ANCIENT MAGIC AND DIVINATION 1

MESOPOTAMIAN MAGIC

TEXTUAL, HISTORICAL, AND INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Tzvi Abusch
Karel van der Toorn
editors

STYX
PUBLICATIONS

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Edited by

Tzvi Abusch and Ann K. Guinan

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Preface

This book owes its existence to the co-operation of six specialists in such different fields as Assyriology, History of Religions, and Cultural Anthropology. Invited by the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) at Wassenaar, The Netherlands, they formed a theme group on 'Magic and Religion in the Ancient Near East' during the academic year 1994–95. The group consisted of Tzvi Abusch (Waltham), Wim van Binsbergen (then Amsterdam & Leiden, now Rotterdam & Leiden), Mark Geller (London), Shaul Shaked (Jerusalem), Karel van der Toorn (then Leiden, now Amsterdam), and Frans Wiggermann (Amsterdam). Located in adjoining offices along the same corridor, they worked both on individual and on common projects.

One of the delights of our year was a weekly series of Wednesday evening seminars. These meetings offered members of the theme group the chance to present and discuss their ongoing research projects in an informal framework which was intensely collegial and highly critical at the same time. Several scholars from outside NIAS joined us on occasion; among them were Joris Borghouts (Leiden), Theo van de Hout (Amsterdam), and Henk Versnel (Leiden). The organization of a conference on Mesopotamian magic was one of the common projects of the group. Planned for the end of the ten months' stay at NIAS, the conference was discussed and prepared during a number of the weekly seminars. Some of the contributions to the present book by members of the group grew out of these seminars. Other contributions were not presented in the Wednesday evening meetings, but would never have seen the light of day without them. We feel that the weekly opportunity for debate and exchange of ideas was one of the most rewarding experiences of our year as NIAS fellows.

The conference on Mesopotamian magic was held 6–9 June, 1995, at the premises of NIAS. A group of about fifteen colleagues came to Wassenaar to join the six resident fellows for three days of presentations and discussion on exorcistic texts and practices from Mesopotamia. In addition to the contributors to this book, the late Jan van Dijk and Klaas R. Veenhof read papers at the conference. The meetings gave a central place to interpretation. The organizers felt that the study of Mesopotamian magic had been dominated by philology at the expense of an effort to make sense of the texts from a number of interpretive perspectives. Though several contributors presented new texts at the conference, most participants presented either interpretive surveys of the material or close readings of specific texts.

The emphasis on interpretation is reflected in the division of this book. It opens with a part on 'Theoretical Perspectives'. The contribution by Wim van Binsbergen and Frans Wiggermann is rather unique in that it combines the insights of the anthropologist with the erudition of the Assyriologist. The result is a rich and thought-provoking article on the meaning and development of magic in Mesopotamia. Niek Veldhuis (Groningen) looks at the poetry of magic in an effort to see how words do the work they are supposed to do. Mark Geller has explored the psychological experience that lies buried underneath the surface level of exorcistic texts. Marten Stol (Amsterdam) takes a slightly different approach in an article that tries to assess the psychosomatic nature of the suffering

that magic is designed to combat. JoAnn Scurlock (Chicago) takes up the issue of the distinction between the various specialists of exorcism; although the question is familiar, Scurlock's approach shows that we must reassess the question.

The second part, entitled 'Surveys and Studies', opens with a discussion by Tzvi Abusch of Mesopotamian ideas about 'Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God'. He argues that the conjunction of the two supernatural forces is due to the increasing importance of witchcraft beliefs in Mesopotamia and theorizes about socio-religious developments that might explain various features and trends discernible in Mesopotamian magical thought and ritual. His essay thus serves as a bridge between the theoretical and material sections. There follows an examination of the Namburbi texts by Stefan Maul (Heidelberg). In a succint and lucid manner, he presents his understanding of the nature and significance of the complex body of material. Alasdair Livingstone (Birmingham) presents a survey of the hemerological tradition in Mesopotamia. The contribution by Karel van der Toorn explores the setting of domestic magic on the basis of a new close reading of Old Babylonian baby incantations. Eva Braun-Holzinger (Frankfurt) surveys the evidence for apotropaeic figures at Mesopotamian temples, and suggests correspondences between archaeological remains and textual descriptions. Shaul Shaked and Christa Müller-Kessler (Emskirchen), finally, take the reader beyond the confines of Assyriology. Shaked looks at the poetics of Aramaic spells from Late Antiquity, and Müller-Kessler compares Mandaic incantations on lead rolls with the incantations on bowls. Apart from their value as introductions to texts that are unfamiliar to many Assyriologists, the two contributions demonstrate certain continuities between early Mesopotamian magic and Mesopotamian magic in late Antiquity.

The third part of the book is devoted to the presentation and discussion of new texts. Irving Finkel (London) offers a large number of new dog, snake and scorpion incantations; Antoine Cavigneaux (Geneva) publishes important new texts from Tel Haddad, and discusses their significance; William W. Hallo (New Haven) publishes two Old Babylonian texts and a Neo-Babylonian one from the Babylonian collections at Yale; and Wilfred G. Lambert (Birmingham) gives an update on his work on 'Marduk's Address to the Demons', a text that can now be reconstructed almost in its entirety.

The editorial work has been greatly facilitated thanks to Aernold van Gosliga (Leiden) and Frans van Koppen (Leiden), who prepared a final version of the book on computer, to Kathryn Kravitz (Waltham), who helped edit the original submissons, and to Chris Wyckoff (Waltham), who read the volume in proof and prepared the index.

The editors look upon this collection of studies as a means to let other people share in the excitement of the NIAS conference on magic, and – indirectly – in the work of the theme group on magic and religion. We trust that this book will serve its purpose as an introduction to the interpretation of Mesopotamian magic.

Tzvi Abusch
Karel van der Toorn
Waltham and Leiden, July 1997

Abbreviations

A	tablets in the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
A.	tablets from Mari in the collections of the Aleppo Museum
AA	*American Anthropologist*
AA(A)S	*Annales archéologiques (arabes) syriennes* (Damascus)
AAR	American Academy of Religion
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	tablets in the Bodleian Collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
AB	Anchor Bible
AbB	Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung (Leiden)
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
ABL	R.F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters* (14 vols., London & Chicago, 1892–1914)
ABRT	J.A. Craig, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts* (2 vols., Leipzig 1895–1897)
ActAnt	*Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
AEM	Archives Epistolaires de Mari
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AHW	W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden, 1965–1981)
AIR	*Ancient Israelite Religion*. FS F.M. Cross (eds. P.D. Miller *et alii*)
Akk	*Akkadica*
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syriens-Palästinas
AlT	D.J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* (London, 1953)
AMT	R.C. Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* (ed. J.B. Pritchard, 3. ed., Princeton, 1969)
Annuaire	*Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*, IVe *section* (Paris: Sorbonne)
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AO	Antiquités orientales (tablets in the Louvre, Paris)
AOS	American Oriental Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
ARES	Archivi Reali di Ebla, Studi
ARET	Archivi Reali di Ebla, Testi
ARM(T)	Archives Royales de Mari (Textes)
ArOr	*Archiv Orientální*
AS	Assyriological Studies (Chicago)
ASJ	*Acta Sumerologica*
ASOR	The American Schools of Oriental Research

ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem*
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
Atra-hasīs	W.G. Lambert & A.R. Millard, *Atra-hasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969)
AulOr	*Aula Orientalis*
AUAM	tablets in the Andrews University Archaeological Museum
AUWE	Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka Endberichte
b	*Babylonian Talmud*, followed by abbreviated name of tractate
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BagF	Baghdader Forschungen
BagM	*Baghdader Mitteilungen*
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
BAM	F. Köcher, *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* (6 vols., Berlin, 1963–1980)
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBR	H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion* (2 vols., Leipzig 1896–1901)
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver & C.A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1962)
BE	The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania
Beih.	Beiheft
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
Bibl	*Biblica*
BID	W. Farber, *Beschwörungsrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi* (Wiesbaden, 1977)
BiMes	Bibliotheca Mesopotamica
BIN	Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of J. B. Nies
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BM	tablets in the British Museum
BMS	L.W. King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery, being "The prayers of the lifting of the hand"* (London, 1896)
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
Bu.	Budge (tablets in the British Museum)
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BWL	W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford, 1960)
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beiheft *ZAW*
CAD	*Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, published by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
CamB	The Cambridge Bible commentary on the New English Bible

CANE	J.M. Sasson, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (4 vols.)
CBCY	Catalogue of the Babylonian Collections at Yale
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBS	Catalogue of the Babylonian Section, Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
CCT	Cuneiform Texts from Cappadocian Tablets in the British Museum
CH	*Codex Hammurabi* (cited according to G.R. Driver & J.C. Miles, *The Babylonian Laws* (Oxford, 1955))
CIS	*Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* (Paris)
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
CNWS	Centre of Non-Western Studies (Leiden)
ConB OT	Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series
CRRAI	Compte Rendu Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
CTM	Calwer theologische Monographien
DBAT	Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament
DDD	*The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden, 1995)
DissSer	Dissertation Series
DN	divine name
Dreams	A.L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Philadelphia, 1956)
EA	J.A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (=VAB 2, Leipzig, 1915); *EA* 359–379: A.F. Rainey, *El Amarna Tablets* 359–379 (=AOAT 82. ed., Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978)
EAEHL	*Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem)
EPHE	École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris)
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain
ERC	Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations (Paris)
ErIsr	*Eretz-Israel*
Erra	Erra epic (cited according to Cagni *l'Epopea di Erra*, Rome, 1969)
ESE	*Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*
EvT	Evangelische Theologie
FAOS	Freiburger Altorientalische Studien
fc.	forthcoming
FM	tablets in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FS	Festschrift
Ges[18]	18th edition of Gesenius' *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (eds. R. Meyer & H. Donner, Berlin, 1987-)
Gilg	Gilgameš epic
H	Texts from Tell Haddad
HAL(AT)[3]	W. Baumgartner *et al.*, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament* (3. ed., Leiden, 1967–1975)
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament (ed. O. Eissfeldt)
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik

Hh	lexicographical Series ḪAR.ra = *ḫubullu* (MSL 5–11)
HKAT	Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HKL	R. Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* (3 vols., Berlin, 1967–1975)
HR	*History of Religions*
HS	tablets in the Hilprecht Collection, Jena
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Series
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup	Supplementary volume to *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IM	tablets in the Iraq Museum
IrAnt	*Iranica Antiqua*
ITT	F. Thureau-Dangin, H. de Genouillac, L. Delaporte, *Inventaire des Tablettes de Tello*
JA	*Journal Asiatique*
JANES(CU)	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies (of Columbia University)*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JEN	Joint Expedition with the Iraq Museum at Nuzi
JEOL	*Jaarbericht 'Ex Oriente Lux'*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
Joüon/ Muraoka	*A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome, 1991)
JPS	The Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia)
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JSS Sup	Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement
JSQ	*Jewish Studies Quarterly*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
K	Tablets in the Kouyunjik collection of the British Museum
KAH	L. Messerschmidt (vol. 1), O. Schroeder (vol. 2), *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts* (Leipzig, 1911–1922)
KAI	H. Donner & W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (3 vols., Wiesbaden, 1962–1964)
KAR	E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* (Leipzig, 1915–

	1923)
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KAV	O. Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts* (Leipzig, 1920)
KB	Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek
KHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
Ki	tablets excavated at Kish, in the collections of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
KlS	*Kleine Schriften*
kt	tablets from Kültepe (Turkey)
KTK	N.B. Jankowska, *Klinopisnye teksty iz Kjul'-Tepe v sobranijach SSSR*
KTS	J. Lewy, *Keilschrifttexte in den Antiken-Museen zu Stambul: Die altassyrischen Texte vom Kültepe bei Kaisarīje*
KTU	M. Dietrich, O. Loretz & J. Sanmartín, *Die keil-alphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit* (AOAT 24, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1976)
LÄ	*Lexikon der Ägyptologie*
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LAS	S. Parpola, *Letters of Assyrian Scholars* (AOAT 5, 2 vols., Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970–1983)
LB	tablets in the de Liagre Böhl Collection, Leiden
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*
LIH	L.W. King, *The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi, King of Babylon* (3 vols.)
LKA	E. Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Berlin, 1953)
LKU	A. Falkenstein, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk* (Berlin, 1931)
LXX	Septuagint
MAD	Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary
MAH	tablets in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève
MAM	A. Salonen, *Die Möbel des alten Mesopotamien* (Helsinki, 1963)
MANE	Monographs on the Ancient Near East
MAOG	*Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig)
Maqlu	G. Meier, *Maqlu* (= *AfO* Beih. 2, Berlin, 1937)
MARI	*Mari Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires*
MDAI	Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran
MDOG	*Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* (Berlin)
MDP	Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse (Paris)
MEE	Materiali epigrafici di Ebla
MHEM	Mesopotamian History and Environment, Memoirs
MHET	Mesopotamian History and Environment, Texts
MLC	tablets in the collections of the J. Pierpont Morgan Library
MMA	tablets in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art
MonSer	Monograph Series
MSL	Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon
MVAG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft
NABU	*Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*

