 2:   Relationship of Sîn and Geme-Sîn

The second section is a sequence of seven main clauses, all verbal sentences. Section 2 can be divided into three subsections:

I 2.1: Sîn saw her and fell in love with her

I 2.2: The brilliance (?) of Sîn he laid (...?) upon her,
        he appointed her at the head of the herd.

I 2.3: The herdsmen followed her
        in the lushest grasses she grazed,
        at the abundant well they watered her.

The 'seeing' and 'loving' (subsection 1) of Sîn almost coincide (this impression is strengthened by phonology, see § 3.1.3: 2β). This results in a double action (subsection 2) of Sîn towards his cow. These actions, in their turn, bring about a new situation which is related in pastoral terms (subsection 3).

   This division into subsections is confirmed by the grammar. Contrary to section 1, all verbal forms are in a prefix conjugation. Subsection 1 is in the preterit, 2 in the perfect, and 3 in the present.

1
| *īmuršima* | preterit | he saw her |
| *irāmši* | preterit | he loved her |

2
| *ištakanši* | perfect | he laid upon her |
| *uštesbissima* | perfect | he appointed her |

3
illaka	present	(the 'herdship') went
ire"i	present	she grazed
išaqqûši	present	they watered her

The preterit relates an event at a certain point in time (seeing and loving). The Akkadian perfect denotes an after-time. Therefore a sequence of cause and effect may well be indicated by the sequence preterit – perfect, as is the case here. The result of this is a new situation which is described in the present tense. The present tense is durative in meaning, the last three sentences, therefore, do not relate an event but the way things are after Geme-Sîn has been appointed to the head of the herd. So we may translate literally: in the lushest grasses she used to graze, at the abundant well they used to water her.

γ The Versions

Having spoken so far about the introduction in general, we must now do justice to the differences between the versions. The most important deviation is the absence

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of section 1 in version **c** (and, in its place, a totally different text) and the relative shortness of section 2 in this same version. However, we will first concentrate on some minor differences between **a** and **b**.

b

On the semantic level **a** and **b** have practically the same section 1. Differences in wording of course generate differences in texture, but that is not the subject of this paragraph. A small variation with some future importance is the absence of the explicit naming of Geme-Sîn in **b**.

a: There was a cow of Sîn, Geme-Sîn by name (*šumša*)
b: A cow of Sîn was Geme-Sîn.

At the end of the narrative in **a**, 32 the word *šumu* is used again, this time referring to the name of the calf (the passage is broken in **b** and absent in **c**, but present in the oldest version: **d**).

The distribution of the different verbal tenses over section 2 is identical in **a** and **b** but the allotment of subjects and objects is different. In the seven sentences in **b** we find six instances where Sîn is the subject and Geme-Sîn the object; the latter is referred to by the pronominal suffix -*ši*. The only exception is the first sentence of subsection 3 where the cows are subject: all cows followed her. Thus Sîn is depicted as lover (subsection 1) and as herdsman (he pastured her and he watered her; subsection 3).

Text **a** differs in subsection 3. Sîn sees and loves and appoints (subsection 1 and 2), but then the versions separate. Not the cows (as in **b**) but the herdsmen (literally: the 'herdship') follow her. And Sîn is not depicted as a herdsman:

In the lushest grasses she grazed subject: Geme-Sîn
At the abundant well they watered her. subject: herdsmen.

It seems that in version **a** Sîn is more strictly in heaven, while the herdsmen and Geme-Sîn play their part on earth. The appointment to the head of the herd in **b** means that she is the first of the cows. But in **a** it means: she is the first of the herd, including the herdsmen. However, the result in both versions is that she is appointed to the position directly under her lover: Sîn.

c

In some formal respects version **c** goes together with **a** and **b**. Part I can be divided into two sections which are separated by the sentence: Sîn saw her. Section 1 has stative verbal forms, section 2 has not. However, in many other respects **c** is deviant.

Section 1

Section 1 of text **c** is nearly identical with the beginning of the previous incantation (for the same purpose) on this tablet. The main difference is the addition of the name Gī-Sîn.

31

Gī-Sîn, slave-girl of Sîn has trouble in childbirth.
The child is stuck, the child is stuck, to bring life to an end.
The bolt is drawn, the door is secured against the suckling babe.

Apart from the name, these sentences have nothing to do with the narrative. They can serve as an introduction to any incantation for a woman in labour, being a poetic description of the situation. Thus, already in these first sentences, we can observe a tension in **c** between 'A Cow of Sîn' as an incantation and as a narrative. In the incantation section 1 is functional as introduction, in the narrative it is not (see § 3.4.2).
This introduction consists of an opening sentence and four phrases, arranged two by two. The first sentence is a kind of superscript, it mentions the problem that has to be solved by this incantation:

Gī-Sîn, slave-girl of Sîn has trouble in childbirth.

In this respect **c** is much more explicit than the other versions which only give hidden hints, e.g. in the wordplay *littu - ālittu*.
    The following two phrases refer directly to the child being stuck. In the third the direct reference is replaced by the metaphor of the door. This motif is continued in the last phrase but combined with a direct reference to 'the suckling babe'. Thus there is a neat circular development of direct reference – metaphorical reference – direct reference. The first phrase: *šerra kunnat* is literally repeated in the second phrase and extended by a sentence beginning with *ana* ('to').

šerra kunnat	the child is stuck
šerra kunnat ana qatû napište	the child is stuck to bring life to an end.

The other phrases are structured in the same way, but the repetition is replaced by (semantic) parallelism.

maḫiṣ sikkūrum	the bolt is drawn
saniq bābu ana tīnuqi lalû	the door is secured against the suckling babe.

Syntactically there is some opposition between the first and the second pair. In the first pair the woman is subject, the child (*šerra*) being formally in the accusative ('she is stuck with respect to the child'). So, the word order in the first pair is O-V (with implicit S) and in the second V-S. By this device the verbs in the second pair are placed in a marked position. The first and the last word of the section as a whole (*šerra*: child; *lalû*: babe) are co-referential.
    In direct language, as well as in a metaphorical way, birth is connected with death. Just as in **a** and **b**, section 1 does not describe an action but a state of affairs. This is expressed by the stative verbal forms, but also by the cyclical and repetitive structure of the section. The object of description is not a cow, nor a calf, but the unborn (human) child in danger. Thus, at the transition to section 2 we are not told that Gī-Sîn is a cow, and so far this is even very improbable:

Section 2

Compared to the other versions, **c** only includes the subsections 1 and 3. Just as in **a** and **b**, subsection 1 is in the preterit and 3 in the present tense. An important difference in subsection 1 is that Sîn is not said to have fallen in love with the cow.

1 (preterit)
Sîn saw her

3 (present)
and pastured her.
Among the lushest grasses he always pastured her,
in the meadows .... he always watered her.

The theme of love is absent, not only here but also in the preceding section: there is no description of the cow and her sex appeal. Therefore the consequences of this love are also absent: compared with **a** and **b** the two favours of Sîn are lacking. The cow is not placed at the head of the herd and the 'brilliance'(?) of her lover is not bestowed upon her. In the absence of the theme of love, the relation herdsman – cow is stressed much more strongly. In this relation nothing changes, it is just depicted. This is mirrored by the use of verbal forms. The last two verbal forms are in the durative present but also show the *-tan-* infix, denoting the iterative aspect ('always').

δ Conclusion

However different, the versions have two things in common:

1   In the introduction description (setting the scene) is more important than action. The story is not in motion as yet, there is no problem to solve. A happy and balanced situation is depicted, appropriately, in the durative present tense. However, the motion is already announced in the sex appeal of the cow and in the love of Sîn (both absent in **c**).
2   From the outset Sîn is active while the cow is passive.

Furthermore, we may conclude that in the introduction **a** and **b** disagree in details, but nevertheless tell the same story along the same lines. **c**, however, is a different case in many respects and this concurs with our conclusions on lay-out and writing (§ 3.1.1 and § 3.1.2).

3.2.2   Part II   The Problem

α   The Plot

In part II the story is set in motion. The cow is mounted by a 'wild bull', and after her time of pregnancy she is upset by birth pangs. The transition from mating to labour takes only one sentence. Thus the paradox of procreation is demonstrated: sexual pleasure leading to pain and fear. In part I the emphasis is put on happiness and pleasure in a balanced and stationary situation. The sexual intercourse is a logical continuation of the description of the sex appeal of the cow. But at the same time the effect of this intercourse is, no less logically, fear and distress. Part II as a whole is situated on earth. So in all versions Sîn is called by his earthly name: wild bull.

Part II in **c** is limited to these two events: the copulation (section 1: positive) and the beginning of the pangs (section 2: negative).

II section 1: sexual lust (positive)
    The wild bull mounted the cow.

II section 2: birth pangs (negative)
    When her days were completed, her months [finished],
    the cow bent down and was taken with labour pains.

In the other versions this kernel is surrounded by remarks about the herdsman and the herd boys. These remarks about human actors firstly place the story in a definite earthly environment, secondly they tend to strengthen the paradox present in part II.

II section 1: sexual lust (positive)
    Hidden from the herd boys, not seen by the herdsman,
    the wild bull mounted the cow, he lifted her tail(?).

II section 2: birth pangs (negative)
    When her days came to an end, her months were finished,
    the cow trembled and terrified her herdsman.
    His head was bowed, all the herd boys lamented with him.
    (text **a**)

In the positive section 1 the sentence about the herdsman and the herd boys adds some secrecy and perhaps stresses the lust of the bull and the cow. In the negative section 2 the concluding line strengthens the impression of fright. The secret lust which remains unseen stands in opposition to the overt pain which is clearly heard.

β   Articulation of Text **a**

Section 1 and section 2 of text **a** are constructed in the same way:

adverbial clause1   adverbial clause 2
verb phrase 1 (perfect)   verb phrase 2 (preterit)

Each pair of adverbial clauses is semantically parallel ('When her days came to an end, her months were finished'; section 2). To a certain degree this also holds true for the verb phrases ('the cow trembled and terrified her herdsman'; section 2). The verb phrases are both dependent on the adverbial clauses. Section 2 is extended with a sentence in the stative, which also consists of two semantically parallel verb phrases. This extension concludes part II.

Section 1:   Sexual Lust (positive)

Two adverbial clauses mark the transition from part I to part II: 'Hidden from the herd boys, not seen by the herdsman.' Now we no longer expect description but something which happened at a certain point in time when someone was hidden and not seen.

ana muḫḫi litti ištaḫiṭ mīru ekdu
the wild bull mounted the cow

This sentence is, of course, crucial for the development of the story and for the transformation of a stationary, happy, and balanced situation into a situation of movement, pain, and hope. The importance of this passage is marked by the introductory adverbial clauses and by the word order. The normal sequence in Akkadian is Subject Object Verb. So the subject in this sentence (*mīru ekdu*) stands in a marked position. The marked position of *mīru* is strengthened by the presence of an adjective, the only one in the narrative[14] (*ekdu*: wild). This wild bull is, of course, an earthly representation of the moongod Sîn (see § 1.1). The transformation is not an accidental transformation, it is brought about by Sîn.

   The second verb phrase is only present in **a**, and its reading is not certain. Broadly speaking it says the same thing but contrary to the first it is very short:

zibbatušša išši
he lifted her tail.

The verb *išši* is a preterit, whereas *ištaḫiṭ* ('he mounted') is a perfect. As pointed out in § 3.2.1, the perfect denotes an after-time, here it connects the event in a rather loose way to the preceding part, or to the adverbial clauses. The sequence perfect – preterit is apt for a double description of the same event since the preterit has no special aspect and just denotes a past time (see the discussion of the conjugations in § 3.2.1).

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[14]   In the supplication there is another adjective: *mušapšiqtum*; **a**, 34.