NBC	tablets in the Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library
NCBC	The New Century Bible Commentary
NCBT	tablets in the collections of Yale University
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. E. Stern, Jerusalem, 1993)
NINO	Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten
NJPS	The New JPS Translation of the Hebrew Bible
n(n).	note(s)
NS	Nova Series
NSG	A. Falkenstein, *Die neusumerischen Gerichtsurkunden*
NTT	*Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift*
OB Gilg. M	Old Babylonian Gilgameš 'Meissner tablet'
OB Gilg. P	Old Babylonian Gilgameš 'Pennsylvania tablet'
OB Gilg. Y	Old Babylonian Gilgameš 'Yale tablet'
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBTR	S. Dalley, C.B.F. Walker & J.D. Hawkins, *Old Babylonian Texts from Tell Rimah* (London, 1976)
OECT	Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
Or.	*Orientalia*
OrAnt.	*Oriens Antiquus*
OrSu	*Orientalia Suecana*
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PAPS	*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*
PBS	Publications of the Babylonian Section, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PJB	*Palästinajahrbuch* (des deutschen evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes, Jerusalem)
PN	personal name
PRU	*Le Palais royal d'Ugarit* (eds. C. F. A. Schaeffer & J. Nougayrol, Paris)
PSBA	*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*
r.	reverse (of the tablet)
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie*
RAI	Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
RB	*Revue Biblique*
REJ	*Revue des Etudes Juives*
RHA	*Revue Hittite et Asianique*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RIDA	*Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité* (Brussels)
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RIME	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods
RivSO	*Rivista degli studi orientali*

RLA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
Rm	Rassam, tablets in the British Museum
RS	tablets from Ras Shamra
RSOu	Ras Shamra-Ougarit
RSR	*Recherches de Science Religieuse*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RT	*Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki)
SAAB	*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
SANE	Sources of the Ancient Near East
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SB	La Sainte Bible
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBTU	*Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*
SCCNH	Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians
SD	Studia et documenta ad iura orientis antiqui pertinentia
SDB	*Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*
SEÅ	*Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*
SEL	*Studi epigrafici e linguistici*
Sem	*Semitica*
Sh.	tablets from Shemshara
SH(C)ANE	Studies in the History (and Culture) of the Ancient Near East
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SLB	Studia ad tabulas cuneiformes collectas a F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl pertinentia
SLTN	S.N. Kramer, *Sumerian Literary Texts from Nippur* (=AASOR 23, New Haven, 1944)
SMS	Syro-Mesopotamian Studies
SP	E.I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs*
SS	Supplement Series
StB	Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten
STC	L.W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation*
StOr	*Studia Orientalia*
StPsm	Studia Pohl, Series Maior
StSem	Studi Semitici
STT	O.R. Gurney & J.J. Finkelstein (vol. 1), O.R. Gurney & P. Hulin (vol. 2), *The Sultantepe Tablets* (London, 1957–1964)
Šurpu	E. Reiner, *Šurpu* (= *AfO* Beih. 11)
SVT	Supplements to *VT*
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
TC	Textes cappadociens
TCL	Textes cunéiformes du Louvre
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*

TDP	R. Labat, *Traité akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics médicaux* (Leiden, 1951)
THAT	*Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*
ThLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TIM	Texts in the Iraq Museum
TLB	Tabulae cuneiformes a F. M. T. de Liagre Böhl collectae
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
TUAT	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments (ed. O. Kaiser, Gütersloh, 1982–1997)
TWAT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*
TWNT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*
UE	Ur Excavations
UET	Ur Excavations, Texts
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Ug.	*Ugaritica*
UVB	Vorläufiger Bericht über die ... Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka (Berlin, 1930-)
VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VAS	Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin
VAT	tablets in the collections of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WbMyth	*Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (ed. H.W. Haussig, Stuttgart, 1965-)
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WVDOG	*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*
WZ	*Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
YBC	Yale Babylonian Collection
YOS	Yale Oriental Series
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZThK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

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I Theoretical Perspectives

Magic in history
A theoretical perspective, and its application to ancient Mesopotamia

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INTRODUCTION[1]

One of the stumbling blocks in the study of religion in ancient Mesopotamia is that of the theoretical approach to magic. The analyst has a choice of various theoretical positions, each with a venerable ancestry to recommend it. Without trying to be exhaustive, we shall review a number of typical approaches in this connection. This will make us aware

[1] We wish to register our gratitude to the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS), Wassenaar, The Netherlands, for initiating and accommodating the theme group on 'Magic and Religion of the Ancient Near East' during the academic year 1994–95; without the congenial and supportive NIAS environment the present study would never have been undertaken. We also appreciate the year's leave of absence granted by our respective departments. The earliest version of this paper was presented at the weekly seminar of the NIAS theme group, 17 May, 1995; we are greatly indebted to the other members of the group (Tzvi Abusch, Mark Geller, Shaul Shaked, and Karel van der Toorn) for their constructive criticism. A revised version was presented at the conference on 'Mesopotamian Magic', NIAS, 6–9 June 1995; among the participants' remarks we have especially benefited from those made by Irving Finkel and Karel van der Toorn.

of the difficulties associated with the various definitions of magic. We propose yet an alternative model, which, however, retains the notions of coercion and mechanicism habitually associated with magic; and we seek to explore these aspects by studying four interrelated, but mutually irreducible domains in which actors have experiences of *control*. One of these domains is that of the hegemonic process by which the state imposes its dominance, and since the historical outlines of that hegemonic process are more or less known insofar as the ancient Near East is concerned, we have the means to situate magic in Mesopotamian history — even if this leaves us with three other dimensions of control which as yet elude a historical treatment.

In the first half of this paper we shall present a theoretical framework for such an approach; in the second half we argue its applicability to ancient Mesopotamia by reference to selected textual evidence. Fully aware that this is only a tentative formulation of a new theoretical perspective, we review a few topics for further research in the conclusion.

A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO MAGIC IN HISTORY

Definition of magic: the descriptive position

The descriptive definitional approach to magic has been by far the most popular in the context of ancient Mesopotamia.[2] This approach takes 'magic' as a relatively self-evident term by which we may conveniently label genres of texts, because we identify the practices referred to or implied in those texts as 'magical': curses, incantations and spells; divination; human attempts at interaction with invisible beings of a lower order ('demons'); charms, amulets, talismans; and finally cures involving *materia medica* whose imputed effects cannot be explained by the natural science of the twentieth century CE.

The orientation of such an approach is exploratory rather than interpretative and analytical. Hence some of the most interesting questions pertaining to the corpus thus delineated remain out of scope: that corpus' relation with other forms of symbolic production in the same culture, its place in history, the extent to which, and the reasons why, it is secret or public.

One can understand what recommended the descriptive approach in the founding phase of Assyriology, when the task of opening up the texts, their vocabulary and imagery, and the creation of such basic tools as the dictionaries had to take precedence over more theoretical, analytical and comparative concerns. The descriptive approach reveals Assyriology as essentially a 'positivist' or non-theoretical project. Its acknowledged core activities have revolved around texts and their translation. For the wider historical and sociological interpretation of these texts, Assyriologists have relied either on common-sense ideas of their own culture, or (more rarely) on a highly eclectic and unsystematic selection of (by now old fashioned) conceptual and theoretical positions borrowed from

[2] For surveys of Mesopotamian magic, cf. J. Bottéro, 'Magie. A. In Mesopotamien', *RLA* 7 (1988), 200–234. E. Reiner, 'La magie babylonienne', in: *Le monde du sorcier* (SO 7; Paris, 1966), 67–98; E. Reiner, *Astral magic in Babylonia* (TAPS 85, 4; Philadelphia, 1995).

a variety of academic disciplines ranging from anthropology to comparative religion and linguistics.[3]

This position has dramatically limited the scope for *explanation* in Assyriology. In any empirical science, including Assyriology, if we want to explain an individual case, we do so by generalisation: the case is shown to display certain features, and we argue the applicability to the case of generalisable, systematic relationships between such features as revealed by the study of a number of other cases considered to be similar. In order to be able to do so we need four things: a consistent and developed conceptual or definitional apparatus, a theory, procedures of operationalisation, and data.

With the data at long last becoming increasingly available, Assyriology can now begin to contemplate the other three necessary steps towards more incisive understanding of the societies of ancient Mesopotamia. It is in such a context that the present argument, however tentative and preliminary, situates itself.

The error of reductionism

To seek to understand ancient texts and practices involves both the ability to appreciate them in their own language and cultural setting, and their rendering, as faithfully and subtly as possible, into a lingua franca of scholarly discourse, where analytical terms (concepts, ideal types, definitions) are employed which on the one hand are arguably applicable to the case under study, but which at the same time have a wider range of applicability, involving other cultures, other settings in time and space.

In the process, we seek to avoid a number of errors. The translation towards a lingua franca of twentieth-century scholarship should be made in such a way that the culture-specific concepts and practices of our own culture and times are not unduly projected onto the material under study, and the latter should not be evaluated in the light of our own accepted beliefs.

This helps us to appreciate a distinct advantage of the descriptive approach to magic: shunning all theory, it at least keeps us from asking the *wrong* theoretical questions. In the context of the study of magic the *avoidance of ethnocentric projection* turns out to be very difficult to achieve and maintain. Many scholars today would consider not the internal ramifications of the magical world-view, or its connections with the publicly mediated religion, with the state, family life and the economy, but the magical nature of that world-view itself as the most puzzling aspect, the one most in need of explanation. How is it possible, such scholars insist on asking, that otherwise sane and intelligent people could believe in such obvious figments of imagination, and how could they allow their lives to be largely governed by such collective fantasies? This line of religious scholarship has a honourable ancestry, going back to Hellenistic theories on the nature of the gods, and leading to 19th and 20th century attempts to explain away religion and magic: for instance as products of group life creating the essential conditions for its own emergence and persistence, by arbitrarily endowing certain aspects of reality with sacred qualities (Durkheim); or as products of individual (Freud) or collective

[3] A comparable state of affairs obtains in the study of ancient Egypt, cf. B.C. Trigger, *Early civilizations: Ancient Egypt in context* (Cairo, 1995; first published 1993).

(Jung) sub-conscious psychological conditions which regulate man's functioning by confronting him with images which are as indispensable as they are unreal. Certainly in the anthropology of religion, we have reached a stage where the sub-discipline's basic stance is that of mainly agnostic or a-religious scholars studying the believers' beliefs and practices with a view of taking them apart, and reductionistically explaining them away.

Though analysts of ancient religions may seek to apply non-religious categories to the religious phenomena they study, and thus try to look for relationships of a correlative or even causal nature between religious and non-religious aspects of a given culture, they overplay their hand when in the process they turn the phenomenon of religion itself into our central explicandum. Scholarship should study *aspects* of religion in their *context*; if it seeks to explode that context by reducing religion to some other, supposedly more fundamental, category of being human, it is merely borrowing the authority of empirical science under false pretences – for what it produces in such a case is no longer empirical science but theology or philosophy.

This means that we cannot define magic simply by reference to a cognitive sub-system ('modern science') of our culture. Frazer's characterisation of magic as pseudo-science is untenable – even if other aspects of his approach to magic may yet continue to inspire us, as we shall see below. Taking modern science as our touchstone would reduce the analytical exercise to a simple act of ethnocentric projection on our part, taking for granted the structure of the physical world as portrayed by our own natural sciences, philosophy and theology of today, and evaluating other cultures' conceptualisation of the world in the light of that criterion.

Anthropological positions[4]

The understanding of symbolic production in a cross-cultural and/or historical context always involves a negotiation between the actors' views (more or less distant from the analyst in time and space), on the one hand, and the conceptual tools of the investigators on the other. In the anthropological usage introduced in the 1960s, such understanding always involves complementarity between 'emic' and 'etic' perspectives. This pair of concepts plays on a linguistic analogy: the difference between phonetic and phonemic approaches to language. A phon*etic* study relies on external assessment of features whose recording does not require one to share the perceptual and evaluative pattering by native speakers. On the other hand, this patterning does constitute the focus of a phon*emic* approach. The 'emic' approach, in other words, tries to arrive at a valid and insightful description on the basis of the local actors' concepts and symbols, while the 'etic' remains external and distant.

[4] Cf. W.M.A. Brooker, 'Magic and semantics', *AA* 73 (1971), 1264–1265; E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande* (London, 1972; reprint of the first edition of 1937); R. Horton & R. Finnegan (eds.), *Modes of thought: Essays on thinking in Western and non-Western societies* (London, 1973); I.C. Jarvie & J. Agassi, 'The problem of the rationality of magic', *BJS* 18 (1967), 55–74, reprinted in: B. Wilson (ed.), *Rationality* (Oxford, 1970), 172–193; T. Macho, 'Bemerkungen zu einer philosophischen Theorie der Magie', in: *Der Wissenschaftler und das Irrationale*, Vol. 1, (ed. H.P. Duerr; Frankfurt am Main, 1981), 330–350; N. Yalman, 'Magic', in: *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (ed. D.L. Sills; New York/Glencoe, 1964), 9: 521–528.

The task of anthropological understanding is complicated by the fact that the community of scholars, at least in the social sciences and in the humanities, is divided as to the central concepts of its discipline. Philologists and historians tend to take a more subtle, more historically informed position than anthropologists. This is one major reason why Oppenheim's[5] plea to bring more anthropology to Assyriology has never worked; the other major reason lies in the a-theoretical and inward-looking nature of Assyriology as discussed above.

The social sciences have often been tempted to resort to a rather shallow form of epistemological *nominalism*, claiming that any concept can be defined in whatever arbitrary way, provided the definition is technically and logically well formed. The aim of anthropological analysis would then be not primarily to convey, with the greatest possible precision, the meaning and structure of an aspect of the culture under study as lived and expressed by the actors themselves, but to argue, for that culture, the applicability of some alien, abstractly defined concept.

Within anthropology, a standard way of going about cross-cultural comparison has been to define abstractly, without specific reference to any existing culture, the social phenomenon under study (e.g. 'patrilineal descent group', 'ancestor worship', 'magic'); then, to translate this abstract definition operationally into criteria which would allow us to identify the phenomenon in a number of actually attested cultures where it may occur under different names or in forms scarcely recognised or institutionalised by that culture's actors themselves; and finally, to link up the occurrence and non-occurrence of this phenomenon with other phenomena, similarly defined. This approach involves a number of human cultures at the same time in the context of methodologically falsifiable hypotheses (which for the influential epistemologist Popper[6] is the hallmark of science). However, the specific actual features of each of the cultures involved are only approximated and often distorted, in order to match the abstract definitions. The historical specificity of each culture is sacrificed for the sake of an aggregate discussion. After the enthusiasm for this kind of analysis in the middle of the twentieth century, structuralism and historical research have sufficiently enriched main-stream anthropology to allow us to admit that the results of culture-unspecific, nominal approaches (like those in vogue in the time of comparative structural-functionalism)[7] have been very disappointing. Presumably, these disadvantages are particularly great in the field of religious studies, where an appreciation of the subtle interplay of multiple references and of superimposed layers of meaning is essential.

In the anthropological study of magic, a few nominalist approaches have dominated the field. We have already referred to Frazer's approach, highly aggregative in general and almost totally unaware of the implications of cultural specificity and spatio-temporal context, which (on the basis of a now obsolete evolutionist perspective justifying the assumption of comparability within each evolutional phase) projects the same, limited repertoire of mythical and ritual scenarios all over the globe, and insists on the haphazard comparison of isolated, totally de-contextualised shreds of cultural and mythical material in interminable succession. Satisfied that 'magic' is, or represents, a universal

[5] A.L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a dead civilization*, (Chicago/London, revised ed. 1977; 1st impr. 1964).

[6] K. Popper, *The logic of scientific discovery* (New York, 1959).

[7] A typical example for the study of religion is: G. Swanson, *The birth of the gods* (Ann Arbor, 1960).

concept having to do with man's attempted control over nature through means which nineteenth-century science claimed to be ineffective, Frazer postulated that such attempts essentially take two distinct forms: imitation and contagion. The distinction appeared to hold true for a great many cultures, and any field-worker could and still can quote convincing examples of contagious and imitative magic from his or her own experience. In retrospect one would say, with Tambiah,[8] that the distinction Frazer captured, admittedly felicitously and with rare intuition, reveals not so much 'traits' of any one specific culture, nor the universality of 'magic' (under whatever local vernacular name) as a cultural category, but far more fundamentally, two major ways in which the human mind can process sense impressions into language: metaphorically, and metonymically. What yet seems to remain of the Frazerian edifice is his emphasis on actors' notions of *coercion* and *mechanicism* as characteristic of magic:

> Thus in so far as religion assumes the world to be directed by conscious agents who may be turned from their purpose by persuasion, it stands in fundamental antagonism to magic as well as to science, both of which take for granted that the course of nature is determined, not by the passions or caprice of personal beings, but by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically. In magic, indeed, the assumption is only implicit, but in science it is explicit. It is true that magic often deals with spirits, which are personal agents of the kind assumed by religion; but whenever it does so in its proper form, it treats them exactly in the same fashion as it treats inanimate agents, that is, *it constrains or coerces instead of conciliating or propitiating them as religion would do.*[9]

Another influential nominal approach to magic stems from Hubert and Mauss,[10] who were so impressed by anthropologists' and travellers' accounts of the Polynesian concept of *mana* (a free-floating, eminently powerful natural life-force) that they formulated nothing less than a universal theory of magic, according to which we are dealing with magic whenever the actors in a culture can be shown to believe in a local equivalent of a concept of *mana* which, needless to say, was de-contextualised and nominally redefined for subsequent anthropological consumption.

Whatever the disadvantages of the nominalist approach, we are all party to it from the moment we set out to study, e.g. in the context of ancient Mesopotamia, not so much *āšipūtu, bārûtu, asûtu*, etc., but rather 'magic', an alien, imposed concept. Our reliance on 'magic', not just apologetically and self-consciously as a loosely descriptive marker, but as an emphatic analytical category, risks involving the same operational distortion familiar from anthropological cross-cultural studies.

While Durkheim, apparently much influenced by Hubert and Mauss,[11] made the

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[8] S.J. Tambiah, *Culture, thought and social action: An anthropological perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.)/ London, 1985): Ch. 1 and 2; cf. L.M. Carucci, 'Medical magic and medicinal cure: Manipulating meanings with ease of disease', *CultA* 8 (1993), 157–168.

[9] J.G. Frazer, *The golden bough: A study in magic and religion* I-VIII, 12 vols. (London, 3rd ed. 1911–1915; first published 1890); the present quotation is after the abridged edition: idem, 2 vols. (London, 1957), i: 67.

[10] H. Hubert & M. Mauss, 'Théorie générale de la magie', in: *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris, 3rd ed. 1966; first published in: *AnnS* 7 (1906)); M. Mauss, *A general theory of magic* (tr. R. Brain; New York, 1972; first published 1950).

[11] Cf. C. Lévi-Strauss, 'Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss', in: *Sociologie et anthropologie* (ed. M.

concept of magic a cornerstone in his sociological theory of religion as being, ultimately, a celebration of the social itself, Malinowski[12] became the first major theoretician in anthropology to approach the study of magic on the basis of personal prolonged fieldwork outside his own society. Malinowski affirmed *both* the practical rationality of non-European man, *and* his awareness of the limitations of his knowledge, the combination giving rise to practices of personal encouragement and anxiety reduction. Malinowski considered such practices to be universal and did not hesitate to call them 'magic'.

Malinowski's use of the concept of magic already spelt doom for its future within anthropology. From the centre of the discipline's attention, it gradually moved to the periphery. Already for Malinowski it was part of a more general concern: man's psychological make-up, viewed in relation to man's selective productive interest in nature. Structuralism subsequently allowed us to describe and understand much better the subtle play of metaphor and metonym on which magical rites and imagery revolve,[13] but such understanding could be achieved without reserving for magic (as Frazer had done) a distinct domain of its own – for the same structuralist methodology was claimed to elucidate myth, ritual, dreams, arts, drama and narrative literature. The 1960s and 1970s saw a number of incisive critical theoretical discussions of the concept of magic in anthropology,[14] and from then on the concept was not only unpopular but even slightly suspect in the discipline. However, the topics that were earlier covered by the term 'magic' would continue to be studied under more accepted labels such as witchcraft, sorcery, rationality, thought processes, and collective fantasies; the continued study of these topics is often cast in the interpretative framework of the expansion of the money economy, the capitalist mode of production, 'modernity' and North Atlantic civilisation. The well-known anthropological collections published in later decades with the word 'magic' featuring prominently in their titles[15] either mainly reprint much older material or turn out to discuss magic hardly at all.

The continuity of the Middle Eastern/European magical tradition

Why do we not simply follow the example of anthropology and do away altogether with the analytical concept of magic?

To abandon the concept of magic with regard to ancient Mesopotamia would mean rejecting a historical usage which has persisted over the past two millennia. During almost that entire period first-hand textual evidence concerning the symbolic production of ancient Mesopotamia was lacking because scholarship no longer had access to the cuneiform tablets nor to the language and script for which they had served as medium.

Mauss; Paris, 3rd ed. 1966), ix-lii.

[12] Cf. B. Malinowski, *Coral gardens and their magic*, 2 vols. (London, 1935); Malinowski, *Magic, science, and religion and other essays* (New York, 1954; first published 1948), and idem, 'The role of magic and religion', in: *Reader in comparative religion* (eds. W. Lessa & E.Z. Vogt; New York, 1972), 63–72.

[13] C. Lévi-Strauss, 'The sorcerer and his magic', in: *Structural anthropology* (New York, 1963), 161–180; S.J. Tambiah, *Culture, thought and social action* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1985).

[14] Cf. M. Wax & R. Wax, 'The notion of magic', *CA* 4 (1963), 495–518; K.E. Rosengren, 'Malinowski's magic: The riddle of the empty cell', *CA* 17 (1976), 667–685; D. Hammond, 'Magic: A problem in semantics', *AA* 72 (1970), 1349–1356.

[15] E.g. J. Middleton (ed.), *Magic, witchcraft, and curing* (Garden City, NY, 1967); A. Kiev (ed.), *Magic, faith and healing* (New York, 1964).

Even so, distinct echoes from that symbolic production filtered through to Hellenic and Hellenistic (and ultimately Jewish, Arab, Indian and Christian) texts and practices, and here they tended to be subsumed under the heading of a complex actors' concept, that of *μαγεία*: a word deriving from an Iranian linguistic and religious context but under which – by implying, at the same time, a vague category of Chaldaeans whose actual cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious associations with ancient Mesopotamia may often have been more fictitious than real – also the afterlife of Mesopotamian magic was subsumed. When, in 1900, R.C. Thompson published *The reports of the magicians and astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon*, he used the word 'magician' not so much in a general, universally applicable abstract sense but in one that, for two millennia, had been specifically used for, among others, ancient Mesopotamian religious specialists *as seen from a European perspective*. In other words, ancient Mesopotamian magic is not just one particular form of magic – it is one of the few *original* forms of magic as recognised in the European tradition. The history of the concept through Hellenism and Late Antiquity right down to the present day contains much of the European encounter with modes of thought which for two millennia had occupied a central position in esoteric scholarly culture, and which only in the last one or two centuries were relegated to a peripheral position. The continued dominance, in North Atlantic culture, of the Bible with its layers of ancient Middle Eastern world-views; the survival and even twentieth-century revival of astrology; the tremendous Renaissance success of *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm/Picatrix* as a medieval re-formulation of Hellenistic magic with a considerable input from ancient Mesopotamia;[16] the even greater success of geomancy, which with a similar background spread not only to Europe but also to most of Africa, the Indian Ocean region and parts of the New World:[17] all this shows that the symbolic production of ancient Mesopotamia has, albeit very selectively, filtered through to our times. Having been the science *par excellence* during the greater part of these two millennia (as it was in ancient Mesopotamia, in the first place), this ancient magical tradition helped to engender modern science. Thus it can even be said to have contributed to the emergence of the intellectual stance from which we are now critically looking at that very same symbolic production.

By now our sources, unearthed and deciphered since the middle of the nineteenth century, have become incomparably more direct, abundant, with far greater time depth and far more complexity, than anything which seeped through in the course of European cultural history. However, to continue to apply the term magic to this newly emerged, puzzling body of Assyriological material may be more nostalgic than it is revealing, unless we find a way of accounting for the dynamic historical development of this corpus and for its peculiar position vis-à-vis other ideological stances within ancient Mesopotamia. This requires looking afresh at the concept of magic.

[16] H. Ritter & M. Plessner, *Picatrix: Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magriti* (Studies of the Warburg Institute, 27; London, 1962); W. Hartner, 'Notes on Picatrix', *Isis* 56 (1965), 438–51; D. Pingree, 'Some of the sources of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*', *JWCI* 43 (1980), 1–15.

[17] W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Four-tablet divination as trans-regional medical technology in Southern Africa', *JRA* 25 (1995), 114–140; idem, 'Regional and historical connections of four-tablet divination in Southern Africa', *JRA* 26 (1996), 2–29; and extensive references cited there.