Section 2:   Birth Pangs (Negative)

The time of pregnancy is dealt with in a pair of adverbial clauses:

ūmēša ina quttî   *arḫīša ina gamāri*
When her days came to an end,   her months were finished,

Both clauses are constructed in the same way by a preposition (*ina*) plus infinitive. *Ūmēša* ('her days') and *arḫīša* ('her months') are placed in the marked initial position (normal: *ina gamār arḫīša*) thus stressing the notion of time passing. Again we expect to arrive at a fixed point in time, and we know for certain what is going to happen. The time of pregnancy is mentioned by just a few words: it doesn't matter; what matters is the delivery.

littu igtalit   *ugallit rē'âša*
The cow trembled   and terrified her herdsman.

Again we find the sequence perfect – preterit, probably indicating the identity of both events. The first verb is transitive, the second intransitive. The word order is:

S   V   :   V   O

The two verbs are derived from the same root and are placed side by side. By this device they tend to reinforce each other. The trembling and terrifying, of course refer to the pain of delivery which is, after all, the central theme of the incantation. The sentence is also linguistically marked at the level of signs ($3\times AB_2$; see § 3.1.2) and at the level of sounds (repetition of the same root, threefold repetition of the important phonemical cluster l-i-t; see § 3.1.3). Section 2, compared to section 1, is extended by another pair of verb phrases which stress again the terror and fear.

appašu qadissu   *kaparrū kalîšunu sapdūšu*
His head was bowed,   all the herd boys lamented with him

Herdsman and herd boys do not have a role on their own, they reflect the atmosphere of the narrative. Strikingly, the verbs in this concluding sentence are both statives. No action is related but rather a situation, a sinister situation. The first move of the narrative goes from plain description (stative verbs in part I section 1) to activity, culminating in the mating of the wild bull with the cow. The second move only takes a sentence or two and goes in the opposite direction, arriving at the opposite situation: from activity to a stationary, unhappy situation.

γ   The Versions

a′
Text **a′** has one important variant in section 2:

littu igdalit igallit
rē'âša appašu qadissu (etc.)

36

The cow trembled severely.
Her herdsman, his head was bowed.

Here both verbs are intransitive and just reinforce each other. The word *rē'âša*
must now be connected with the next sentence (in both manuscripts *rē'âša* is indeed
placed on the next line).

b

It seems that part II of **b** is extended by another sentence but the text is badly
damaged at that point. In section 1 **b** and **c** have one verb phrase only:

litta iltaḫiṭ būru ekdu
The wild bull mounted the cow.
b, 24–25

The verb phrases in section 2 are also deviant:

littu iktamiṣi	*iḫâl arḫu*
the cow squatted	and was taken with labour pains.

b, 26

Arḫu is another word for 'cow' and a homonym of *arḫu*='month', which occurs in
the preceding adverbial clause (see § 3.1.3: straight sound play). The verb *iktamiṣi*
is an anthropomorphism: cows do not squat. In the Middle East, as in many other
cultures, squatting was and is normal pose at delivery.[15] Thus 'giving birth' is a
connotation of 'to squat'. There is a neat pattern of opposition and parallelism in
this sentence. There is opposition in word order:

S1   V1   :   V2   S2

On the lexical level the respective subjects and verbs are different; in connotation
the verbs are parallel; the subjects are even co-referential.

c

Text **c** is much shorter then the other versions.

1 *ana muḫḫi litti iltikiṭ būru ekdu*
2 *ūmēša ana mullê arḫēša ana[   ]*
  taḫtimiš taḫâl būrtu

1 The wild bull mounted the cow.
2 When her days were fulfilled, her months [finished],
  the cow bent down and was taken with labour pains.

Compared to **a** the adverbial clauses in section 1 and the concluding sentence of
section 2 are missing. This implies that the herdsman and the herd boys are totally
absent in **c**. In part I we observed that, in contrast to the other versions the role of

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[15] See Stol 1983; p.60–61.

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Sîn as herdsman is more strongly emphasized since his role as lover is absent. The absence of earthly herdsman in **c** confirms this view. Therefore the equation of Sîn with the 'wild bull' — though not impossible — is not as compelling here as it is in the other versions.

δ   Conclusion

The course of the narrative is generally the same in part II in all versions. Nevertheless, the differences in part I make themselves felt here since the reader has had different hints and information. Once more text **c** is the shortest, and leaves out passages not strictly relevant to the flow of the narrative (herdsman and herd boys). In all versions the situation has changed completely by the end of part II. Instead of rest and happiness there is fright and pain. The troubles, at best hinted at in part I, are realised now. At the same time, the pain is the pain of birth, that is to say, the danger and pain conceal a promise.

3.2.3   Part III: The Solution

α   The Plot

The problem presented in part II, the problem for which the incantation is written, is solved in part III. It takes four steps:

1) the cries of the cow reach heaven
2) two heavenly beings descend to earth
3) magical treatment of the woman
4) birth and name giving

text **a**:

section 1
23 At her crying, at her screaming in labour, Nannāru was downcast.
24 Sîn heard her screaming in heaven and lifted high his hand.

section 2
25 Two Lamassus descended from heaven.
     One of them carried 'oil-from-the-jar',
26 the other brought down 'water-of-labour'.

section 3
     With 'oil-from-the-jar' she touched her forehead,
27 with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.
28 Once again she touched her forehead with 'oil-from-the-jar',
29 with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.

section 4
30 When she touched for the third time,

31 the calf fell down on the ground like a gazelle's young.
32 'Milk-calf' she called the calf.

β   Articulation of Text **a**

Section 1:   The Crying

ana ikkillīša	At her crying,
ana rigim ḫâlīša	at her screaming in labour,
nepalsaḫ Nannāru	Nannāru was downcast
Sîn ina šamê ištamme rigimša	Sîn heard her screaming in heaven
išši qāssu šamāmē	and lifted high his hand.

The section consists of a verb phrase, dependent on a double adverbial clause, and two independent verb phrases.

The adverbial clauses and the first verb phrase are closely connected with the preceding part, both semantically and grammatically. The words 'crying', 'screaming' and 'downcast' express the same sense of fright and pain. The stative verbal form (*nepalsaḫ*: 'he was downcast') underlines the immovability of the situation. The second verb (*ištamme*: 'he heard') is a preterit, but it contains the *-tan-* infix of the iterative. So we may translate: 'again and again Sîn heard her screaming'; there is still no action, no intervention. Action begins in the third verb phrase, the verb (*išši*: he lifted) is in the preterit.

Thus the progression in this section is reflected in the verbal tenses:

nepalsaḫ	'he was downcast'	stative
ištamme	'he heard (repeatedly)'	iterative
išši	'he lifted'	preterit

The adverbial clauses ('at her crying ...') already suggest that something is going to happen, just as at the beginning of part II. In the two first verbal phrases action is delayed.

Yet at first sight this action does not seem to be very helpful: he lifted high his hand. The translation is not altogether certain and we do not know exactly what is meant. Nevertheless, 'he lifted high his hand' stands in clear contrast to 'he was downcast'.

nepalsaḫ	*išši*
'down'	'high'
stative	preterit

Thus the contrast high-low (heaven-earth) is expressed here in a figurative way. Indeed, the translation 'high' is based on an adverbial interpretation of the word *šamāmē*, a secondary form of *šamû* ('heaven'). Nannāru (or Nanna) is another (originally Sumerian) name for Sîn, connected by popular etymology with 'light', 'celestial light'. 'In heaven' (*ina šamê*) is a known epithet of Sîn.[16] *Nannāru* is

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[16] See already *YOS* XI 11,5 and 16; O.B.

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followed immediately by *Sîn ina šamê* on the next line:[17] by this device the location in heaven is very marked. Again, the lifting (of the hand) is followed by a descent (of the Lamassus: section 2).

Section 2:   The Descent

In the second section the descent of two heavenly beings is related in detail. These heavenly beings are called Lamassus, well known as helping spirits and doorkeepers (see§ 1.1). The 'opening of the door' is a quite natural metaphor for delivery, which indeed appears as such in incantations.[18]

The section consists of three independent verb clauses.

šitta lamassātu šamê ūridānimma	Two Lamassus descended from heaven.
iltēt šaman pūri našât	One of them carried 'oil-from-the-jar',
šanītum ušappala mê ḫâli	the other brought down 'water-of-labour'.

The three verbal forms are all different:

ūridānimma	*našât*	*ušappala*
preterit+ventive+*-ma*	stative	present+ventive

The descent of the Lamassus is obviously commanded by Sîn, as is expressed in the suffix *-ma* ('so'; 'and') which connects the first verb with the preceding section. The ventive (*-nim-* , *-a* or *-am-*) is used in verbs of going and denotes the direction 'hither'. Both in *ūridānimma* (they came down) and in *ušappala* (she brought down) the direction to the earth is marked that way, thus stressing once more the contrast to heaven. The first phrase describes an action in the preterit: *ūridānimma* ('they came down'). The last two phrases qualify the first, as may be concluded from the numerals at the beginning of each sentence: two..., the first..., the second.... In stative (second phrase) and present (third phrase) the function of the two Lamassus is described, rather than being a specific event. Though very different in nature, the two verbal tenses can function here in a similar way:

One was the bearer of 'oil-from-the-jar',
the other used to bring down 'water-of-labour'.

Ušappala is derived from *šuppulu*, meaning 'to bring down'. Semantically this word combines 'to carry' and 'to come down', so uniting the two preceding verbs.

These last two sentences of section 2 are parallel in meaning, syntactically they are constructed in a chiastic way:

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[17] The combination Nannāru Sîn, also well known, appears in the subsequent incantation in a parallel line (III 39; translated in § 2.5).

[18] Lambert 1969, p.35; a negative example is to be found in an Akkadian incantation against Lamaštu *YOS* XI 19,6: 'she is continually blocking the door of the woman in labour' (translation Van Dijk 1985).

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iltēt	*šaman pūri*	*našât*	subj.	obj.	verb
šanītum	*ušappala*	*mê ḫâli*	subj.	verb	obj.

The subject of both is a numeral (the first.. , the second ...). We do not know exactly what 'oil-from-the-jar' and 'water-of-labour' are. The first occurs frequently in magical-medical texts, the second must be a specific medicinal or magical liquid for this purpose. Their use is specified in the next section: the treatment.

Section 3:   The Treatment

The narration of the treatment is very closely connected with the preceding section by the double repetition of the two liquids.

ilput šaman pūri pūssa	With 'oil-from-the-jar' she touched her forehead,
mê ḫâli usappiḫa kala zumrīša	with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.
šanâ ilput šaman pūri pūssa	Once again she touched her forehead with 'oil-from-the-jar',
mê ḫâli usappiḫa kala zumrīša	with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.

The only difference between the first pair and the second is *šanâ*: once again... The connection with the previous section is further strengthened by the resemblance of the verbs *ušappala* and *usappiḫa*, both in phonology and in script (see § 3.1.2 and § 3.1.3). And again the phrases appear to be built in a chiastic way:

ilput	*šaman pūri*	*pūssa*	verb	first obj.	sec. obj.
mê ḫâli	*usappiḫa*	*kala zumrīša*	first obj.	verb	sec. obj.

In contrast with the preceding pair, both verbal forms are in the preterit and describe a specific event: now something is really happening. This repetition of words, sounds and syntactical patterns gives the impression of a very detailed and accurate account of what is happening, following the events step by step.

Section 4:   The Birth

Section four consists of a verb phrase, dependent on an adverbial clause, and followed by an independent verb phrase.

šallatiššu ina lapāti	When she touched for the third time,
būru kīma uzāli imtaqut qaqqaršu	the calf fell down on the ground like a gazelle's young.
būr šizbi ištakan šum būri	'Milk-calf' she called the calf.

This syntactical construction expresses the deterministic relation between ritual and birth. The 'third time' is not related in a verb phrase but in the adverbial clause on which *imtaqut* (it fell down) depends. Both verbs (*imtaqut* and *ištakan*) are in

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the perfect tense. They relate what happened after and as a consequence of the ritual (where the preterit was used).

The gazelle was a symbol of rapid movement and especially for rapid flight from danger.[19] In another incantation found on this same tablet the child is exhorted to 'run like a gazelle' (A,IV 2). Here the comparison is somewhat odd, since it combines a connotation of being young ('to be born') with a traditional symbol (gazelle=rapid flight) for the meaning: rapid delivery. For the last time we can observe a downward movement: the calf fell down onto the ground.