The comparative and historical position

An obvious way out of the nominalist dilemma of distortion is to compare only cultures that are arguably comparable: that are close to one another, for instance because they share the same region and historical period, use related languages, and the same productive technologies. Under such conditions of closeness, historical links reduce the operational distortion and make the comparison far more meaningful. In Southern African anthropology this has proved a useful line of comparative studies.[18] In this way it becomes much more likely that justice is done to local perspectives and concepts, and that, in the negotiation process between the culture under study and its academic rendering, the inherent logic of the former is not light-heartedly sacrificed. Within one extended region and one extended period, it is often possible to trace in detail the historical ramification of essentially the same cultural complex (e.g. oxen traction, kin endogamy, or magic), and to reveal both its qualified continuity and its response to situationally different social, economic and political conditions within constituent part-regions and part-periods; the result is a greater understanding of the region and its history, and of the cultural complex under study – perhaps even beyond those spatio-temporal confines.

Potentially, such a position is historical rather than anthropological, since it concentrates on the differential, largely unpredictable and unsystematic, unfolding of historical concepts and institutions against the background of other historical processes in the same geographical context. The conceptual perspective adopted tends to lean heavily on that of the historical actors involved, since it is largely in terms of their own perceptions and motivations, and of the changes therein, that their changing life-world can be made sense of.

Ideally, if both our time and the necessary data were plentiful, this is the kind of study of magic in ancient Mesopotamia which we would like to undertake. But let us first try and construct a tentative theoretical perspective. As argued above, no meaningful explanation could be attempted without a theory, whatever its specific contents.

Four domains for the experience of control

We return for a moment to what would appear to be of lasting value in Frazer's approach, the notion of magic as being coercive and mechanistic. Many students of magic tend to agree, with Frazer, that the concept of magic seeks to describe actors' ways of conceptualising and effecting *control*. Such conceptualising can be relegated to a limited number of contexts in which human individuals have primary experiences of control. Let us try to list the most obvious of these contexts here, with implicit reference to the town-dwelling agriculturalists of ancient Mesopotamia: (a) instrumental control, or man's interaction with nature; (b) volitional bodily control by the emerging self; (c) interactive control, or man's effect upon his immediate environment; (d) hegemonic control of, and through, large-scale formal political institutions.

[18] I. Schapera, *Government and politics in tribal societies* (London, 1963; first published 1956); A. Kuper, *Wives for cattle* (London, 1982); W.M.J. van Binsbergen, *Religious change in Zambia* (London/Boston, 1981).

(*a*) *instrumental control, or man's interaction with nature*

Through technology man seeks to control nature, in such activities as hunting, collecting, agriculture, animal husbandry, house construction, pottery, weaving, basketry, metallurgy, and other crafts. At the same time man has an overwhelming experience, certainly in the period indicated, of the limitations of his control: in hunting accidents; crop failure; domestic animals breaking away, attacking their masters, or dying; materials being spoiled, tools breaking, technological problems remaining unsolved, and the like. Besides, there is the experience that only a small segment of the non-human world is open to human control: celestial and meteorological phenomena, the rhythm of night and day and of the seasons, occur with such rigid periodicity that only with a considerable effort of imagination man can boast to have any influence on these natural phenomena. While man created a humanised habitat through clearing, agriculture, irrigation, house construction, and the like, by the end of the fourth millennium he was never far away from an un-transformed landscape that was virtually unaffected by him.

no control over nat. environment so very little emphasis on the study for natural medicine

Although the non-human elements (materials, tools, animals) involved in post-Neolithic technology may on occassion conceivably be personalised and addressed in an anthropomorphic fashion, by and large the everyday technical experience in the sphere of production is more likely to represent a factual, mechanistic conceptual domain of its own. It is here, probably, that the notions of instrumentality and coercion originate that many of us would prefer to retain in any approach to magic. If we may adhere to the old definition of man as the tool-maker, such instrumentality could have a very long history indeed, going into many hundreds of thousands of years; but with reference to times before the last few millennia, we can only guess at the specific phases which notions of instrumentality have gone through.

(*b*) *volitional bodily control by the emerging self*

The second domain comprises man's effect on his own body, such as motor patterns which may involve wielding tools including arms, the bodily experience of breathing, feeding, eliminating, sexuality, childbirth, and nursing. Also here sensations of control are offset by overwhelming experiences to the contrary: of lack of control, through infancy, old age, through lack of experience and of physical strength, or in sleep, drunkenness, fatigue, mental disturbance, sexual arousal, illness – with death as the ultimate ceasing of all self-control. To modern man, the domain of bodily experience implies a personal awareness of self and at least a partial dissociation between self and one's own body; yet (as studies in historical psychology have argued)[19] the emergence of self and personhood as a distinct, conscious category may well be a relatively recent cultural product, and it would be rash to attribute a universal, basically identical experience of self-control to human beings regardless of time and place, cultural history and human evolution. Meanwhile the hallmark of bodily control is volition, the subjugation of bod-

[19] Cf. E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the irrational* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1951); R.B. Onians, *The origins of European thought: About the body, the mind, the soul, the world, time, and fate: New interpretations of Greek, Roman and kindred evidence also of some basic Jewish and Christian beliefs* (Cambridge, 1951); B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes: Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen* (Hamburg, 1955). In social-science circles, Jaynes's somewhat popular book has made considerable impact: J. Jaynes, *The origin of consciousness in the breakdown of the bicameral mind* (Boston, 1976); cf. P.A. Vroon, 'Zelfinterpretatie en motivatie bij Homerus', *NedTP* 36 (1981), 219–229; P.A. Vroon, *Wolfsklem: De evolutie van het menselijk gedrag* (Baarn, 1992).

ily processes to the human will, and this is in principle an experience of control rather similar to the instrumental control exerted over extra-human nature: it resembles the wielding of voiceless and unmotivated tools more than the mobilisation, management or subjugation of fellow humans.

(*c*) *interactive control, or man's effect upon his immediate social environment*
The third domain involves control over other people, and being controlled by them, in the face-to-face context of the kin group and the local community (let us call it the domestic domain),[20] by such social mechanisms as language use, kinship rules and etiquette, the division of labour in productive arrangements inside and outside the kin group, patronage, contracts, formal and informal judicial negotiations, physical violence, etc. Physical violence incidentally is a borderline case in that it applies the forms of instrumentality within the domain of social interaction – which is precisely why most face-to-face groups based on kinship or co-residence make a point of declaring intra-group violence out of bounds. Somewhat in the same way the even more widespread regulation of sexuality through incest prohibitions within face-to-face kin-groups might be considered an attempt to create a boundary between the social domain of interactive control and that of bodily experience inimical to control. If we may not assume a timeless, constant quality for such actors' notions as the self and the person, it would be dangerous to characterise the experience of control in this domain as *personalistic*. But what we certainly can say is that here we meet control as a result of the *interaction* between humans, which also implies the differential distribution of power and status springing from such interaction. It is here that practices of gift giving, address, negotiation, propitiation, supplication, are found – as ubiquitous strategies of more or less oblique interactive control between group members, and as obvious models for the interaction between man and god. The latter in its turn may provide models for the interaction between juniors and seniors, patrons and clients, and between the genders. But while the gods may be models of, and for,[21] a group's most senior members, interactive control is not the prerogative of dominant elders, as is clear from the effective demands babies make upon their environment. Babies' survival depends on interactive control (through crying, grabbing, sucking and other forms of behaviour triggering adult responses). At the other end of the human life-span, it is interactive control which ensures access to food and shelter, and thus survival, in the case of elders whom old age has rendered unfit for productive work. In general, interaction in the domestic domain entails a rather reticent and uncertain control, a give-and-take based on direct or deferred social reciprocity; it is persuasive, never absolute, and often lacks effective physical sanctions. Again, along with other anthropomorphic features, such reciprocity may be projected

[20] Implied in the following sections is the theory of the articulation of modes of production, e.g. W.M.J. van Binsbergen & P.L. Geschiere, 'Marxist theory and anthropological practice: The application of French Marxist anthropology in fieldwork', in: *Old modes of production and capitalist encroachment: Anthropological explorations in Africa* (eds. W.M.J. van Binsbergen & P.L. Geschiere; London/Boston, 1985), 235–289; W.M.J. van Binsbergen, *Religious change in Zambia* (London/Boston, 1981). For a related perspective specifically adapted to Ancient Mesopotamia, cf. E.R. Service, *Origins of the state and civilization: The process of cultural evolution* (New York, 1975), ch. 12, 203f.

[21] The complementary duality of religion as a model both of, and for, social life, has been inspiringly argued in a famous article by C. Geertz, 'Religion as a cultural system', in: *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion* (ed. M. Banton; London, 1966), 1–46.

onto man's instrumental action upon nature, without, however, completely eclipting instrumentality. The sphere of interactive control, the closely-knit human group, makes for internal production, circulation of products and consumption within the group, defining various roles and statuses. Access to the latter largely depends not only on gender but also on age, so that group members may occupy them successively in the course of their lives. To the extent to which status differences depend on age, they are rotating with the individual's climbing years. At the same time, the domestic sphere is the locus of biological reproduction.

(*d*) *hegemonic control of, and through, large-scale formal political institutions*
Superimposed upon the interactive, domestic domain we can discern a fourth domain of control, typically associated with a form of organisation centring on *formal* institutions, such as the temple and the palace. For its own biological and material reproduction this domain is not self-supporting: it feeds upon the product and the personnel of the interactive, domestic domain. For it is from the latter that the human material derives which peoples the formal institutions, even if these do invest in their own reproduction (e.g. through formalised instruction in writing, ritual, etiquette, martial skills) once the personnel has been acquired. The ideological orientation in this fourth domain departs from that of the domestic domain in that hierarchy tends to be absolute and enduring rather than rotative and generational. By the same token, bureaucratic and legal rules rather than kinship obligations govern social relations within the hegemonic sphere. While the hegemonic apparatus consolidates itself it seeks to impose its control ever more effectively over an ever larger number of people involved in the interactive domestic domain. The control it seeks is formal and absolute, and its sanctions often include physical violence leading to loss of life. In short this is the process of state formation, state consolidation, the supplanting of one state by another, and the emergence of imperialism in the history of ancient Mesopotamia.

The hegemonic domain unavoidably imposes severe constraints on the nature and the extent of interactive control in the domestic domain: for whatever product is realised in the latter (basically through instrumental control over nature) risks being appropriated or destroyed as an effect of hegemonic control; likewise, although biological human reproduction takes place exclusively in the domestic domain, the hegemonic domain appropriates human personnel as captives, soldiers and clerks.

A number of observations may be made at this point.
First, the human experience of control has always been heterogeneous – there is *not one original form of control* from which all others, including that which we may choose to call magic, are derived. Always we have various idioms of power which, depending on the situation, shade over into each other or emphatically contrast with each other.

Secondly, these various experiences of control are intimately linked; within the span of one life, even of one day, people typically operate within most if not all of these spheres. Instrumental control may invoke well-known older academic notions of magic; interactional control may appeal to us as a likely context for the emergence of ancestor worship; the hegemonic sphere may seem to breed fully-fledged gods, distanced from humans and with claims to impersonal, absolute respect. Yet these modes of control, and the ways in which they have been conceptualised by actors at the time, do not represent

successive stages in an evolutionary scheme, but complementary modes within one and the same time frame, one and the same historic culture. At the same time there is a temporal sequence here, not for reasons of blind evolutionary necessity, but as a reflection of the historical fact that technology, personhood, group processes in the domestic domain, and state formation (to sum up our four domains) have individually gone through a history (which includes complex interrelations), and have individually had an origin. For technology and personhood this origin may go back hundreds of thousands, not to say several million years – to man's very origins as a species; face-to-face social organisation is likely to have an even more remote origin in primate socio-biology. But state formation is a relatively recent phenomenon, and its origin coincides with the historical baseline we have chosen, that of the fourth millennium BCE. In this respect it eminently makes sense (archaeologically, for instance) to speak of 'pre-hegemonic', without implying an evolutionist's frame of analysis. The distinctive feature of evolutionism in the social sciences and humanities, of course, does not lie in admitting the well-established facts of man's biological evolution as a mammal species, but in assuming that the history of human societies, and their comparison, can be understood by reference to the same classificatory and dynamic models that elucidate biological evolution.

Thirdly, for an appreciation of the emergence of magic from the interplay of these domains, it is relevant to look not just at experiences of control, but also at their counterparts: experiences of failure of control, and of the anxiety this creates; here Malinowski continues to be inspiring.

Fourthly, and this is our main point, despite the entanglement of these four spheres, this perspective has made it possible for us to proceed, from the timeless and universal, to the historical and the specific.

Magic in history

Archaeology informs us on the increasing achievements regarding instrumental control in the various domains of technology. Coming to the second domain, however, it is extremely difficult to gauge historical developments in the field of bodily experience, volitional self-control and self-awareness. With regard to the formation and evolution of the third, the domestic domain, we are on slightly more solid historical grounds. Finally, with the hegemonic domain history properly begins, since writing, and the bureaucratic power it engenders, is one of the hallmarks of the hegemonic process, certainly in ancient Mesopotamia; the texts record the ins and outs of the hegemonic process, and the archaeological record fills in the material details.

If magic is a logic of control, it could in principle refer to any of the four domains identified here, and possibly others which we have overlooked. Given the defectiveness of our historical data on some of these domains, we could not hope of ever writing anything near a full account of magic in history. However, as an idiom of control, magic must of necessity be caught up, in one way or another, in the relatively well-attested hegemonic process, which is merely the sustained attempt of one particular form of organised extraction to impose itself upon the domestic communities of a region.

If there is to be a product in the first place, so that the hegemonic domain can appropriate it, the latter's control over the domestic domain can never be so tight as to destroy the typical forms of interactive control on which domestic productive relationships largely depend. Therefore, implied in the very hegemonic process is the continuing existence of an embedded or encapsulated, yet partly uncaptured, interactive logic of control fundamentally irreducible to the hegemonic logic of control.

The situation becomes even more complicated, and more promising from a point of view of situating magic in history, when we realise that the productive success of the interactive, domestic domain also depends on the extent to which that domain continues to be the social context for activities entailing instrumental control over nature (in the form of production in agriculture, hunting, crafts, etc.), while its members pursue volitional bodily self-control (as essential for both material production and biological reproduction).

In other words, the control as pursued in the hegemonic process is necessarily accompanied by various, rival experiences of control which stand on a totally different footing, which express a totally different coherence and imagery (see below), and which refer to contexts and situations of production and reproduction outside the hegemonic domain and (as the very condition for the latter's success) only *partially* subjected to it. *We submit that these experiences of control in the instrumental, bodily and interactive domain, as alternative domains of action and experience rival to the political domain of hegemonic control, are enshrined in the magic which we have sought to identify and define.*

If this theoretical reasoning is correct, we should be able to pinpoint the vestiges and indications of rival forms of control within the very expressions of hegemonic political control which the textual material can offer. And to the extent to which we are capable of writing a history of that hegemonic process, we may also become capable of identifying, decoding, and analysing magic in history.

Let us stress that these rival vestiges of pre- and para-hegemonic control are embedded within hegemonic ideological expressions. Only a theoretical perspective coupled to a process of textual decoding, of close reading, can throw them in relief. They are therefore merely implicit, not explicit, challenges of the ideological component of the hegemonic process. Of course, the hegemonic process may often call forth counter-action in the form of passive resistance, rejection, rebellion, civil strife, and groups moving away outside the state's effective territory. But that is rather a different matter. What we are emphatically not saying is that magic is a consciously rebellious counter-ideology maintained by identifiable subjugated groups; *rather, magic is a dislocated sediment of pre-hegemonic popular notions of control which have ended up in the hegemonic corpus.*

From structure to contents: magical imagery versus theistic imagery

Thus we have theoretically defined a structural and historical context for magic. Before we turn to the case of ancient Mesopotamia in order to apply this theoretical framework, let us finally try to make a few statements about the specific contents, the mythical imagery, that might in principle be characteristic of the four domains of control distin-

guished here. Here, a note of caution is in order: religious imagery almost by definition lacks a solid anchorage in empirical reality (even though it is ultimately inspired by the latter). Among human symbolic productions, religion is particularly open to free variation and creativity. Therefore structural aspects merely suggest, and never determine, symbolic contents in this field.

The domestic (preponderantly feminine) domain of the production and processing of raw materials (grain, oil, wool, etc.) for the immediate family, is also the domain of biological and (as far as socialisation in early childhood is concerned) cultural reproduction. As a mode of production and reproduction, the domestic domain is highly resilient in itself, as well as highly resistant to effective hegemony from the political and economic centre. Even when processes of material domestic production are assaulted and virtually destroyed – as has been effectively the case in the North Atlantic region in the last few centuries under the impact of urbanisation, industrialisation, proletarianisation and state control over education – the domestic domain remains the virtually autonomous locus of biological reproduction, which even the wilder Orwellian or Huxleyan nightmares of human reproduction in a state context have never been able to appropriate. No system of slavery or imprisonment has ever been able to effectively and lastingly replace the human family as a locus of biological reproduction. The domestic domain is also the most obvious context of interpersonal care in times of deprivation, illness and death. Thus, only the domestic domain represents a power-house independent of the political and economic centre of the society, and a challenge to the latter's premises of control. Quite likely, the domestic domain has been one of the main contexts in which the old holistic world-view and a variety of non-hegemonic cults have been preserved. In general the domestic domain has been a major locus of magic, folklore and uncaptured 'paganism' throughout human history.[22] A similar argument could be made for the relatively outlying, rural sections of ancient Mesopotamian society, which in effect amounted to domestic communities. These features would perhaps favour a symbolic repertoire highlighting images of fecundity, femininity, continuity, and wholeness.

Although rejecting the assumptions of intra-group reciprocity and insisting on a one-way process of extraction based on assumptions of absolute bureaucratic control, the hegemonic domain yet tends to constitute itself ideologically and mythologically after the model of the domestic domain. It is in the latter that the hegemonic domain finds, and exploits for its own interests, the imagery of legitimate authority, and of justified exchange of material products for immaterial services such as management, knowledge, ownership of means of production, protection, purification and intercession. Whereas in the domestic domain supernatural beings (tutelary gods, ancestors) tend to provide models of, and for, the authority of living senior kinsmen, the function if not the nature of the gods undergoes profound changes when appropriated by the hegemonic domain: for there the gods come to represent the logic of extraction, its inescapability, absolute nature, violence and unaccountability – and from the domestic sphere notions of hierarchy and supplication are hegemonically transformed into an absolute distinction

[22] This theme is less developed in Foucault's controversial history of sexuality: M. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1976–1984); however, cf. G. Rattray Taylor, *Sex in history* (London, 1953); C. Ginzburg, *I Benandanti: Stregoneria e culti agrari tra cinquecento e seicento*, (Torino, 1966); C. Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the witches' sabbath* (tr. R. Rosenthal; Harmondsworth, 1992; repr. of the first Engl. edition, 1991; orig. *Storia notturna*; Torino, 1989).

between god and man, into submission and total, impotent dependence.

But the domestic domain is not only subservient to the hegemonic domain; it also forms a context for productive and reproductive activities in which instrumental and volitional modes of control are pursued. Thus the domestic domain essentially mediates between two main models of control: on the one hand a theistic model with personalistic overtones which is pressed into service in the hegemonic process, and on the other a mechanistic, volitional (from the point of view of the actor), and thus coercive model governing the relation between man and nature, and between self and body. Here, personalism and instrumentalism, supplication and coercion may take turns in what is a composite mode of conceptualising control. While the hegemonic idiom would emphasise distance, absolute difference and total submission between god and man, the domestic domain, which also enshrines instrumental and volitional modes of control, would tend towards far greater horizontality, complementarity if not interchangeability between man and nature, between body and consciousness, between person and object; such complementarity would stress the community not only between humans, but also between humans and the non-human aspects of nature involved in human production, while at the same time situating humans in the context of the bodily processes associated with production and reproduction. As an expression of the successful negotiation of these contradictions, the term 'holism' would seem to sum up the non-hegemonic, domestic idiom.

We have speculated enough. Let us see if the theory presented above gets us anywhere closer to an appreciation of magic in the history of ancient Mesopotamia.

APPLICATION TO MESOPOTAMIA

Magic in Mesopotamia: modes of holism and uncapturedness

Throughout the corpus of ancient Mesopotamian symbolic production,[23] the evidence of the hegemonic, theistic half of our fundamental contradiction is overwhelmingly present, with references to the king, his works for the gods, and particularly the pious references to these gods themselves, without whose exalted presence and condescending intervention no order or power can exist on earth. Yet inside this collection of ideologically and politically 'correct' statements, elements can be detected that fit in only superficially, and implicitly challenge the hegemonic process that lends structure and direction to the royal and priestly extracting process governing Mesopotamian society. Viewed in isolation these embedded elements add up to a holistic world-view in which the boundaries between man and nature are far less strictly drawn than in the orthodox theistic repertoire, and where on the basis of methods manipulating metaphor and metonym, much as described (but wrongly interpreted) by Frazer, man identifies, utilises,

[23] General references on ancient Mesopotamian religion and its history, for the benefit of non-Assyriological readers: J. Bottéro, *La religion babylonienne* (Paris, 1951); J. Bottéro, 'Symptômes, signes, écritures', in: *Divination et rationalité*, (ed. J.P. Vernant et al.; Paris, 1974), 70–195; H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the gods* (Chicago, 1948); H. Frankfort et al., *The intellectual adventure of ancient man: An essay on speculative thought in the ancient Near East* (Chicago, 1957; first published 1946); T. Jacobsen, *The treasures of darkness: A history of Mesopotamian religion* (New Haven & London, 1976); and the contributions on Mesopotamia in the section 'Religion and science', *CANE* 3: 1685–2094.

and redirects the forces around him without divine interference.

It will be argued that these holistic passages, with their alternative view on the sources of cosmic power, are the truncated and re-ordered remnants of a pre- and para-hegemonic world-view, picked up, developed and guarded by specialists applying themselves nominally to the hegemonic order, while in fact channelling an anti-hegemonic sentiment that is actualised in crisis situations in which the theoretically infinite power of the gods fails and man has to take care of himself. Since this holistic alternative to hegemonic power is very close to what would commonly be called magic, we see no objection to applying this term also to the Mesopotamian material, provided that our theoretical stance is not obscured by the use of such a conventional term. It is the interaction between this type of alternative material and divine rule that will guide our analysis of the ancient Mesopotamian ideological system.

Aspects of the hegemonic history of ancient Mesopotamia

Before we can set out to interpret whatever textual evidence we have in the light of a hegemonic history of magic, let us first sketch the bare outlines of such hegemonic processes as are discernible in the political and economic history of ancient Mesopotamia since the late fourth millennium.

In the southern part of the alluvial plains we see the emergence, from the fourth millennium onwards, of city states. The organisation of these early urban communities is in the hands of an elite associated with the temple as well as (somewhat later in the third millennium) with the palace and a system of law enforcement. The unifying efforts of these agencies may be detected from the fact that despite evidence of cultural and linguistic heterogeneity in the region at the time, the religious and political idioms are unified and more or less constant. One has the impression of an explosively expanding society trying to create a new social order out of the scattered debris of pre-existing organisations (in the fields of kinship and politics) that no longer served its needs. Although the city's public institutions (temple and palace) demonstrably established themselves as structures of production, extraction and domination, it is the imposition of this complex as a whole upon other, earlier domains of human organisation and activity which marks the hegemonic nature of the process involved. These earlier domains would include: agricultural production; the processing of food in the family, which is also the main locus of biological reproduction; petty commodity production; exchange of products between settled and pastoralist elements; etc. Within the social, political and economic life of the society a number of domains become discernible whose interrelationship consist in the fact that one domain (that of temple and palace) reproduces itself mainly on the basis of surplus extraction from the other domains. It is perhaps useful (but no more than that) to designate these domains 'modes of production', and their asymmetrical exploitative relationship as 'articulation'. We note that as a mode of production the temple and palace domain, far from being internally undifferentiated and egalitarian, has its own internal hierarchical structure, from the ruler to lower officials and priests; but all share in the extraction from other, pre-existing domains. At the same time this extraction process, which an outside observer might be inclined to call exploitative, conceals its exploitative nature (and perhaps even the violence facilitating that exploitation) under an effective ideology: that of the city god, for the fulfilment

of whose needs man was created in the first place. Even regardless of the conscious legitimation of this structure in religious terms, it is clear that the temple and palace domain delivers an essential service probably well worth the input in terms of surplus extraction: it creates a viable social order ensuring production and security, as well as an urban and ethnic identity that people are proud of.

In the first half of the third millennium the political ideology was centred on the axis: city-god / city-ruler; there is not yet a national state, but the notion of a national religious unity is maintained by the centrality of Eridu and its god Enki/Ea. The second half of the third millennium sees the development of a national kingship centred on Nippur and Enlil. When during the second millennium Babylon becomes the uncontested capital of the nation, its god Marduk rises with it; at the end of the millennium the political situation is formalised in a newly created myth, *Enūma Eliš*, in which Marduk's rulership is made independent of Enlil.