The subject of the last verb (*ištakan*) is not explicitly expressed and could, theoretically, also be Sîn ('he called'). But it seems that Sîn no longer plays an important part. He has sent the Lamassus but he himself has disappeared from the stage, or rather: he has remained in heaven. Finally, with the name-giving the calf receives individuality, a new 'person' is there.

The movement of part III goes from a stative situation of distress to new life, and from heaven to 'the ground'.

γ The Versions

Text **d** adds a fourth version of the text from part III. It begins with the ritual which is, it seems, repeated twice. The differences to text **a** are rather small, indeed the resemblance of **a** to **d** is remarkable. Text **b** is badly broken in this passage but a few differences are noteworthy. The second liquid, (the first is not preserved), is here called *mê šulme*: 'water-of-well-being'. Another difference, however, is more important for the structure of the story. The crying of the cow in section 1 is not heard by Sîn, but by the Lamassus. It seems that Sîn doesn't appear at all in part III of text **b**.

At [her crying], at her screaming in labour,
they heard her screaming in heaven.
Two Lamassus descended from heaven.

The differences between **c** and the other versions are very considerable and again reveal the special character of this text.

ina[ ]	At [her crying],
ina rigmī ḫîlīša	at her screaming in labour,
Sîn nannār šamê[ ]	Sîn, the light of heaven, [heard her screaming].
šitta šina marāt Anim	Two are the daughters of Anu,
ultu šamê ūridāni	they descended from heaven.
ištēte našât mê ḫili	One of them carried 'water-of-labour',
šanītu našât šaman pūri	the second carried 'oil-from-the-jar'.
mê ḫili lilput pūssa	With 'water-of-labour' he must touch

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[19] Heimpel 1968, p.239–243. In incantations for quieting a crying baby the child is often compared to a gazelle kid (*mār ṣabītim*, Farber 1989:*passim*) I owe this reference to Prof. dr M. Stol, Amsterdam. In at least one version this comparison functions in a word play with *ṣabātu: liṣbassu-mi ša iṣbatu ṣabītam* (Vorl. 2 p.36, 19–20).

	her forehead,
šaman pūri[ ]*kala zumrīša*	with 'oil-from-the-jar' [he must sprinkle?]
	her whole body.

In **c** the heavenly beings are called 'daughters of Anu'. Anu is the god of heaven so the contrast heaven – earth is strongly stressed here in yet another way. *Šitta šina marāt Anim* is a kind of stock phrase, occurring repeatedly in magical texts (see the Philological Remarks: § 4.3).

The most striking difference with the other versions is, however, the absence of sections 3 and 4 (treatment and birth) in the story proper. The narrative suddenly changes into a ritual instruction; the story as such has no end. The third person (masculine) to which these instructions are directed is apparently the *āšipu* (magician) who performs the ceremony.

δ Conclusion

In part III the story is brought to a happy ending. The contrast between heaven and earth, already present in the previous parts, is now presented more strongly and more explicitly. The solution is brought about by magic which originates in heaven. The happy ending is provided by the calf now lying on the ground. This end is not reached in version **c** which remains unsatisfactory as a narrative. But 'A Cow of Sîn' is not just a narrative, it is an incantation. The narrative has now ended, the incantation continues with the supplication.

3.2.4 Part IV The Supplication

α General

In all versions the story proper is followed by some lines containing the supplication part of the incantation. This supplication takes the form of a comparison, which is very common in incantations.

β Articulation of Text **a**

Text **a** is once again the most elaborate:

kīma Geme-Sîn išariš īlida	Just as Geme-Sîn gave birth normally,
līlid ardatum mušapšiqtum	may also this girl in labour give birth.
šabšūtum aj ikkali	Let the midwife not tarry,
erītu līšir	let the pregnant one be all right.

The supplication basically consists of a threefold request, supported by a comparison. This is expressed in three main clauses in the precative, introduced by a subordinate *kīma* (like ...) clause. The comparison implies a parallel: the parallel between the cow who 'gave birth normally' and the woman in childbirth. The request implies a contrast: the things as they are (negative) and as they should be (positive); this chasm is bridged by the comparison.

The request is first expressed in the precative verbs: *līlid* (positive: she may give birth), *aj ikkali* (negative: she may not be held back) and *līšir* (positive: she may be all right). On the lexical level it is also expressed in the contrast of *mušapšiqtum* (literally: 'woman in great difficulty') and *išariš/līšir*. The verb *ešēru* means 'to be all right', but also: 'to give birth prosperously'. *Mušapšiqtum* has the special meaning: 'woman in labour'. The parallelism is of course expressed in the *kīma* sentence, but also in the recurrence of roots. In the scheme the interrupted line represents the explicit comparison (with *kīma*), the continuous line the lexical parallels.
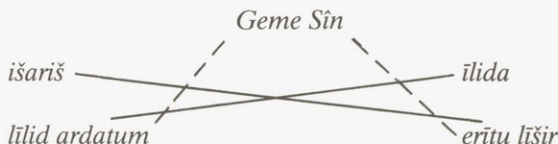
The two roots in *išariš īlida* (she gave birth normally) recur in precative verbs: *līšir* (root: 'ŠR) and *līlid* (root: WLD). The form *īlida* is grammatically incorrect (correct: *ūlida*), and so the parallelism is underlined in phonology. Thus on the lexical level we can also observe that the comparison (parallelism) leads to the request (precative).

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In the comparison, unlike most parts of the text, **a** and **c** agree while **b** differs. In **a** and **c** the point of comparison is made explicit (text **a**):

> Just as Geme-Sîn gave birth normally, may also this woman in labour give birth.

In **b** the woman is only compared to Geme-Sîn, without explaining the point:

> Like Geme-Sîn may she be all right ....

The differences between **a** and **c** are rather small, and mostly due to a difference in dialect. The midwife is not mentioned in **c**.

kīma Gī-Sîn amtu ša Sîn	Just as Gī-Sîn, the slave-girl of Sîn,
ešriši tūlidu	gave birth normally,
lū tūlid ardatu multapšiqtu	may also this girl in labour give birth.
EN$_2$.E$_2$.NU.RU	Incantation.

In **c** the relation between supplication and story is strange and complicated. The story has no end, so in this passage we learn for the first time, in an indirect way, that the calf has indeed been born.

δ Conclusion

In all versions the supplication is in one way or another supported by a comparison of the woman in labour with 'a cow of Sîn'. This implies both contrast (in the request) and parallelism (in the comparison). The comparison links the supplication to the narrative.

3.2.5 The Overall Structure

After having analyzed the structure of each single part we will now turn to the structural coherence of the whole text. What structural lines hold the text together?

α Text **a**: The Narrative

The division of the narrative into three parts is formally indicated by pairs of parallel circumstantial clauses, introduced by a preposition (*ina* or *ana*): line 18 (beginning of part II) and line 23 (beginning of part III). It is worth noting that in comparable circumstantial clauses the preposition is not placed at initial position (lines 20 and 30).

The transition to a new part is also a transition to a different treatment of time and place. In part I both time and place are immaterial. We learn about Sîn and Geme-Sîn, but it is not clear whether the action takes place in heaven or on earth. Indeed, properly speaking there is no action at all, there is no point fixed in time and the phrases are descriptive or iterative. The second part is clearly located on earth, even Sîn is in an earthly disguise: a wild bull. Both the mating and the beginning

of labour are clearly fixed in time, strongly emphasized in **a**, 20: 'when her days came to an end, when her months were finished...'. The third part begins in heaven and ends on earth. Heaven (**a**, 24: 'Sîn in heaven'), earth (**a**, 31: 'the calf fell on the ground') and the transition between them (**a**, 25: 'two Lamassus descended') are all explicitly mentioned for the first time. Time, compared to part II, is passing much more slowly. Indeed, each event is related step by step, whereas the few lines of part II sufficed for the whole time from impregnation to the first pangs.

	part	lines	time	place
I	introduction	8	immaterial	immaterial
II	problem	5	fast	earth
III	solution	10	slow	from heaven to earth

Obviously, part III is the most important section of the narrative. It takes off the most space on the tablet, it is the most detailed in narration, and one of the main contrasts which emerged from the structural analysis is explicitly and abundantly present.

    The story can be said to be circular: from a positive situation in part I (pleasure), through a negative situation of pain, to a positive situation again in part III: birth.
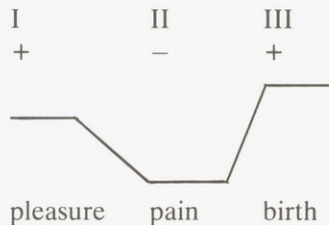
This can be understood in a diachronical way but also in a synchronical way: birth is pain and pleasure at the same time. This is the paradox of birth and procreation, it is the promise of new life and, at the same time, the danger of death. It includes the sexual pleasure as well as the pain of the labour.
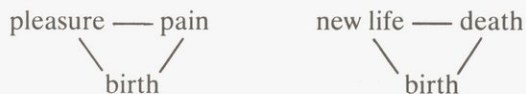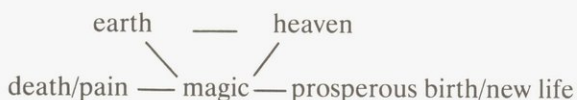

Heaven and earth, above and below, is another important contrast present in the narrative. In the preceding analyses we have observed this contrast in different ways: in the general flow of the story (location) as well as in interesting details (see part III: he was downcast — he lifted high his hand — the Lamassus descended). The story is always set in motion by heaven: by Sîn or by the Lamassus, his representatives. The heavenly beings react on the cow and bring a new element into the

flow of the story. In the first instance it is the beauty of the cow and her attractive-
ness which makes Sîn fall in love with her. The copulation of the 'wild bull' with
the cow brings about the transition to pain in part II. Then, the screaming of the
cow causes the Lamassus to come down and perform the rituals necessary for the
transition to the second positive situation: the prosperous birth. We may conclude
that birth and procreation are heavenly and earthly at the same time. Or, to put
it in anachronistic terms, birth and procreation are 'natural' and 'supernatural' at
once.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{heaven} & \!\!\!\!—\!\!\!\! & \text{earth} \\ & \diagdown \quad \diagup & \\ & \text{birth} & \end{array}$$

The paradox of birth and the contrast of heaven and earth are not unrelated. The
first reveals the limits of human capabilities: the limits of his understanding as well
as the limits of his ability to control the future. The myth is a way to remove or
transgress these limits of understanding. By using magic man is able to influence
the future: it transgresses the limits of his power. By using magic man can influ-
ence the natural as well as the supernatural powers.[20] The magical treatment is of
heavenly origin, as we learn from this poem. Magic is the way to combat everything
that threatens human happiness and well-being (see Bottéro 1988, p. 203f.), it is
indeed intended to create a heaven on earth. In other words, magic mediates in
the contrast heaven — earth, while it solves the paradox of death — life and pain
— pleasure by guaranteeing a prosperous birth and thus eliminating the threat.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{earth} & & \!\!\!—\!\!\! & & \text{heaven} \\ & \diagdown & & \diagup & \\ \text{death/pain} & \!\!—\!\! & \text{magic} & \!\!—\!\! & \text{prosperous birth/new life} \end{array}$$

The two triangles appear to be connected by magic. The magical treatment of the
cow is related in the third part, so it is a small wonder that this part was marked in
various ways as being the most important. The mediatory function of magic in the
contrast heaven — earth and the solution of the paradox of birth constitutes the
first main structural line of 'A Cow of Sîn'.

β   Text **a**: The Supplication in the Overall Structure

The supplication begins with *kīma Geme-Sîn*: 'like Geme Sîn...'. Of course, the
reader knew from the first sentence that the story of the cow was a comparison in
the context of a request. Here, the position of the narrative within the incantation
is made explicit. The reader, or rather: the priest or magician reciting this incan-
tation, steps out of the world of the story into the world of a real woman in labour.