From the second half of the third millennium onwards there is an ever increasing quantity of evidence relating to the ins and outs of the hegemonic process. The outline of the development of the ideological system stems from (more or less) datable mythological texts linked to archaeological and historical fact, but cannot be discussed here in detail. Our opinions on magic are based less on specific texts, which are often fragmented, hybrid, and undatable, than on a contrastive grouping of the types and themes that dominate the corpus as a whole. Since it is not so much the inner development of magic, but rather its place in the ideological system that interests us here, the loss of historical detail implied by the distant view does not detract from the argument.

The present argument aims at a deep-structural reading and seeks to reconstruct a subconscious level of structuration which, as such, is not open to conscious reflection by the subjects themselves. A rather similar case is presented by iconography, which also revolves on our external reading of meaning and implications which are seldom explicitly indicated by the actors. Thus, something as abstract as an alternative notion of control should not be expected to have left a precise and detailed textual formulation, the absence of which therefore cannot be construed as an argument against our reconstruction.

From political hegemony to religious concepts

What emerges from the evidence as the religious counterpart of political centralisation, is a centralistic idiom focusing on the god Enlil. Enlil, and less prominently the other gods, govern by NAMTAR (Akk. *šīmtu*),[24] that is by 'allocating tasks', 'determining the fates or destinies' of gods, man and the universe. An earlier layer of centralisation in the South focuses on Enki and his city Eridu. It would seem, however, that Eridu was a religious centre, the touchstone of tradition (ME), rather than a political centre. That the *Sumerian King List* lists Eridu as the seat of the earliest kingship is undoubtedly an anachronism related to the nature of this text.

[24] For the Akkadian notion of fate see J.N. Lawson, *The concept of fate in ancient Mesopotamia of the first millennium: Toward an understanding of šīmtu* (Wiesbaden, 1994).

In ways which are eminently important for an understanding of Mesopotamian magic as part of a historical process, the concept of NAMTAR (*šīmtu*) contrasts with another normative principle, that of ME (Akk. *parṣu*). While NAMTAR (*šīmtu*) connotes the governmental decisions made by Enlil, ME (*parṣu*)[25] evokes an impersonal and timeless order, the non-volitional state of equilibrium to which the universe and its constituent parts are subjected. The ME are at home in the old religious centre Eridu, and guarded by its god Enki/Ea. The ME are not created, but they are simply there as part of the universe; they are the rules of tradition, the unchanging ways in which the world of man and things is supposed to be organised; they can be disused or forgotten, but never destroyed. Together they constitute natural law, a guideline for behaviour untainted by human or divine interference. As an impersonal cosmological principle ME (and the similar Egyptian concept of *ma'at*, 'right order', 'truth')[26] would appear to stem from a religious repertoire predating the third millennium; early in the second millennium the concept loses its cosmological significance. The idea of a traditional timeless world is less capable of being manipulated for hegemonic purposes than anthropomorphic myth; it fits the loose association of small-scale village societies largely organised by kinship, while the obviously more hegemonic divine government exemplified by NAMTAR fits their reorganisation into cities and later a nation.

The opposition of ME and NAMTAR is not just conceptually implied, but turns out to be made explicit in third millennium cosmogony.[27] Herein a cosmic ocean, Namma, produces a proto-universe, Heaven and Earth undivided. In a series of stages, all represented by gods, Heaven and Earth produce the Holy Mound (DUKUG), which in its turn produces Enlil, 'Lord Ether', who by his very existence separates Heaven and Earth. Enlil, representing the space between Heaven and Earth, the sphere of human and animal life, organises what he finds by his decisions (NAMTAR), and thus puts everything into place: the universe becomes a cosmos. Before being permanently subjected, however, the primordial universe (Heaven and Earth) rebels; its representative, a member of the older generation of gods, Enmešarra, 'Lord All ME', tries to usurp Enlil's prerogative to NAMTAR (i.e. prerogative to make decisions). He is defeated by Enlil and incarcerated in the netherworld for good. The myth can be read as a theistically-slanted argument on two modes of defining order: an immutable cosmological order (ME) whose unmistakable champion is Enmešarra, against a protean, individual-centred, volitional, anthropomorphic order, whose champion is Enlil. The latter reflects, on the religious and mythical plane, the hegemonic process revolving on the imposition and expansion of the centralised mode of production upon an earlier concept of the organisation of social life, production and reproduction.

The tension between divine rule and the universe to be subjugated is the theme of yet another third millennium myth, *Lugale*.[28] In this myth an alliance of stones

[25] For a review of the meanings of this word see, with previous literature, G. Farber, *RLA*, s.v. 'me'; cf. also K. Oberhuber, *Linguistisch-philologische Prolegomena zur altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft: Vorträge und Kleinere Schriften, 53; Innsbruck, 1991), 11ff.

[26] See J. Assmann, *Ma'at. Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im alten Ägypten* (München, 1990).

[27] See F.A.M. Wiggermann, 'Mythological foundations of Nature', in: *Natural phenomena: Their meaning, depiction and description in the ancient Near East* (ed. D.J.W. Meijer; Verhandelingen/Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afdeling Letterkunde, n.s., 152; Amsterdam, 1992), 279–306, esp. 287ff.

[28] J.J.A. van Dijk, *RLA*, s.v. 'Lugale', with previous literature; for the opposition Azag : Namtar in this myth

is led by Azag, 'Disorder', a version (individualised for the occasion) of a common demon of untimely disease and disorder in general. The stones rebel against having their tasks allocated (NAMTAR) by Ninurta, Enlil's strong arm. Needless to say their resistance proves futile, and the myth ends with a long list of stones, all given their proper functions by Ninurta. The difference between this myth and the one about Enmešarra lies in the specific moment of mythical time in which the confrontation takes place. Whereas Enmešarra belonged to the primordial universe that was subjugated when Enlil organised the cosmos, the stones belong to a periphery of the universe: to rebellious mountain lands that continue to exist. Apparently, the universe prior to divine rule and that outside divine rule share a tendency to rise against the prerogatives of the gods of order; and although in each case the rebellion is squelched, the very fact of its occurrence shows that divine rule is not beyond question, and that order is not completely secured. In other words, the way in which the uncaptured elements appear in the symbolic system reveals their continuing existence as a feared anti-social force and a threat to the hegemonic order.

A further development of the relation between universe and divine rule can be observed in *Enūma Eliš*, and will be briefly discussed below, under the heading 'the nature of Mesopotamian holism'.

ME / parṣu and the holistic world-view

If NAMTAR is the historical agency characterising the hegemonic process of which holism is the prehistoric counterpart, and if the untamed primordial universe of the ME (*parṣu*) is subjugated by the same agency, then we are tempted to equate the universe of the ME with that of holism and magic. In fact there is evidence supporting this point of view.

A first indication lies in the fact that the specialist concerned with magic refers, for the foundation of his art, mainly to Enki/Ea (and members of his circle: his son Asalluhi, the half-god Oannes, and the sage Adapa, whom we shall discuss below). Enki is the god that guards the ME / *parṣu*; in this connection it is also significant that an old form of the word for this specialist, IŠIB, is written with the same sign used to spell ME.

More important is the *Anzû* myth[29] in which the monster bird Anzû, who stole the Tablet of Fates (NAMTAR) from Enlil, is confronted by Ninurta, Enlil's son and warrior. When asked for his credentials Ninurta identifies himself as the emissary of the gods that rightfully determine the fates. Anzû, however, is not impressed since he is in actual possession of the Tablet of Fates, which makes his word as powerful as that of Enlil and enables him to rule the ME (*parṣu*). By the power of his word (*šīmtu*) Ninurta now performs a trick against his adversary: he decomposes the latter's arrows into their natural constituent parts which are then sent back to their place of origin:

> reed that approaches me, return to your thicket
> frame of the bow to your forest
> string, to the back of the sheep, feathers return to the birds.[30]

see provisionally F.A.M. Wiggermann, *RLA*, s.v. 'Mischwesen', 224.

[29] For a recent translation, with references to text editions, see K. Hecker, 'Das Anzu-Epos', TUAT III / 4 Mythen and Epen II (1994), 745–759.

[30] Tablet II 62–65.

Šīmtu here is the power to operate the universe of inanimate things and make them change their normal ways, their ME (*parṣu*), or, in other words, to perform magic. The loss of the Tablet of Fates did not affect the gods' ability to act, only their mastery over nature, and another text explains that the possession of the Tablet of Fates involved the 'secret of Heaven and Earth',[31] the knowledge of which in fact entails this mastery, as we will see below. Normally this power over nature, symbolised by the possession of the Tablet of Fates, is a divine prerogative, but it can fall into the hands of malicious outsiders like Anzû, who use it for their own purposes. Especially in the *Anzû* myth Enlil is surnamed 'the god, Bond-of-Heaven-and-Earth' (*ilum Duranki*). This is undoubtedly no coincidence, but related to the theme of the myth: rather than referring to a cosmic element that prevents Heaven and Earth from drifting apart, the epithet denotes metaphorically how Enlil keeps the universe from disintegrating. In the same vein, Marduk warns that if he leaves his seat of government 'the rule of Heaven and Earth will be torn asunder'.[32] The demons, adversaries of divine rule, are said to tear out the 'exalted cord, bond of Heaven and Earth'.[33]

Again, and as concluded above, the hegemonic rule of the gods appears not to be completely secured against the forces of reaction.

The ability to perform magical tricks can also be acquired without possessing the Tablet of Fates. This is the case in the legend of Adapa,[34] who is one of the models of the incantation specialist (*āšipu*). Adapa, Ea's favourite servant and endowed by him with great wisdom, goes out to the sea one day in order to catch fish for the table of his divine lord, and runs into the fury of the South Wind which nearly drowns him. Adapa reacts with a curse: 'may your wing be broken', and indeed, contrary to normal experience, 'as soon as he had said it, the wing of the South Wind was broken'. By the wisdom given to him by Ea, Adapa has unexpectedly stumbled upon a way to operate nature without divine help, or in the words of Anu considering his decision in the matter:

> Why did Ea reveal to an imperfect human being
> that of Heaven and Earth,
> and endow him with an arrogant (*kabru*) heart?

Anu's speech shows that what we have called 'the way to operate nature' is the 'secret of Heaven and Earth' ('secret' is implied by 'reveal' in the previous line), the secret of the universe regulated by the ME (*parṣu*) and turned into an insecure cosmos by the hegemonic rule of the gods. Now, since death is among the fates decreed by the gods for mankind and since Adapa is able to dodge those fates, we are entitled to expect that in the end he obtained eternal life. That this is yet not the case is due to his instructor Ea, who exactly at this point closed the book of wisdom by feeding Adapa misleading information. Even Ea's humanitarianism has its limitations, and so has the magic of the incantation specialist: he cannot revive the dead.[35]

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[31] A.R. George, 'Sennacherib and the tablet of sins', *Iraq* 48 (1986), 133:4.
[32] *Erra* I 170.
[33] UḪ 13–15:36.
[34] Edition and translation of the text, with discussion of Adapa's place as a sage, see S.A. Picchioni, *Il Poemetto di Adapa* (Budapest, 1981). A new edition is now being prepared by S. Izre'el.
[35] Cf. P. Michalowski, 'Adapa and the ritual process', *RO* 41 (1980), 77–82.

Theism in the arcane arts of Mesopotamia

The Akkadian 'secret of Heaven and Earth' (*pirišti šamê u erṣetim*) which we encountered above in relation to Anzû's and Adapa's magic, is exactly parallel to the Latin *arcana mundi* used to denote magic and divination.[36] This secret recurs in the aetiology of the arts of the diviner, the art of interpreting 'the signs of Heaven and Earth'.[37] In this text Enmeduranki, an ancient king of Sippar, is called before Šamaš and Adad, who seated him on a throne of gold and

> showed him how to observe oil on water, the privileged property (*niṣirtu*) of Anu, [Enlil, and Ea], and gave him the tablet of the gods, the liver, a secret (*pirištu*) of Heaven and [Earth].[38]

Later on in the text astrology is mentioned as well. Apparently knowledge of the 'secret of Heaven and Earth' enables not only a sage like Adapa to perform his magic tricks, but also the diviner to interpret the signs. In both cases this knowledge stems from the gods, and becomes, as is evidenced by a variety of other texts, the privileged property (*niṣirtu*) of the guild of scribes, among whom are magical and divination experts: *āšipu* and *bārû* respectively. In this way potentially dangerous and anti-social knowledge is domesticated and made subservient to the public cause represented by the rule of the gods, as is the primordial universe itself. In line with the precarious nature of divine rule over the universe, however, this optimistic presentation has not eliminated the fear of an unauthorised use of this knowledge.