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[20] In the magical-medical texts both aspects are brought together, the magical is more supernatural
in our eyes, whereas the medical is more natural. Of course this kind of distinction is modern.
However, we may not be wrong in stating that the Mesopotamians were well aware of the difference
between magic and medicine, without keeping them totally apart. See Ritter 1965.

This distinction is very strongly marked on the lexical level. The name of Geme-Sîn is the only important lexeme which is also found in the narrative.[21] The supplication is replete with lexemes belonging to the semantical field of delivery (*ešēru*: to give birth easily/to be all right; *alādu*: to give birth; *mušapšiqtum*: woman in labour; *šabšūtum*: midwife; *erītu*: pregnant one), none of them occurring in the narrative.

The narrative is not just a narrative anymore, it is part of an incantation, of a magical procedure in order to further delivery. The stories of Geme-Sîn and the woman in childbirth develop in a parallel way, up to the ritual. The happy ending of the story of the cow is the argument supporting the request: may this girl in labour give birth that easily too. Looking back from the supplication to the narrative the comparison, leading to a request, appears to be another main structural element of the text.

γ   The Versions

The paradox of birth, solved by magic, and the comparison of woman and cow are present in all versions. The most important variation is found in text **c**. As we have previously seen, the narrative in **c** has several strange features and is not complete. The transition from narrative to supplication, from the fictional world of the story to the world of a real woman in labour, is not as clearly defined as in **a**. Indeed, so far no satisfying interpretation of this text has been offered. Gī-Sîn (as the cow is called in **c**) is introduced, but not as a cow; obviously there is a happy ending, but it is not related. The narrative as such makes no sense and for that reason the comparison in the supplication seems to be meaningless.

δ   Conclusion

The structural line governing the narrative is the mediation of magic between heaven and earth as the solution of the paradox of birth. The supplication is strongly marked as something different. Nevertheless, it uses the narrative in the comparison in the context of the request. The comparison is a second main structural element. Thus, a story in which magic plays a central role is itself part of a magical ceremony. In § 3.4 we will take into account the implications of the fundamental incantational character of the text. This will be the clue to a coherent interpretation of text **c**.

Firstly, however, we will return to our previous analysis of sound and writing to see whether our structural observations are somehow reflected in texture (§ 3.3).

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[21] *Kīma* ('like') is the only other shared lexeme.

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3.3 THE FINISHED WHOLE

In the preceding paragraphs we have analyzed texture and structure separately. Of course, texture and structure are closely bound up with each other for the simple reason that they together make one text. Texture is the exterior side of a text, the wrapping. It has its own weight as decoration, in turning a text into something beautiful. Still, mere decoration hardly exists in poetry since everything has its impact on meaning. The exterior and interior cannot be separated. Can word play, sound patterns, rhyme, lay out, and sign play be shown to have a bearing on structure? Are the structural lines discovered in § 3.2 reflected in texture?

In § 3.1.3 we have distinguished four ways of using sounds and sound patterns, that is:

1 Sound play and double entendre
2 Sound association
3 Recurring sound patterns
4 Rhyme and sound parallelism

In § 3.2.5 two main structural lines were shown to be present:

1   Magic, mediating between heaven and earth, solves the paradox of birth (present in the narrative).
2   The comparison of the cow and the woman, supporting the request (connecting narrative and supplication).

   The coherence of texture and structure will be illustrated by three examples: the double entendre *littu - ālittu*; the hidden references to Lamaštu and Ardat Lilî, and the role of magic.

α   *littu — ālittu*

The double entendre *littu* (cow) — *ālittu* (woman in childbirth) directly reflects the second structural line. As shown in § 3.1.3, *littu* is echoed in a recurring sound pattern all over the text. It is worth noting that in the supplication of text **a** the phoneme combination /li/ occurs no less then five times, of which it is twice /lid/:

kīma Geme-Sîn išariš īlida	ī/lid/a
līlid ardatum mušapšiqtum	/lī//lid/
šabšutum aj ikkali	ikka/li/
erītu līšir	/lī/šir

Whereas on the lexical level the supplication stands fully apart (§ 3.2.5), this sound pattern stresses the coherence of supplication and narrative and the point of this

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coherence: the comparison *littu* — *ālittu*. The word *littu* is further marked by a sign play on AB$_2$ in **a**, 21 (§ 3.1.2).

β Lamaštu and Ardat Lilî

In the different versions we find different puns on Lamaštu and Ardat Lilî. Clearly they represent the dangerous side of delivery, in the contrast life — death they are death. In these double entendres the paradox of birth is stressed, the more so since the references to the killing demons are found on the opposite side: in the names of the helping spirits (**a** and **b**: Lamassus; **c**: 'Daughters of Anu') and in the request for a prosperous birth (**a**, 34: *līlid ardatum*: may the girl give birth).

γ Magic

In the structure of the narrative magic plays a central role since it is the mediator in the contrast heaven — earth and solves the paradox of birth. This is reflected in the pun on *šaman pūri* (one of the magical liquids; texts **a** and **c**). The pun refers both to heaven (*šamû*) and to the calf (*būru*), the magical liquid mediates between the divine world and the earthly happiness of new life. In text **a** this is underlined by a striking repetition of important sounds from *būru/pūri* and *šaman/šamû* in the passage of the ritual:

būru/pūri:	il/pu/t šaman /pū/ri /pū/ssa	(26 and 28)
šaman/šamû:	ilput /ša/man pūri pūs/sa/	(26)
	mê ḫâli u/sa/ppiḫa kala zumrī/ša/	(27 and 29)
	/ša/nâ ilput /ša/man pūri pūs/sa/	(28)

It might be useful to give some detailed attention to this passage.

a, 26b–28:

(i)   *ilput šaman pūri pūssa*
(ii)   *mê ḫâli usappiḫa kala zumrīša*
(i′)   *šanâ ilput šaman pūri pūssa*
(ii′)   *mê ḫâli usappiḫa kala zumrīša*

With 'oil-from-the-jar' she touched her forehead,
with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.
Once again she touched her forehead with 'oil-from-the-jar',
with 'water-of-labour' she sprinkled her whole body.

The most remarkable feature is, of course, the verbatim repetition of i and ii in i' and ii'. The sense of repetition is strengthened backwards and forwards. In the preceding lines the two magical liquids have already been mentioned in the same sequence. In the subsequent line a third repetition of the ritual is hinted at: 'When she touched for the third time...'. By this device the magical treatment is highly

marked, and indeed, it is the pivotal point of the narrative, as we have argued earlier. Repetition is reflected and thus reinforced by phonology through the repetition of /pu/ and /ša/ or /sa/. The prominence of /ša/ and /sa/ can even be observed from the beginning of part III up to the third anointment. We have counted no less then 22 occurrences of /sa/ or /ša/ in the lines 23–30. In the last section of the narrative (the birth) it is absent, emerging again quite prominently in the supplication. Even on the level of writing, repetition is a remarkable feature. Apart from the obvious repetition of signs where words or phrases are repeated, we may point at *ušappala*/*usappiḫa* (26f.) which both begin with the signs U$_2$ ŠAB (see§ 3.1.2).

In text **a** the ritual is not just highly marked, it is marked with repetitions of all kinds. This yields the text a certain slowness and solemnity. It reflects the repetitive character of the ritual. In ritual the order is restored, not just now but every time it is necessary, and each time in the same way.

With this assertion we have already transgressed the boundary between the text of the incantation and the practice of magic. The implications of magical practice for a literary understanding of incantation will be the subject of the next paragraphs (§ 3.4 and § 3.5).

3.4 A MOOT POINT: VERSION **a** VERSUS **c**

Apart from the supplication, text **a** can be read merely as a narrative. In our analysis of this narrative we came upon the central issues of the paradox of birth, the opposition of heaven and earth, and the mediatory function of magic. Although we treated **c** as one of the 'versions', we must admit that this text requires quite another approach. The story of 'A Cow of Sîn' can be clearly recognized. A few lines are even nearly identical with **a**. However, a purely narrative approach to text **c** fails to lead to a coherent understanding. On the one hand the story is not complete; on the other hand some elements do not fit and interrupt the flow of the narrative. One of these 'superfluous' elements is the introduction: 'The bolt is drawn, the door is secured against the suckling babe'. From a narrative point of view this line has no function. Yet in the context of an incantation for a woman in childbirth this is an appropriate opening. Indeed, the first few lines of **c** duplicate the beginning of the preceding incantation, which has nothing in common with 'A Cow of Sîn' apart from its purpose. A fruitful interpretation of **c** requires an understanding of the implications of the incantational character of the text and of the magical practice in which it functioned. It appears that this approach will also give us a better insight into the way in which the narrative functions in the other versions. The comparison of **a** and **c** will therefore be preceded by an analysis of the incantational structure of them both.

3.4.1 Incantational Structure of **a**

The relation of the narrative incantation 'A Cow of Sîn' to magic is twofold. In the first place a magical ritual has a central place within the story. In the second

place the incantation is itself part of a magical ceremony for a woman in childbirth. We may presume that a ceremony, embracing both incantation and ritual, must be performed during the birth. In the narrative a cow appears; obviously -and in the supplication explicitly- it is an image for the woman. The past of the woman can be compared to part I and II of the story: there has been a relationship between this woman and a man; there has been sexual intercourse leading to gestation. At the present time, the situation of the woman can be compared to Geme-Sîn in labour. For the future all that this parallel implies is hoped for.

During the ceremony when 'A Cow of Sîn' is recited reference (however indirect) is made to a concrete woman in childbirth. The biographical division of the 'story' of this woman can be projected back into the image, the narrative of Geme-Sîn. From this point of view we can distinguish, within the narrative, between 'time past', 'time present', and 'time future'. This division of the narrative does not coincide with the division into introduction, problem, and solution.

	narrative	concrete reference	'time'
I Introduction	relationship Geme-Sîn and Sîn	relationship woman-man	
II Problem	copulation pregnancy	sexual intercourse pregnancy	past
III Solution	labour ritual	labour ritual	present
	birth of the calf name-giving	birth of the child name-giving	future

This new division is forced upon the text because of its practical use in a concrete magical ceremony. The question arises of whether this division is perceptible in the text. Or, to put the question another way: is the narrative only used within an incantation, transformed into a comparison by the supplication? Or can we observe some specific features in the narrative itself which point at a specific incantational structure and texture?

The ceremony in which 'A Cow of Sîn' is recited corresponds to 'time present' of the narrative. Notably, in 'time present' (labour and anointment) there is no detail which refers directly or indirectly to a cow, it could as well concern the woman. The ritual described in the text concurs with the ritual performed in reality. For a short time the narrative is not an image anymore but a description, directly applicable to the attended woman.

In this part we can indeed observe many very remarkable features. Whereas the rest of the story is depicted in rough lines, the ritual is narrated in great detail. Fur-

thermore, we noticed special phonological features and the role of repetition and parallelism in this passage of the narrative. While the ritual is very strongly marked with parallelism, this feature abruptly disappears in 'time future' (see § 3.1.4 and § 3.3). The phonemical clusters /ša/ and /sa/, prominent in 'time present', are nearly absent in the subsequent passage (see § 3.3γ: magic). Thus in texture 'time present' is highly marked, which is reasonable within the context of the ceremony.

In 'time past' the cow is an image for the woman. In 'time present', during pangs and ritual, there is no comparison, image and subject coincide. In 'time future' it is the calf (mentioned several times) which restores the image-character of the story.

	image	concrete reference
'time past'	cow (*littu*)	woman
'time present'	labour (*ḫâlu*)	
	ritual	
'time future'	calf (*būru*)	child

The words between brackets can be called motif-words, they only occur in the respective parts of the text:

10–22	past	:	*littu*	3×
23–30	present:		*ḫâlu*	4×
31–32	future	:	*būru*	3×

Yet these three motif-words do not function on the same level within the text. The cow, whether mentioned explicitly or not, plays an important role throughout the whole text, both in the story and in the supplication. This is so not only for the obvious reason that it is the cow who is in labour (*ḫâlu*) and gives birth to a calf (*būru*), but also because of the central word play *littu — ālittu*. And indeed, although the word *littu* only occurs in 'time past', we find puns throughout the narrative and the supplication (see § 3.1.3).

Ḫâlu is the motif-word of 'time present'. Indeed the labour pains are the very reason for the present ceremony, it is the enemy to be defeated. Puns alluding to *ḫâlu* can only be observed in 'time present':

23	*ḫâlīša nepalsaḫ*	ḫ-a-š	:	s-a-ḫ
27	*mê ḫâli usappiḫa*	ḫ-a-i	:	i-ḫ-a
	(repeated in 29).			

The third motif-word (*būru*: calf) is, as it were, phonologically foreshadowed in 'time present' by the name of a medicament: *šaman pūri* ('oil from the jar'; repeated three times). The calf itself is only mentioned in 'time future'. But in a way it is the cause of the pangs in 'time present'; during the anointment and recitation of the incantation it is the hoped-for outcome of the whole operation.

The three motif-words correspond to the triangle of the paradox of birth (§ 3.2.5):

```
pleasure ——————— pain
   cow              labour
      \            /
       \          /
        \        /
         birth
         calf
```
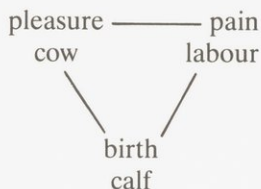
So the story has both a narrative and an incantational structure. It appears that the structure of the text is not the same when analyzed from different angles, but they are closely related. This is, of course, the case because the narrative reflects the ceremony of which it itself is a part.

In part IV, the supplication, the relation between narrative and incantation is made explicit:

33 Just as Geme-Sîn gave birth normally,
34 may also this girl in labour give birth.
35 Let the midwife not tarry, let the pregnant one be all right.

The supplication refers to the story but it only refers to its 'time future'. Just as the story of the cow in past and present was parallel to the biography of the woman, so the future of the woman must be parallel too. This argument is compelling for two reasons. First of all the magical treatment of the woman (the parallel in 'time present') is not a fortuitous new invention of this *āšipu* (magician). This is the right treatment, established of old by Sîn himself. The parallel is a legitimation, a mythological etiology of this ritual.

The second reason is to be found in the system of sympathetic magic. In sympathetic magic a part (nail, hair etc.) can equate the whole. This part, however, can also be any feature of the object, including its name or even grapheme.[22] The pun *littu* — *ālittu* (cow — woman in childbirth) within this system is not just a joke but a very serious matter. Indeed, the *littu* is an *ālittu* since it sounds alike.

3.4.2 Incantational Structure of **c**.

In **c** the story is fragmentary: it lacks a conclusion and the introduction does not fit. Therefore we can hardly speak about the narrative structure of text **c**, on the other hand there is an unmistakable incantational structure.

When the incantation is recited we can again distinguish between 'time past', 'time present', and 'time future'.

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[22] For a fundamental treatment of the Mesopotamian system of magic see the article on magic in RlA (Bottéro 1988).

line	narrative: Gī-Sîn	other images	concrete reference: the woman	'time'
51	Gī-Sîn in difficult childbirth		woman in difficult childbirth	present
52			child is stuck	
53		door is secured	womb of the woman closed	
53-55	Sîn and Gī-Sîn		man and his wife	
55	bull mounts the cow		making love	
56	pregnancy		pregnancy	past
57	pangs of the cow begin		pangs of the woman begin	
58-59	Daughters of Anu: heavenly help for the cow		magical help for the woman	present
60			anointment of the woman	
61-62	Gī-Sîn gives birth		the woman gives birth	future

This scheme differs in a number of respects from the scheme of version **a**. First of all, the text does not show the straightforward sequence: 'time past, 'time present', 'time future'. The introduction belongs to 'time present', it is not part of the narrative. It describes the present situation of woman and child in both metaphorical

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('the door is secured') and direct language. 'Time past' is a real narrative fragment about a cow (Gī-Sîn), which is an image for the woman. In this respect it is fully comparable with the parallel part in **a**. 'Time present' begins as narrative, but shifts half-way through into a magical-medical instruction: 'With 'water-of-labour' he must touch her forehead, with 'oil-from-the-jar' [he must sprinkle?] her whole body.'

In the scheme this is represented by the gap in the 'narrative' column. 'Time future' only encloses the delivery. Just as the first item, it is placed between the 'narrative' and the 'other image' column. Both mention Gī-Sîn, but not in the context of the story, while nevertheless clearly referring to it. The delivery is only mentioned in the supplication by means of the comparison: 'Just as Gī-Sîn, the slave-girl of Sîn gave birth normally, may also this girl in labour give birth'.

Still there is another very strange feature in text **c** which we have not yet indicated. At three places at the end of the text a disagreement in number can be observed.

c, 60–62:

> *mê ḫili lilput pūssa* (SAG.KI.MEŠ-*sa*) *šaman pūri*[   ]*kala zumrīša* (SU.MEŠ-*ša*) *kīma Gī-Sîn amtu ša Sîn ešriši tūlidu lū tūlid ardatu multapšiqtu* (ᵐⁱ²LA.RA.AḪ. MEŠ)

SAG.KI.MEŠ-*sa* (line 61) is translated: 'her forehead'. The sign MEŠ marks the plural. The suffix -*ša*, however, is a possessive suffix of the feminine singular, so the whole combination literally means: 'her foreheads'. The same problem occurs in SU.MEŠ-*ša*, literally: 'her bodies', which is apparently nonsense. Similarly, ᵐⁱ²LA.RA.AḪ.MEŠ is a plural adjective ('the ones in difficult childbirth'), but the corresponding noun (*ardatu*: 'girl') and verb (*lū tūlid*: 'she may give birth') are singular.

In my transcription and translation of the text I have ignored these plural signs, to avoid being ungrammatical. The tension between singular and plural can be explained here by the fundamental fact that a magical ceremony can be repeated. When recited the incantation refers to one concrete woman. In principle, however, it is applicable to every woman in labour.

What conclusions may we draw from all this? First of all it must be stressed that in the scheme the column 'concrete reference' is complete, it contains all necessary elements. The comparison with the cow in 'time future' is based on the parallel in 'time past' and 'time present', and the ritual is legitimized as a heavenly ordinance. Some 'superfluous' elements in the other versions of the story, that is to say, elements which have no correspondence on the level of the concrete reference, are absent. On the other hand, the introduction, which is very inadequate from a narrative point of view, appears to be a relevant extension of the incantational structure.

Secondly, the special features of 'time present' may be noticed. In 'time present' a special tension is reached since the text refers (directly or indirectly) to the person for whom the magical ceremony is actually performed. In **c** this is reflected in

the double occurrence of 'time present'. The introduction, although irrelevant to the narrative, effectively describes, directly and metaphorically, the dangerous situation of woman and child. Moreover, the shift from narrative to ritual instruction takes place in a 'time present' part. Indeed, the ritual is part of the narrative and at the same time the narrative is part of the ritual. These seemingly anomalous features can be interpreted from an incantational point of view .

In the third place it appears that **c** is composed from the point of view of the magician. In 'time present' the ritual is presented as an instruction directed to the magician (though in the third person): 'With 'water-of-labour' he must touch her forehead, with 'oil-from-the-jar' [he must sprinkle?] her whole body'. Indeed the verbal forms change from feminine (subject: the daughters of Anu) into masculine. In addition the tension between the concrete (singular) reference and the plural applicability of the magical ceremony is of no interest for the attended woman. Only from his own special point of view will the magician see that the cow represents Mrs. so and so today and tomorrow someone else.

Finally, we may once again refer back to the paragraph on texture (§ 3.1). It appeared that **c** was written in a short-hand fashion, using the space as economically as possible. This concurs with our analysis of the story in **c**. The narrative is not just 'told', it is efficiently used within an incantational structure.

3.4.3   Conclusion: **a** and **c** compared.

The incantational structures of **a** and **c** prove to be not as different as they seem at first sight. Both texts encompass 'time past', 'time present', and 'time future'. From an incantational point of view **c** contains all necessary elements and is as complete as **a**. More importantly both versions stress 'time present'. Version **a** remains within the borders of the story and marks important passages with purely poetical means (repetitions of all kinds). In **c** 'time present' is reduplicated. The narrative part is preceded by a 'time present' introduction where the problem of mother and child is explicitly presented. Most remarkable is the peculiar nature of 'time present' in the narrative part of both versions. Image and concrete reference shade off into each other. In **a** all references to a cow are omitted: image and concrete reference coincide. In **c** the narrative is replaced by a ritual instruction: the image gives way to concrete reference.

Yet the position of the narrative in the incantation is very different in **a** and **c** respectively. In **a** the narrative has some kind of independence, it has a structure of its own. Narrative and incantation are neatly interwoven. The narrative can be shown to be subservient in structure to the purpose of the incantation. However, the purpose of the incantation and the magical procedure itself are the main themes of the narrative. Thus, the performance of the text in a magical ceremony can be said to add greatly to the impact of the narrative. Essentially the text is an incantation, the narrative is included in such a way that both structures are reinforced.

In **c**, on the other hand, the narrative has no independence at all. Fragments of a story, supposedly well-known, are used in an exclusively incantational structure.

In this **c** can be compared with the incantations translated in § 2.5. The key to the special character of **c** seems to be effectiveness. Written in a short-hand fashion (§ 3.1.2), paying hardly any attention to lay out (§ 3.1.1), it gives no heed to the significance of the story as such.

3.5   TOWARDS A LITERARY UNDERSTANDING OF INCANTATION

An incantation is always part of a magical ceremony. Such a ceremony is intended to change a situation in reality, evaluated negatively. It is intended to fight every-thing which frustrates happiness and well being. The ceremony usually consists of active and verbal parts, the latter being the incantation. An incantation consists solely of language, and to use an incantation means to recite it. In that it differs fundamentally from other magical-medical texts like prescriptions or ritual instruc-tions. The intention of the incantation is to influence reality by language. For that reason the incantation refers to this reality in a specific way. In the first place it refers to a typical situation: a woman in childbirth, someone with a headache. When recited it refers to a concrete and historically defined patient. An incan-tation is a kind of form in which the names must be filled out. Indeed in many incantations the patient is called by name as: 'NN son (or: daughter) of NN'.

The reference to the patient, to his/her problem, or to the hoped-for solution, can be direct or indirect, overt or covert, by comparison, by metaphor, by word or sign play. Indeed, a whole range of possibilities can be and is used, from simple simile to complete narrative, different kinds of 'chains' (see e.g 'The Heart Grass': Reiner 1985 p.94ff.), and mumbo-jumbo spells.

Pjotr Michalowski (1981) has analyzed the poetic structure of the Sumerian incantation against Gall (the article has the unveiling title 'Carminative Magic'). The incantation appears to be tightly organized on all levels of analysis: phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. According to Michalowski, this complexity and high degree of poetical organization cannot be generalized into a statement about all of Sumerian poetry since 'the high concentration of poetic elements in this and other incantations is due to their pragmatic values, which would not necessarily be found in other types of texts' (p. 12). In her close-reading of 'The Heart Grass', an Akkadian incantation against 'seizure of the heart',[23] Erica Reiner (1985) found that the 'tightly knit structure is correlated with the manifestation of the main thrust of the poem at all linguistic levels' (p. 97).

An incantation is intended to influence a god, a demon, an illness. Thus an in-quiry into the literary techniques of incantations is an inquiry into magical rhetoric. It seems that magic does not use the same arguments as the debater and it differs in rhetorical tactics. The system of sympathetic magic is based on the 'internal sol-idarity of the world' (see Bottéro 1988, p. 206f.). A part can be identified with the

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[23] This is an unidentified illness. Probably it refers to a whole range of internal diseases. Two O.B. versions of this incantation have recently been published in *YOS* XI (nos. 11 and 12). My analysis of these O.B. versions will appear in *OLP* (Veldhuis 1990).

whole, and things that share a common feature may represent each other. Sympathetic magic is based on similarity and opposition. In that it is congruent with poetics. The suggestion is that the cogency, and thus the effectivness, of an incantation is dependent on its poetical quality (see also Sebeok 1974 p. 41). Poetics will not appear to be the only facet of magical rhetorics. Other aspects can be: legitimation formulas, personalization of a non-human opponent etc.