Earlier, we saw that the operation of nature, or briefly magic, was thought to be a prerogative of the gods and related to the way they govern Heaven and Earth by 'deciding the fates' (NAMTAR, *šīmtu*). The canonical interpretation of divination links up with this view by presenting the signs (that is, whatever departs from the normal order of things) as divine operations on the inanimate world; these operations encode messages concerning the governmental decisions of the gods (NAMTAR, *šīmtu*). Like magic based on the 'secret of Heaven and Earth', the skills of understanding fate and decoding the divine message are revealed by the gods and guarded by the scholars. This is clear for instance from the *Catalogue of texts and authors* which starts off with works ascribed to dictation by Ea: magic, (works about) divination, and the myth *Lugale* (with its companion *Angim*), which, as we saw above, is concerned with Fate and its adversary, the individualised demonic power Azag.[39] For one of the divination series mentioned in this text, the physiognomic omens (*alamdimmû*), we have a very explicit statement in a Middle Babylonian colophon:

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[36] Cf. G. Luck, *Arcana mundi: Magic and the occult in the Greek and Roman worlds: A collection of ancient texts: translated, annotated and introduced by G. Luck* (Baltimore/London, 1985).

[37] Th. Bauer, *Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals* (Leipzig, 1933), vol. 2, 77 r. 8, cf. A.L. Oppenheim, 'A Babylonian diviner's manual', *JNES* 33 (1974), 197–220.

[38] W.G. Lambert, 'Enmeduranki and related matters', *JCS* 21 (1967), 126–138, esp. 132:7f.

[39] 64:1ff. in W.G. Lambert, 'A catalogue of texts and authors', *JCS* 16 (1962), 59–77.

alamdimmû (concerns) external form and appearance (and how they imply) the fate of man which Ea and Asalluhi ordained in Heaven.[40]

Holism in the arcane arts of Mesopotamia

Although the canonical view understands omens as messages of the gods concerning their decisions, the 'great mass of Mesopotamian omen material was basically non-theistic'.[41]

Omens take the normal, eternal order of things as their point of departure, and seek to derive information from whatever deviates from the normal state and course of things. A cracking beam in the house's roof,[42] intertwined lizards falling down from that beam,[43] monstrous births, discolorations of the sky, all upset the natural order of the universe and are therefore held to be meaningful to all those dependent on this order. This idea of a mutual dependency of man and his surroundings, which we have called holism, is not limited to ancient Mesopotamia, and similar omens are found in India, China, and the Arabian world; they constitute an old and widespread substratum in Old World cosmology.[44]

Besides a general lack of reference to the gods, a further clue to the non-theistic

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[40] I.L. Finkel, 'Adad-apla-iddina, Esagil-kin-apli, and the series SA.GIG', in: *A Scientific Humanist: Studies in memory of Abraham Sachs* (eds. B. Eichler & E. Leichty; Philadelphia, 1988), 148:29f.

[41] Cited from H.W.F. Saggs, *The encounter with the divine in Mesopotamia and Israel* (London, 1978), 137, where this problem is discussed; cf. I.T. Abusch, '*Alaktu* and *halakhah*: Oracular decision, divine revelation', *HTR* 80 (1987), 32, n. 57.

[42] CT 40 3:63.

[43] *KAR* 382:7.

[44] Literature on omens in the Old World is fairly extensive but largely obscure.

On omens in South Asia, see: C.D. Bijalwan, *Hindu omens* (New Delhi, 1977); V.L. Devkar, 'Omens on birds as described in the Citraprasna or Sakunamala MSS in the Baroda Museum', *BMPGB* 10–11 (1954), 25–31; S.K. Govindasami, 'Omens and divination in early Tamil religion', *JAnnU* 11 (1941), 1–7; L.H. Gray, 'The Parsi-Persian Burj-Namah, or book of omens from the moon', *JAOS* 30 (1910), 336–342; V.R. Pandit, 'Omens and portents in Vedic literature', *Proceedings of the 13th all-India oriental congress*, 2 (1951), 65–71; G.S. Pillai, 'Omens and beliefs of the early Tamils', *JAnnU* 16 (1951), 37–55; K. Raghunathji, 'Omens from the falling of house lizards', *IndAnt* 14 (1885), 112–115; S.C. Ray, 'Magical practices, omens and dreams among the Birbers', *JB(O)RS* 10 (1924), 209–20; S. Vyas, 'Beliefs in omens in the Ramayana age', *JOIB* 2 (1952–53), 1–8; A. Weber, 'Zwei vedische Texte über Omina und Portenta', *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin: Aus dem Jahre 1858, Philologische und historische Abhandlungen* (königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften; Berlin, 1859), 313–413.

For a discussion of omens in the Arabian world see: J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabisches Heidentums* (Berlin/Leipzig, 2nd ed. 1927), 200f.

Representative references to omens in Africa are to be found in, e.g.: D.C. Simmons, 'Efik divination, ordeals and omens', *SWJA* 12 (1956) 2, 223–228; A.-I. Berglund, *Zulu thought-patterns and symbolism* (London/Cape Town/Johannesburg, 1989; first published 1976); C.M. Doke, *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia: A study of their customs and beliefs* (Westport, Conn., 1970; first published London, 1931). Not specifically on omens but a standard recent publication on African divination in general is: P.M. Peek (ed.), *African divination systems: Ways of knowing* (Bloomington, 1991).

On omens in Greek and Roman antiquity, cf. A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1879–82), i, 177f; R. Flacelière, *Devins et oracles grecs* (série: Que sais-je?; Paris, 1961; English tr. *Greek oracles*; London, 1965, second edition 1976); G. Luck, *Arcana mundi: Magic and the occult in the Greek and Roman worlds: A collection of ancient texts: translated, annotated and introduced by G. Luck* (Baltimore/London, 1985), 229ff; Plinius, *Hist. Nat.* xvii, 38, 243.

Finally, on omens in China see: H. Doré, *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine*, 15 vols., Pt 1, vol 3: *Méthodes de divination* (p. 217–322) (Shanghai, 1914–29); R.J. Smith, *Fortune-tellers and philosophers: Divination in traditional Chinese society* (Boulder/San Francisco/Oxford, 1991), *passim*.

dimension of divination lies in the measures prescribed to avert a predicted evil. For whereas the theistic response would necessarily be in terms of supplication and propitiation, this is regularly not what is prescribed. Instead one finds magical action which seems to dissimulate the power and even existence of personalistic gods whimsically shaping man's destiny: the ominous sign (or a model representation of it) is destroyed, the predicted evil is redirected to a substitute or countered by material objects to which amuletic properties are ascribed.

The methods used by the diviner to interpret the signs are based mainly on verbal or material association. For instance, in extispicy a sign in the form of a wedge is called *kakku* (Akkadian loan-word from Sumerian GAG, 'wedge') and generally leads to forecasts involving weapons (*kakku*) or war. Examples for material association can be found in an Old Babylonian liver model in the British Museum.[45] It treats the sign 'hole' on a number of different locations, and derives its divinatory value from various metaphoric plays on the notions hole, tunnel, breach: a priestess will have illicit sexual intercourse, a secret will come out, a stronghold will be taken by the enemy, a prisoner will escape. Such associative methods try to specify a sympathetic relation between man and matter, a typical feature of the holistic world-view.

A case similar to that for the diviner can also be made for the incantation specialist (*āšipu*), who nominally attributes his art to the gods, but in fact uses methods that stem from the holistic rather than from the theistic repertoire. This is clear especially in incantations of the Marduk/Ea type and in the *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*. In the latter type of incantations plants, minerals and animal substances are addressed and given their effectiveness as *materia magica* by a series of mythical statements relating them to the pristine purity of Heaven and Earth.

Often the KUR, 'mountain lands', appear in this context as well. The grouping of Heaven, Earth and mountain lands as the place of origin both of the demons and of the *materia magica* reveals that what we have called 'pristine purity' and the demonic share the same pre-hegemonic holistic qualities.

In the Marduk-Ea type of incantation, the specialist justifies his choice of actions and materials by a brief, standardised mythical introduction deriving his knowledge from the humanitarian gods Asalluhi (Marduk) and Enki (Ea). A similar approach is reflected in the formula *šiptu ul yattun šipat* DN ('the incantation is not mine, it is the incantation of god so-and-so') that occurs in many Akkadian incantations. There is an essential non-sequitur here between the theistic idiom of the mythical introduction, and the denouement in terms of a manipulation of inanimate matter constituting an application of the 'secret of Heaven and Earth', the ancient science that the theistic idiom had been unable to eradicate. Here we witness the same shift of perspective as in man's evasion of fate through destruction of the sign or through amulets.

By choosing Enki/Ea as its main patron, magic reveals its foundation in the universe of the ME/*parṣu* and the antiquity of Eridu, Enki's city. Thus, although Enki is a full member of the pantheon and as such fulfils his role as embedding agent, a certain tension is expected between him, the ancient guardian of the ME ordered universe, and the representatives of theistic hegemony. In fact, as we will see below, this tension, which

[45] CT 6 1ff.

from a different perspective S.N. Kramer[46] has called 'Enki's inferiority complex', is attested in the demonisation of Enlil's rule.

The evil Udug and Azag demons, which the incantation specialist confronts in the older magical texts, belong to the same holistic world as his counter-measures: these demons are the non-anthropomorphic breed of Heaven and Earth, amoral outsiders sharing neither the burdens nor the profits of civilisation. They attack man indiscriminately, not because of his sins (a hegemonic concept), but in order to take by force what they do not get by right: food and drink. The essential characteristic of these demons is that they do not have a cult, so that they cannot profit from the co-operation with man on a regular basis as the gods do. They are not members of the civilised centre, and in many incantations the specialist adjures them by the non-theistic entities they belong to: Heaven and Earth, the untamed universe.

Surprisingly, there is a second class of demons in the early incantation material, to wit the enforcers of Enlil's rule: the personified NAMTAR (*šīmtu*) 'Destiny', himself, the GALLA (*gallû*), policemen, and the MAŠKIM (*rābiṣu*), inspectors. These essentially legitimate spirits do not have a cult either, but are expected 'to eat at the table of their father Enlil'. They have a demonic quality because their commander Enlil shares an important characteristic with real demons: beyond being served in an orderly fashion, he has no interest in man. Enlil's lack of interest in the fate of mankind is exemplified by the creation myths, in which man is created as a work force to replace the demurring lower gods whose task it is to serve under Enlil. When later the noise of man disturbs Enlil's sleep he is immediately ready to destroy his human servants, for whether by man or by the lower gods, Enlil will be served in any case. Thus, although framed in a theistic idiom, *āšipūtu* encodes a tension between the humanitarian gods of white magic and Enlil's legal but oppressive rule, a clear anti-hegemonic tendency. It is undoubtedly to redress this evil that some very early incantations replace Enki by Enlil.[47]

Like the diviner, the incantation specialist uses methods based on verbal or material 'sympathies'. An example of verbal sympathy is the use of the *anameru* plant in a ritual 'to see', *ana amāri*, ghosts. Material sympathies lie at the basis of substitution of the threatened person by images made of various materials, especially clay.

The nature of Mesopotamian holism

Taken together these non-theistic modes of action (the interpretation of signs, the reaction to adversity) suggest a more or less coherent alternative to theistic power, one in which man is an integral part of a 'pure' universe (Heaven and Earth) without abnormalities (signs) and adversities (disease, demons). The presence of such disorders signals an impure or even demonic deviation from the norm, which can be interpreted and readjusted by the correct application of a secret knowledge concerning the 'design' (GIŠḪUR, Akk. *uṣurtu*) of Heaven and Earth.[48] From what actually transpires of this

[46] S.N. Kramer, 'Enki and his inferiority complex', *Or* 39 (1970), 103–110.

[47] M. Krebernik, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (Hildesheim, 1984), 211.

[48] For this notion and its relation to ME see G. Farber-Flügge, *Der Mythos 'Inanna und Enki' unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liste der me* (StPsm 10; Rome, 1973), 181ff. (to 1.23 add *KAR* 4:4); *Ee* I 61f. (where Ea establishes the 'designs of everything' for his incantation); and UḪ 3:125 (where the incantation specialist

secret knowledge it must be concluded that it was based on the verbal or material association of man and matter. There are many examples of this mode of thought, especially in the commentaries.