To arrive at a fuller understanding of Mesopotamian incantations close reading of these texts is required, taking into account both structural and pragmatic lines. The texts must not be treated in isolation but considered to be a part of the systems of Mesopotamian poetics and Mesopotamian magic.
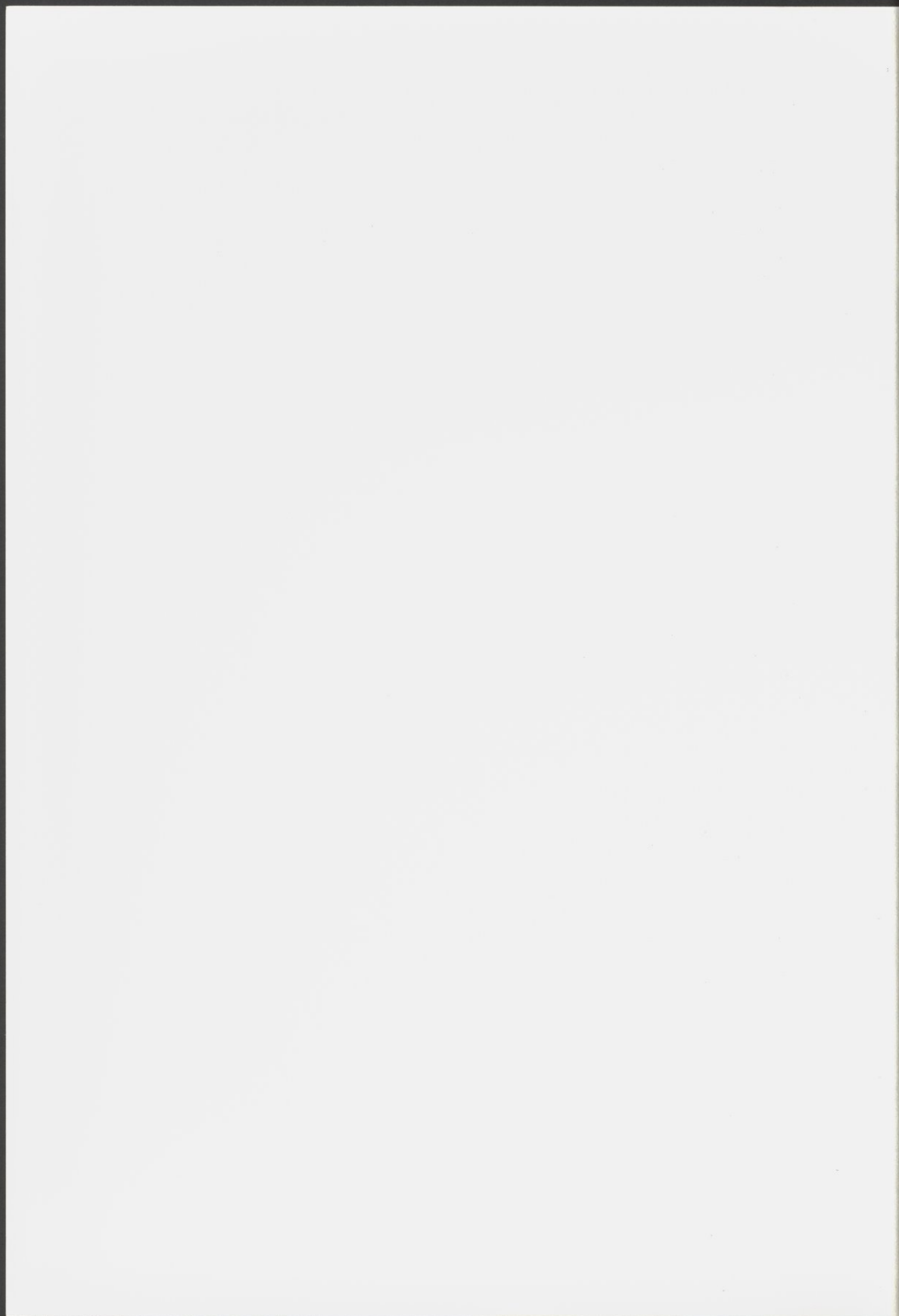
4 PHILOLOGY: TRANSLITERATION AND COMMENTARY

In this chapter each text is presented in transliteration, followed by some philo-
logical remarks. These remarks are kept to a minimum since all texts have been
treated at least once by earlier studies. The most relevant philological discussions
can be found in the editions and in Röllig 1985.

4.1 TEXT **a** AND **a′**

a:10 EN_2 DIŠ-et AB_2 $ša_2$ ^dXXX $GEME_2$ $^dEN.ZU.NA$ šum-$ša_2$
a′: 4 [ ] $ša_2$ ^dXXX $GEME_2$ [ ]-$ša_2$

a:11 ti-iq-na-a-te tuq-qu_3-na-at
a′: 5 ti-[ ]-te [

a:12 bi-nu-tam kaz-bat i-mur-ši-ma ^dXXX i-ra-am-ši
a′: 6 bi-nu-tam kaz-[

a:13 nam-ru $ša_2$ ^dXXX šu-ba-ḫi iš-ta-kan-ši
a′: 7 nam-ru $ša_2$ ^dXXX [

a:14 uš-te-eṣ-bi-is-si-ma pa-an su-kul-lim
a′: 8 uš-te-eṣ-bi-is-si-[

a:15 re-e_2-u_2-tu il-la-ka EGIR-$ša_2$
a′: 9 re-e_2-a-u_2-tu il-[

a:16 ina nu-ru-ub šam-me i-re-'i šam-me
a′:10 ina nu-ru-ub šam-mi i-[

a:17 ina šub-be_2-e maš-qe_2-e i-šaq-qu-ši me-e
a′:11 ina šub-be_2-e maš-qi_2-i[

a:18 ina pu-zur ka-par_2-ri la a-mar re-'-i
a′:12 ina pu-zur ka-par_2-ri la a-[

a:19 ana UGU AB_2 iš-ta-ḫi-iṭ mi-ru ek-du ḫe-pi_2 <<zib>>-ba-tuš-$ša_2$ IL_2-ši
a′:13 ana UGU AB_2 iš-ta-ḫi-iṭ mi-[

a:20 U_4.MEŠ-$ša_2$ ina qu-ut-ti-i ar_2-ḫi-$ša_2$ ina ga-ma-ri
a′:14 U_4.MEŠ-$ša_2$ i-na qu-ut-ti-i [

a:21 AB_2 ig-ta-lit u_2-ga-al-lit
a′:15 AB_2 ig-da-lit i-ga-[

a:22 re-e_2-a-$ša_2$ ap-pa-šu qa_2-di-is-su ka-par-ru ka-li-$šu_2$-nu sap-du-$šu_2$
a′:16 re-e_2-a-$ša_2$ ap-pa-šu qa_2-di-[

a:23   ana ik-kil-li-ša$_2$ ana ri-gim ḫa-li-ša$_2$ ne-pal-saḫ ^{d}ŠEŠ.KI-ru
a′:17   ana ik-kil-li-ša$_2$ ana ri-gim ḫa-[

a:24 ^{d}XXX ina AN-e iš-tam-me ri-gim-ša$_2$ iš-ši qa-as-su ša$_2$-ma-me
a′:18 ^{d}XXX ina AN-e iš-tam-me ri-[

a:25   MIN ^{d}LAMA$_2$.MEŠ AN-e u$_2$-ri-da-nim$_2$-ma DIŠ-et I$_3$.GIŠ BUR na-ša$_2$-at
a′:19   MIN ^{d}LAMA$_2$.MEŠ AN-e u$_2$-ri-[

a:26   ša$_2$-ni-tum u$_2$-šap-pa-la me-e ḫa-li il-pu-ut I$_3$.GIŠ BUR pu-us-sa
a′:20   ša$_2$-ni-tum u$_2$-šap-pa-la me-[

a:27   me-e ḫa-li u$_2$-sap-pi-ḫa ka-la zu-um-ri-ša$_2$
a′:21   me-e ḫa-li u$_2$-sap-pi-[

a:28   ša$_2$-na-a il-pu-ut I$_3$.GIŠ BUR pu-us-sa
a′:22   ša$_2$-na-a il-pu-ut I$_3$.GIŠ! BUR pu-[

a:29   me-e ḫa-li u$_2$-sap-pi-ḫa ka-la SU-ša$_2$
a′:23   me-e ḫa-li u$_2$-sap-pi-ḫa [

a:30   šal-la-ti-iš-šu ina la-pa-ti
a′:24   šal-la-ti-iš-šu ina la-[

a:31   bu-ru GIN$_7$ u$_2$-za-li im-ta-qut qaq-qar-šu$_2$
a′:25   bu-ru GIN$_7$ u$_2$-za-li im-ta-[

a:32   AMAR.GA iš-ta-kan šu-um bu-u$_2$-ri
a′:26   AMAR.GA iš-ta-kan šu-um bu-u$_2$-[

a:33   ki-ma GEME$_2$ ^{d}EN.ZU.NA i-ša$_2$-riš i-li-da
a′:27   ki-ma GEME$_2$ ^{d}EN.ZU.NA i-ša$_2$-r[iš

a:34   li-li-id ar$_2$-da-tum mu-šap-šiq-tum
a′:28   li-li-id ar$_2$-da-tum mu-[

a:35   šab-šu-tum a-a ik-ka-li e-ri-tu li-ši-ir
a′:29   šab-su-tum a-a ik-ka-li [

Remarks

13: The word *namru* is clearly derived from the root NWR (to be light), but the morphology and syntax are not clear. The word *šubaḫi* is unknown. The parallel line **b**, 21 is also obscure.

19: *ḫe-pi$_2$ <<zib>>-ba-tuš-ša$_2$*: reading suggested by Farber 1987. *He-pi$_2$* is an editorial gloss ('broken') inserted by the ancient copyist and indicating a broken passage in his original.

28: I$_3$.GIŠ: In AMT 67,1 (**a′**) a MA is copied instead of I$_3$.GIŠ. The tablet is slightly damaged here; the photograph seems to allow the reading of the ligature I$_3$×GIŠ.

31: *Qaqqaršu*: see Lambert 1960, p. 328. For *maqātu* in the semantic field of deliv-
    ery see A,I 50 and Beckman 1983, p. 26.

32: AMAR.GA is best to be read in Akkadian: *būr šizbi*. It is a common ideogram
    for a new-born calf (literally: milk-calf). Therefore, properly speaking, it is not
    a name at all.

4.2   TEXT **b**

19 EN$_2$.E$_2$.NU.RU$_3$
20 ^{gud}AB$_2$ ša ^{d}XXX GEME$_2$ ^{d}XXX ši-ik-na-te mu-tu-rat mi-nu-ta ka-az-[
21 e-mur-ši-ma ^{d}XXX i-ra-am-ši mi-ḫi-ir ^{d}XXX nam-ru-te mu-[
22 ul-ta-aṣ-bi-si pa-nu su-ku-li-ša la-tu i-la-ka-a i-n[a
23 i-na nu-ru-ub U$_2$.MEŠ i-ra-'i-ši i-na šub-be ša maš-qe-e [
24 i-na pu-zu!-ur ^{lu_2}SIPA la la-mad ka-par$_2$-ri ^{gud}AB$_2$ il-[
25 AMAR ek-du ar-ḫi-ša i-na ga-ma-ri U$_4$.MEŠ-ša$_2$ i-n[a
26 ^{gud}AB$_2$ ik-ta-mi-ṣi i-ḫa-al ar-ḫu ^{lu_2}SIPA [
27 u ka-par$_2$-ru MEŠ DU$_3$.A.BI-šu-nu sa-ap-du-ši sa-ap-[
28 [   ]x x na-ši-šu u$_3$ ka-par$_2$-ru u$_2$-ka-na-ša$_2$ a-na [
29 [-g]i-im ḫi-li-ša$_2$ NA AN iš-ta-ma-a ri-gi-i[m
30 [   ]MIN-ta ^{d}ALAD$_3$ AN-e u$_2$-ri-da-ni il-ti-[
31 [   ]x BI KU$_3$ NUN ḪI na-ša$_2$-at A.MEŠ šul-me x[
32 [   ]x IB ḪU x x ša$_2$ ^{gud}AB$_2$ ša[
33 [   ]x x im-qu-ta A.GAR$_3$-šu a-na ḫar-[
34 [   ]x ki-ma GEME$_2$ ^{d}XXX le-še-ra x[
35 [   ]x DU x x x[   ] x x [   ]
36 [l]e-še-er [

Remarks

General: orthography and paleography clearly place tablet B in the Middle Assyr-
ian period (see Lambert 1965). The dialect may be called 'Assyrianized Babylonian'
(Mayer 1971, p. 1). A Babylonian form, for instance, is l. 26: *iḫâl* (Assyrian: *taḫâl*;
compare **c**, 57). But l. 21: *ēmuršima* is Assyrian (Babylonian *īmuršima*; compare **a**,
21).

20 *Mutturat* is derived from *(w)atāru*. W only changes into m in intervocalic posi-
   tion, so *šiknāte mutturat* must be regarded as a *shandi* spelling.

20 *Minûtu* is considered to be a secondary form of *binûtu* (substitution of initial b
   by m; suggested by Röllig 1985, p. 264).

29 Text: NA AN *iš-ta-ma-a* This must be emended to <<*i*>>-*na* AN *iš-ta-ma-a*:
   'they (fem.) heard in heaven'. The form *ištamā* is a correct feminine plural
   (subject: *lamassātu*).

51 gi-se-en ^{د}XXX GEME$_2$ ša ^{د}XXX a-la-da šap-šu-qa-at še-er-ra
52 ku-na-at še-er-ra ku-na-at ana qa-tu-u$_2$ ZI-te ŠU.RA si-ku-rum
53 sa-ni-iq KA$_2$-bu ana NU TI QI$_2$ la-lu-u$_2$ IGI.DU$_8$-ši-ma ^{د}XXX
54 i-ra-'i-ši ana nu-ru-ub U$_2$.MEŠ ir-ta-na-'i ina sa-ḫi x (x)
55 NAG.MEŠ[   ]MEŠ ana UGU ^{gud}AB$_2$ il-ti-ki-iṭ bu-ru
56 ek-du U$_4$.MEŠ-ša ana mu-le-e ITI.MEŠ-ša ana ⌈x x x⌉
57 ta-aḫ-ti-me-iš ta-ḫa-al bu-ur-tu ina x [
58 ina GU$_3$.MEŠ ḫi-li-ša ^{د}XXX na-na-ar AN-e [
59 MIN ši-na DUMU.MI$_2$ ^{د}a-nim TA AN-e u$_2$-ri-da-a-ni DIŠ-te na-ša-at A.MEŠ
    ḫi-i-li ša-ni-tu
60 na-ša-at I$_3$ pu-u$_2$-ri A.MEŠ ḫi-li li-il-pu-ut SAG.KI.MEŠ-sa I$_3$ pu-u$_2$-ri x U$_2$ PI
61 DU$_3$!.A.BI SU.MEŠ-ša GIN$_7$-ma gi-i-^{د}XXX GEME$_2$ ša ^{د}XXX e-eš-ri-ši U$_3$.TU-
    du lu-U$_3$.TU-id
62 ar-da-a-tu ^{mi2}LA.RA.AḪ.MEŠ EN$_2$!.E$_2$.NU.RU

Remarks

General: orthography and sign forms of Ms. C point to the Middle Assyrian period
(see further Lambert 1969). The dialect can be compared with B: an Assyrianized
Babylonian. This text consistently uses the verbal prefix *ta/tu* for the 3rd person
feminine singular, which is an Assyrian characteristic.

51 *Gi-se-en* ^{د}XXX: ^{د}XXX is considered to be a gloss.

53 NU TI QI$_2$ is an error for *ti-nu-qi$_2$*, as the parallel line 36 shows.

54 A peculiar characteristic of **c** is the deviant use of prepositions when compared
   with the other versions.

l	**c**	**a/b**
54	*ana nurub*	*ina*
56	*ana mullê*	*ina*
58	*ina rigmī*	*ana*
59	*ultu šamê*	∅

   I can offer no explanation for this.

59 *šitta šina marāt Anim ultu šamê ūridāni* Almost identical lines can be found in
   Maqlû III 31–33 (Meier 1967) and *BAM* 513 III 19' with duplicates (see Lands-
   berger and Jacobsen 1955, p. 16 no. 3).

60 Lambert (1969) reads: *mê ḫili <li> ilput* and considers the LI to be a scribal er-
   ror (dittography). It remains a problem, however, since there is no appropriate
   subject for *ilput*, being a masculine form. The unaltered reading *lilput* must be
   preferred.

4.4 MS. D

No complete transliteration of this tablet exists. Therefore the tablet is presented here in its entirety.

1′–5′:traces
6′ il-pu-[
7′ i-na ša-ni-i il-pu-[
8′ pa-na SU-šu i-na ša-ni-[
9′ im-qu$_2$-ut qa-aq-qar$_2$-šu x [
10′ il-ta-kan$_2$ šu-u$_2$-um [
11′ li-il-da$_2$ ar-da$_2$-[
12′ PEŠ$_4$-tum li-še-x [   ] x [

13′ INIM.INIM.MA EN$_2$ mu-šap-ši-iq-[
14′ iš-tu re-e-eš lib$_3$-bi-šu A-[

15′ EN$_2$.E$_2$.NU.RU ar-ḫi-mi i-da-[
16′ su$_2$-u$_2$-pu!-ur ^{د}SUMUKAN ar-ḫi-m[i
17′ i-na ⌈EGIR?⌉-ša u$_2$-še-iš-še-r[a
18′ i-il-la-a-me-e il-la-k[a
19′ i-il-la-a-[me]-e il-l[a
20′ aš-šum$_2$ u$_2$-ni-q[i$_2$
21′ li-i-šir$_3$ ar$_2$-d[a
22′ TU$_6$.EN$_2$.E.NU.[RU

23′ x x

Remarks

General: some sign values are characteristic for Boghazköy: *da$_2$* (TA; l. 11), *qu$_2$* (KU; l. 9), *kan$_2$* (GAN$_2$; l. 10) and *qar$_2$* (KAR; l. 9). Remarkable is the masculine form of the pronominal suffix in *zumrīšu* (8′) and *libbīšu* (14′); for *-ša* ('her'). Since Hittite grammar does not differentiate between feminine and masculine, this is obviously due to interference with the mother tongue of the scribe (Labat 1932, p. 58 and 70). Apparently tablet D is not imported but written by a native scribe.

15′-22′ This is an hitherto unrecognized version of another incantation for a woman in childbirth. Two other versions are known: Old Babylonian: *VS* 17, 34; see Van Dijk 1972, p. 343f.; Dutch translation by Stol 1983, p. 31. Neo-Assyrian: Ms. A/A' (*BAM* 248) I 40–41; see Civil 1974, p. 334 and Veldhuis 1989.

16′ Text: *su$_2$-u$_2$-MU-ur. VS* 17, 34, 3: *su$_2$-pu-u$_2$-ur$_2$* ^{د}SUMUKAN.

18′-21′ Read: *illamê illak[ā dimāšu ammīnim] /illamê ill[akā dimāšu] /aššum unīq-[ija]*: 'The full moon his tears are running. Why are the tears of the full moon running? Because of my she-goat ...' (see *VS* 17, 34,5–10). On *ellamû* see Civil 1974, p. 334 ad l. 17ff.
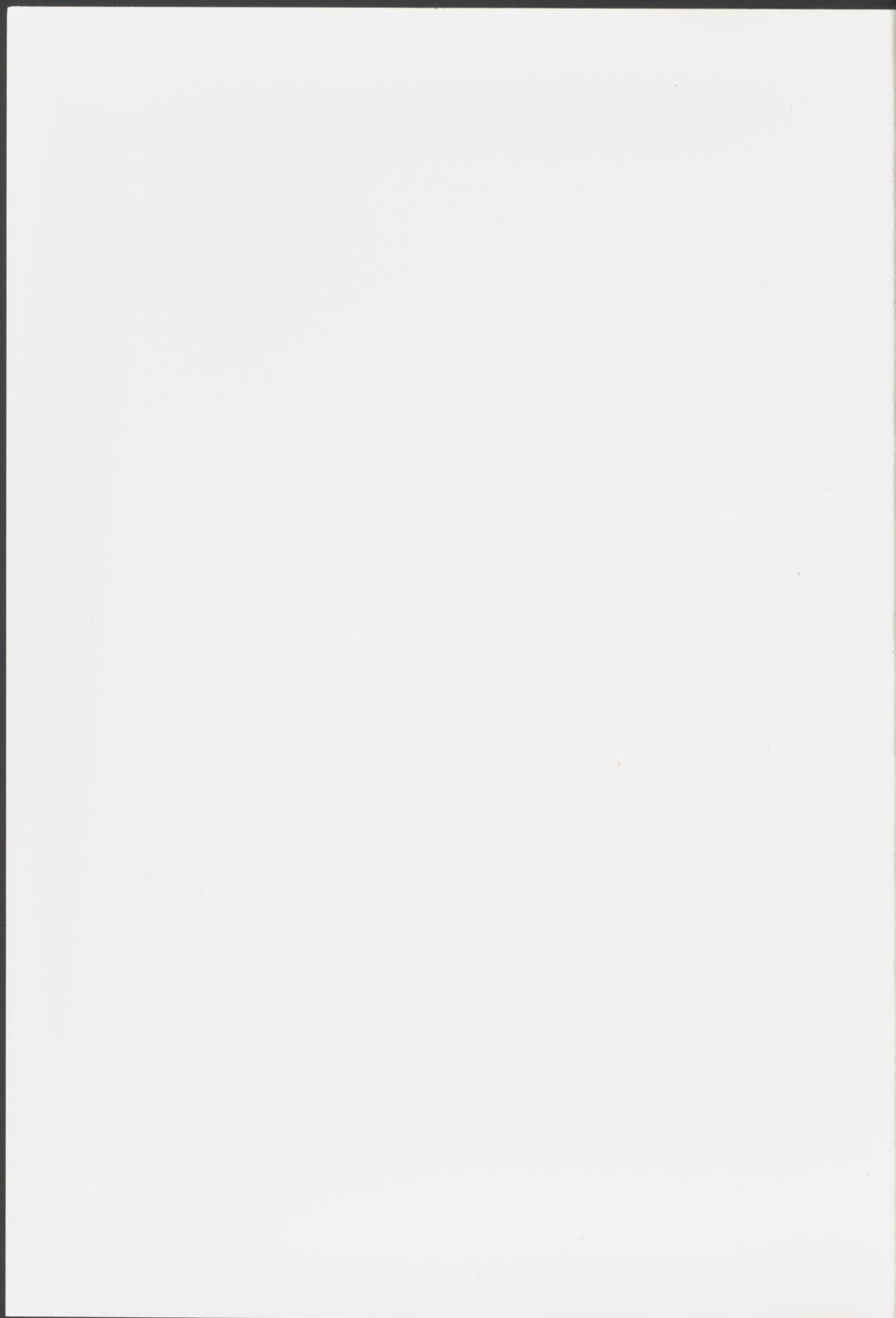
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GLOSSARY

Separate references to text **a′** are only given in case of substantial difference with **a**.

aj not (precative): **a**, 35

alādu (U₃.TU) to give birth: **a**, 33, 34; **c**, 51, 61 (2×); **d**, 11′

alāku to go: **a**, 15; **b**, 22

amāru (IGI.DU₈) to see: **a**, 12, 18; **b**, 21; **c**, 53

amtu (GEME₂) slave-girl: **c**, 51, 61

ana to: **a**, 19, 23 (2×); **b**, 28, (29), 33; **c**, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 (2×)

Anu god of heaven: **c**, 59

appu face: **a**, 22

arādu to descend: **a**, 25; **b**, 30; **c**, 59

ardatu girl: **a**, 34; **c**, 62; **d**, 11′

arḫu (ITI) month: **a**, 20; **b**, 25; **c**, 56

arḫu cow: **b**, 26

arki (EGIR) after: **a**, 15; (**b**, 22)

atāru D to be (very) great: **b**, 20 (*mu-tu-rat*)

bābu (KA₂) door: **c**, 53

binûtu shape: **a**, 12; **b**, 20 (*mi-nu-ta*)

būrtu cow: **c**, 57

būru (AMAR) (bull) calf: **a**, 31, 32 (2×); **b**, 25; **c**, 55

ekdu wild: **a**, 19; **b**, 25; **c**, 56

EN₂.E₂.NU.RU₃/RU (incantation rubric; meaning unkown): **b**, 19; **c**, 62

erītu (PEŠ₄) pregnant woman: **a**, 35; **d**, 12′

ešeriš see *išariš*

ešēru to be all right; to give birth normally: **a**, 35; **b**, 34, 36; **d**, 12′

galātu to tremble: **a**, 21; **a′**, 15 (2×) D to terrify: **a**, 21

gamāru to finish: **a**, 20; **b**, 25

Geme-Sîn (GEME₂ ᵈEN.ZU.NA; GEME₂ ᵈXXX) (Name of the cow): **a**, 10, 33; **b**, 20, 34

Gī-Sîn (Gi- ᵈXXX) (Name of the cow): **c**, 51 (*gi-se-en* ᵈXXX), 61

ḫâlu to be in labour: **a**, 23, 26, 27, 29; **b**, 26, 29; **c**, 57, 58, 59, 60

ḫamāšu to bend down: **c**, 57

ḫepi broken (editorial gloss of the ancient copyist): **a**, 19

ikkillu cry: **a**, 23

iltēt see *ištēn*

ina in; into: **a**, 16, 17, 18, 20 (2×), 24, 30; **b**, 22, 23(2×), 24, 25 (2×), 29 (<<*i*>>-*na*); **c**, 54, 57, 58; **d**, 7′, 8′

INIM.INIM.MA incantation (rubric): **d**, 13′

išariš all right (adverb): **a**, 33; **c**, 61 (*e-eš-ri-ši*)

ištēn (DIŠ) one: **a**, 10, 25; **b**, 30; **c**, 59 (DIŠ-*te*)

kalû (DU₃.A.BI) all: **a**, 22, 27, 29; **b**, 27; **c**, 61

kalû N to hold back: **a**, 35

kamāṣu to squat: **b**, 26

kânu D to make firm; stative: to be stuck: **c**, 52 (2×)

kaparru herd boy: **a**, 18, 22; **b**, 24, 27, 28

kazbu attractive: **a**, 12; **b**, 20

kīma (GIN₇) like: **a**, 31, 33; **b**, 34; **c**, 61

lā not: **a**, 18; **b**, 24

lalû baby: **c**, 53

lamādu to learn; to notice: **b**, 24

lamassu (LAMA₂; ALAD₃) Lamassu (protective spirit): **a**, 25; **b**, 30

lapātu to touch: **a**, 26, 28, 30; **c**, 60; **d**, 6′, 7′

littu (AB₂) cow: **a**, 10, 19, 21; **b**, 20, 22, 24, 26, 32; **c**, 55

lū (precative particle): **c**, 61

mahāṣu (ŠU.RA) to strike; to draw (a bolt): **c**, 52

malû D to fill: **c**, 56

maqātu to fall: **a**, 31; **b**, 33; **d**, 9′

mārtu (DUMU.MI₂) daughter: **c**, 59

mašqû well: **a**, 17; **b**, 23

miḫru counterpart: **b**, 21 (?)

minûtu see *binûtu*

mīru bull: **a**, 19

mû (A.MEŠ) water: **a**, 17, 26, 27, 29; **b**, 31; **c**, 55, 59, 60

muḫḫu (UGU) top: **a**, 19; **c**, 55

namru brilliance (?): **a**, 13; **b**, 21 (*nam-ru-te*)

nannāru (ŠEŠ.KI) celestial light (epithet of the moon god): **a**, 23; **c**, 58

napalsuḫu to be downcast: **a**, 23

napištu (ZI) life: **c**, 52

našû (IL₂) to lift; to carry: **a**, 19, 24, 25; **b**, 28, 31; **c**, 59, 60

nurbu something lush: **a**, 16; **b**, 23; **c**, 54

pānu face; front: **a**, 14; **b**, 22; **d**, 8′

pašāqu Š: to be in difficulty; to be in labour: **a**, 34; **c**, 51; **d**, 13′
  Št (LA.RA.AH): **c**, 62

pūru (BUR) jar: **a**, 25, 26, 28; **c**, 60 (2×)

pūtu (SAG.KI) forehead: **a**, 26, 28; **c**, 60

puzru secret: **a**, 18; **b**, 24

qadādu to bow: **a**, 22

qaqqaru ground: **a**, 31; **d**, 9′

qātu hand: **a**, 24

qatû to bring to an end: **c**, 52
  D: **a**, 20

râmu to love: **a**, 12; **b**, 21

re'û to pasture; to graze: **a**, 16; **b**, 23; **c**, 54
  Gtn: **c**, 54

rē'û (^{lu₂}SIPA) herdsman: **a**, 18, 22; **b**, 24, 26

rē'ûtu herdship: **a**, 15

rigmu (GU₃) scream: **a**, 23, 24; **b**, 29 (2×); **c**, 58

saḫḫu meadow: **c**, 54

sanāqu to control; to secure: **c**, 53

sapādu to mourn: **a**, 22; **b**, 27

sapāḫu D to sprinkle: **a**, 27, 29

sikkūru bolt: **c**, 52

Sîn (^dXXX) moon god: **a**, 10, 12, 13, 24; **b**, 20, 21 (2×); **c**, 51 (2×), 53, 58, 61

sukullu (cattle) herd: **a**, 14; **b**, 22

ṣabātu Š to appoint: **a**, 14; **b**, 22

ša of; that: **a**, 10, 13; **b**, 20, 23, 32 (2×); **c**, 51, 61

šabsūtu midwife: **a**, 35 (*šab-šu-tum*); **a′**, 29 (*šab-su-tum*)

šaḫāṭu to mount: **a**, 19; **b**, 24; **c**, 55 (*il-ti-ki-iṭ*)

šakānu to place; to give (a name): **a**, 13, 32; **d**, 10'

šakāṭu see *šaḫāṭu*

šallatiššu for the third time: **a**, 30

šamāmū heaven: **a**, 24

šammu (U₂) grass: **a**, 16 (2×); **b**, 23; **c**, 54

šamnu (I₃; I₃.GIŠ) oil: **a**, 25, 26, 28; **c**, 60 (2×)

šamû (AN) heaven: **a**, 24, 25; **b**, 29, 30; **c**, 58, 59

šanâ for the second time: **a**, 28

šanû second: **a**, 26; **c**, 59; **d**, 7', 8'

šapālu D to bring down: **a**, 26

šaqû to water: **a**, 17; (**b**, 23)
  Gtn (NAG.MEŠ): **c**, 55

šebû D to satisfy: **a**, 17; **b**, 23

šemû to hear: **b**, 29
  Gtn: **a**, 24

šerru child: **c**, 51, 52

šikittu stature: **b**, 20

šina (MIN) two: **a**, 25; **b**, 30; **c**, 59

šiptu (EN₂) incantation: **a**, 10; **d**, 13'

šitta see *šina*

šizbu (GA) milk: **a**, 32

šubaḫu (?): **a**, 13

šulmu well-being: **b**, 31

šumu name: **a**, 10, 32; **d**, 10'

taqānu D to decorate: **a**, 11

tēniqu suckling: **c**, 53 (NU TI QI₂; read: *ti-nu-qi₂*)

tiqnu ornament: **a**, 11

u and: **b**, 27, 28

ugāru (A.GAR₃) field: **b**, 33

ultu (TA) from: **c**, 59

ūmu (U₄) day: **a**, 20; **b**, 25; **c**, 56

uzālu gazelle's young: **a**, 31

zibbatu tail: **a**,19 (*he-pi₂* <<*zib*>>-*ba-tuš-ša₂*)

zumru (SU) body: **a**, 27, 29; **c**, 61; **d**, 8'
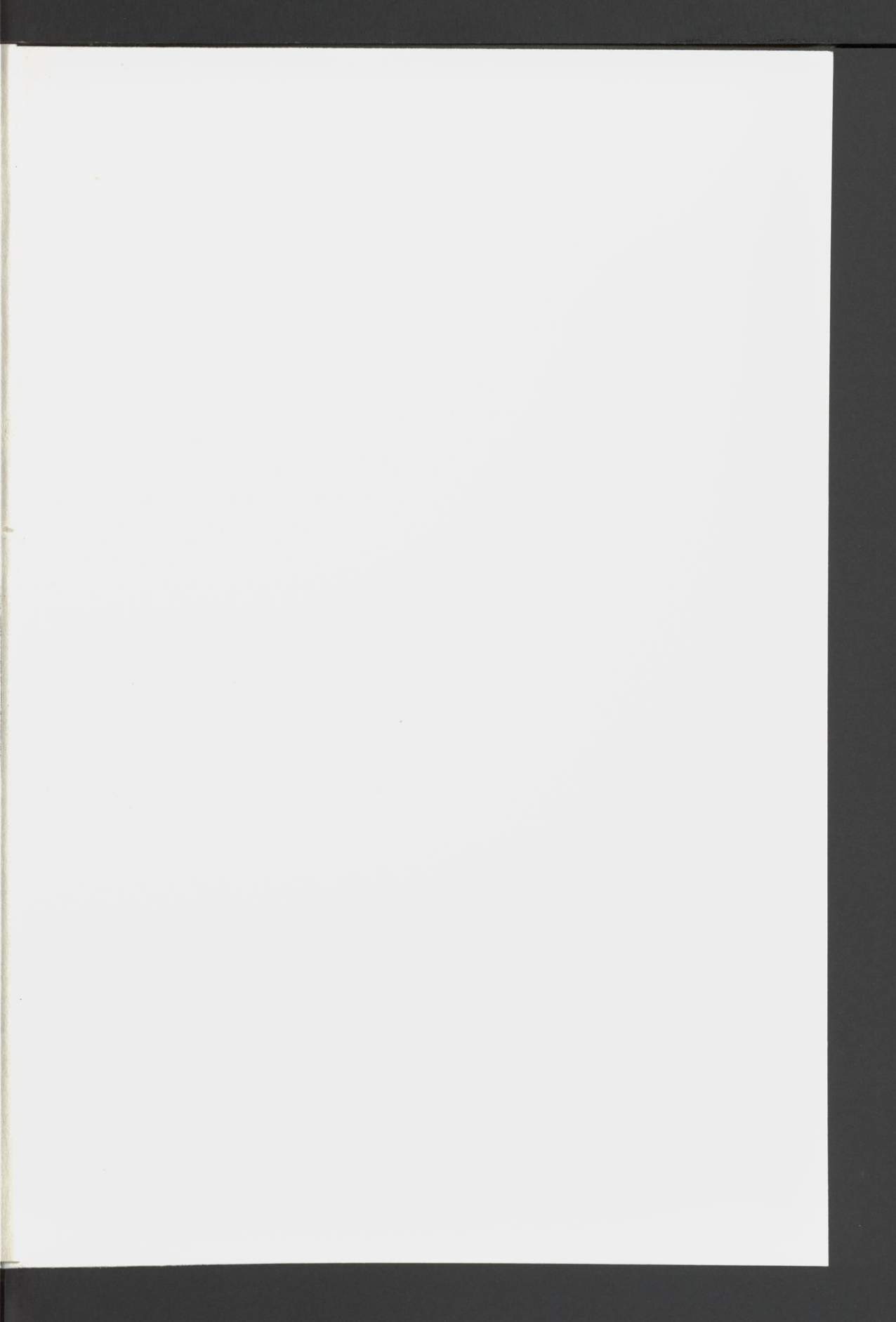
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