Heaven and Earth, the universe of the ME, represent an empirical amoral world that precedes and underlies the cosmos structured in theistic terms, with its personal, moral, and transcendent leadership. It is through immanent concatenation of agency that man belongs to that world of the senses, and may interpret or re-direct it by using the powers that permeate it. Such a use of power, however, becomes an usurpation of divine prerogatives from the moment the concept of a personal god gains prominence; no theistic system can afford to accept such usurpation. The subjugation of the amoral realm that escapes divine control is as necessary as the incorporation of uncaptured modes of production at the peripheries and in the hidden folds of the centralised system, and in fact it is its ideological double. The specialists at incantation and divination are the typical embedding agents who by vesting holistic power with a theistic idiom, effect its survival and development. By themselves, the survival of holistic notions and the growing importance of the embedding agents (*āšipūtu* and *bārûtu*) reveal the weakness of the theistic project, and the continuing existence of uncaptured elements in the centre of civilisation. As we have seen above, the texts recognise this by implying a tension between Enki and Enlil and between ME and NAMTAR, as well as by repeatedly commenting on the precarious nature of divine rule over the universe. The embedded and therefore acceptable survival of holistic magical power, and the concomitant recognition of the uncertainty of divine, moral rule, imply the peripheral existence of a non-embedded, immoral magic. This immoral and inexcusably non-theistic magic, the black counterpart of *āšipūtu*, defines witchcraft, at least from the point of view of the centre.[49] In this definition witchcraft is an imaginary anti-institution just as permanent as *āšipūtu*, and coincides with the other counter-forces of hegemonic rule: foreign enemies, primordial gods, demons, wild animals, the whole undomesticated universe. As we will see below, however, there is reason to believe that the centralistic view on witchcraft was not universally held, and that among the population there still existed forms of magic that were not embedded and yet not witchcraft. Of course this non-embedded magic too has a black and anti-social application, which can be called witchcraft as well; in this definition, however, witchcraft is rather something incidental, something depending on judgement, and lacks the permanence and cosmic moral dimension of witchcraft defined in opposition to *āšipūtu*.[50]

After Marduk's rise to cosmic rulership, the place of magic in the ideological system changed. In the myth upon which Marduk's universal rule is founded, *Enūma Eliš*, both Enlil and the ME (*parṣu*) as a cosmological principle have completely disappeared. The Fates (NAMTAR, *šīmtu*), once Enlil's instrument of rule, have now taken the place of the ME as the cosmic organising principle, and pertain to the primordial universe. It is only by his superior wisdom and by his incantations (*tû*) that Marduk could defeat the gods

states that 'the designs of Enki' are in his hands).

[49] T. Abusch, 'The demonic image of the witch in standard Babylonian literature: The reworking of popular conceptions by learned exorcists', in: *Religion, science and magic in concert and in conflict* (eds. J. Neusner et al.; New York/Oxford, 1989), 38–58.

[50] Cf. *ibid.*, 32-34 and T. Abusch, 'Some reflections on Mesopotamian witchcraft', in: *Religion and politics in the ancient Near East* (ed. A. Berlin; Bethesda, Maryland, 1996), 21–25.

of chaos, whose power stems from their possession of the Tablet of Fates – a thoroughly revised version of the Enmešarra myth. Thus, although it is still the power of the word that rules the world, from now on, this word is 'incantation', the same thing that is used by the magical specialist. The earlier (Old Babylonian) identification of Marduk with Asalluhi, Enki's son and one of the patrons of white magic, together with the decisive role of his incantations in *Enūma Eliš*, imply a solution of the tension between, on the one hand, the magic of Enki and Asalluhi (Marduk) and, on the other hand, Enlil's hegemonic rule as attested in the earlier material: Enlil has lost his mythological significance, and one of the patrons of magic has taken over cosmic rule. In other words, magic is elevated to a hegemonic principle. This shift in the position of white magic must have corresponded to a shift in the position of its black counterpart, witchcraft, and have elevated the witch from being one among many, to constituting the cosmic enemy par excellence of hegemonic rule.[51]

The elevation of magic, however, did not rob it of its non-theistic foundations. Implicitly it remains a counter-force to theistic rule, and its presence now at the heart of the ideological system signals a major defeat of the gods' hegemonic aspirations that in the end would result in their total subordination to the eternal forces of nature (Fate, replacing the earlier ME, *parṣu*) in astrological cosmology.[52] These changes are rooted in the shift from national state to empire, and in the concomitant universalisation of hegemonic claims implying a relative loss of control by the central powers.

Non-embedded forms of Mesopotamian magic

So far we have been concerned with forms of magic embedded in a theistic framework, which for obvious reasons is textually the more common type. There are other forms of Mesopotamian magic, however, less well adapted to the hegemonic enterprise, and therefore less well attested, but especially worthy of attention in the present context. All of them seem to stem from a rural or popular background. It must be remembered here that the king, his family, and his courtiers are not only officials but also ordinary people, and that they had problems and projects that did not always derive from their official functions. This perhaps explains the interest of the scribal community in the more popular types of magic, like the potency incantations and even 'Entering the Palace', which the Assyrian king (or rather court) wanted for his library.[53]

Embedded magic, orthodox *āšipūtu* so to speak, contrasts with another, complementary genre, the Art of the Healer, *asûtu*.[54] This art shows a number of peculiar features that distinguish it from *āšipūtu* and refer it to a more popular *Sitz im Leben*. In the first

[51] Cf. r. ii 7 of the late astral mythological commentary discussed in: B. Landsberger, 'Ein astralmythologischer Kommentar aus der Spätzeit babylonischer Gelehrsamkeit', *AfK* 1 (1923), 43–48; there, the constellation *enzu*, 'goat', is associated with Tiamat and the Witch (reference courtesy T. Abusch).

[52] For a summary of Seleucid astrological 'philosophy' through the eyes of Diodorus Siculus and Philo of Alexandria, see F. Cumont, *Astrology and religion among the Greeks and Romans* (New York, 1960; first published 1912), 17–21.

[53] CT 22 1:23.

[54] Cf. E.F. Ritter, 'Magical-expert (*āšipu*) and physician (*asû*): Notes on two complementary professions in Babylonian medicine', in: *Studies in honour of Benno Landsberger on his seventy-fifth birthday, April 21, 1965* (eds. H.G. Güterbock & T. Jacobsen; AS 16; Chicago, 1965), 299–322.

place, while basically using the spoken language of the nation, Akkadian, it contains a fair amount of corrupt, misspelled and puzzling Sumerian phrases and incantations, quite in contrast to the Sumerian of the *āšipūtu* corpus, which through the ages retains a high degree of correctness and intelligibility. The difference is due, we would suggest, to a difference in transmission: whereas the *āšipūtu* corpus was written down early and transmitted in a more or less fixed form through the schools, the *asûtu* corpus was transmitted orally by its practitioners and thus only contained spoken Sumerian, which for a variety of reasons is something quite different from written Sumerian and easily corruptible. Generally speaking, and in contrast to *āšipūtu* with its recognisable themes and series, the whole corpus of *asûtu* is in a confused state, which confirms its lateness as an object of scholarly interest. In the second place, it contains a large amount of near duplications both of incantations and prescriptions, which again suggests a background in actual practice, with different healers using variant forms of the same theme, all indiscriminately petrified in writing; we find here an illustration of the general principle pointed out by the anthropologist Evans-Pritchard, who concludes that multifarious variation of incantations points to a less guarded and more variegated context of transmission.[55] Thirdly, the corpus contains a number of (especially cosmological) incantations that represent heterodox mythologies; and finally, up to the end the *āšipu* with his theological affiliations has a much higher status than the *asû*.

It would seem that this non-consensual, crude, fragmented *asûtu* corpus comes closer to the world-view and the medical practices, not of specialists, but of the general lay population. Typical for *asûtu*, and in accordance with the above, is the avoidance of the theistic model. Afflictions are generally not attributed to gods, demons, or sin, but simply to sometimes personified entities coterminous with the names of the affliction itself. When given, their aetiology resembles that of the demons, but whereas the demons are the personified breed of Heaven and Earth, the diseases are simply pieces of nature that have gone astray: fire that drips down from the stars, wind that has entered a man's body, weeds that have burst through the surface of the earth. Treatment in the *asûtu* complex makes use of the very same *materia magica* that is being used in *āšipūtu*: plants, minerals, and animal substances. But whereas in *āšipūtu* the incidence of sin and sanction, propitiation and supplication grew through time, such moral and ultimately theistic references are virtually absent from *asûtu*. Nonetheless, *asûtu* has its patron gods (Ninazu, Ninisina/Gula, and Damu), and so did not completely escape theistic interference; its gods, however, did not belong to the ruling class of the pantheon.

More folk magic can be found in a wide variety of incantations meant to influence someone, for potency, love, and various favours. One example from a series of such texts that entered the canonical corpus will suffice:

> Incantation: Wild ass that had an erection for mating, who has damped your ardour?
> Violent stallion, whose sexual excitement is a devastating flood, who has bound your limbs?
>
> Who has slackened your muscles? Mankind has ... your ...
> Your goddess has turned to you. May Asalluhi, god of magic

[55] Cf. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'The morphology and function of magic', in: *Magic, witchcraft, and curing* (ed. J. Middleton; Garden City, NY, 1967; first published in *AA* 31 (1929), 619–641), 1-22.

> Unbind you by means of the plants of the mountain and the plants of the deep, and
> May he give your limbs (back their) abundance through the charms of Ištar.
> Incantation for Potency. Its ritual: you crush magnetic iron ore, put it into oil;
> He should rub his penis, chest, and waist, and then he will recover.[56]

Unavoidably there are references to gods here, but the magic lies in the image of the sexually excited equids with their impressive members, and the use of iron to strengthen the man's potency. The incidence of love incantations and related material is rather low, and most types are either isolated or known only by title from a late text that matches magical activities with stars and constellations in order to fix the best time for performance.[57] The scarcity of actual texts is undoubtedly explained by the fact that such activities enter the twilight of socially acceptable and unacceptable applications of magic, or in other words, carry the suspicion of witchcraft.

The persistence of a 'magical', holistic perspective can be gleaned from the series EGALKURA, 'Entering the Palace', which in actual fact constitutes a special case of the former group of magical activities.[58] The antiquity of this type of activity is hard to ascertain, but the Sumerian name and the occurrence of the land Emutbal in one of the incantations[59] point to its existence in the earlier part of the second millennium. A prescription of nine amuletic stones for a 'courtier entering the palace' has been preserved,[60] in between a number of like prescriptions for amulets for a variety of occasions, such as anger of a god, bad dreams, and demonic threats.[61] The use of magical stones and plants in a context where we expect prayers and confessions, that is in texts dealing with (the consequences of) divine anger, is not uncommon.[62] This series of prescriptions caters to the needs of the ordinary citizen when entering the palace, the world of civil servants upon whom he is dependent for administrative and legal action. In view of our present argument this context is all the more interesting because here we deal with the very embodiment of the hegemonic process: the organisational forms and their personnel through which the complex of temple and palace imposes its hegemony. Strikingly, the prescriptions in this series read as if, in this confrontation between subject and hegemonic apparatus, the subject implicitly rejects the ideological idiom of the latter including its theistic overtones. These magical instructions make practically no reference to divine authorisation, but instead take recourse to magical objects made effective by a spell (a kind of *Kultmittelbeschwörung* sometimes even addressing Heaven and Earth): a thread thrice twined to bind the mouth of your opponent in court, a salve of powdered

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[56] From R.D. Biggs, *ŠÀ.ZI.GA. Ancient Mesopotamian potency incantations* (TCS 2; Locust Valley, 1967), 17:12ff.

[57] BRM IV 19 / / 20 and duplicates, cf. A. Ungnad, 'Besprechungskunst und Astrologie in Babylonien', *AfO* 14 (1942–1944), 251-284; also E. Reiner, 'Nocturnal talk', in: *Lingering over words: Studies in ancient Near Eastern literature in honor of William L. Moran* (eds. T. Abusch, J. Huehnergard, & P. Steinkeller; Atlanta, Georgia, 1990), 421–424.

[58] *KAR* 71, 237, 238, *LKA* 104–107a, *STT* 237, *SBTU* II no. 24, cf. J.V. Kinnier Wilson, 'An introduction to Babylonian psychiatry', AS 16 (1965), 289ff; T. Abusch, *Babylonian witchcraft literature* (Atlanta, Georgia, 1972), 92ff.

[59] *SBTU* II 24:7.

[60] *BAM* IV 376 iv 9–11.

[61] Cf. also K. Yalvaç, 'Eine Liste von Amulettsteinen im Museum zu Istanbul', AS 16 (1965), 329–336.

[62] Cf. R. Labat, 'La pharmacopée au service de la piété', *Sem* 3 (1950), 5–18; F. Köcher, 'Ein verkannter neubabylonischer Text aus Sippar', *AfO* 20 (1963), 156–158; *BAM* 314–316.

metals and stones to enhance your strength, or an amulet of *asḫar*-stone that, on the basis of verbal association, is expected to 'turn away' (*saḫāru*) your adversary and appease his anger. Normally the consequences of such activities are dealt with in the context of anti-witchcraft rituals. 'Binding of the mouth' (KADIBEDA), 'appeasing of anger' (ŠURḪUNGA), and 'entering the palace' (EGALKURA) occur together in an anti-witchcraft incantation edited by W.G. Lambert.[63] Generally speaking it is clear from the anti-witchcraft texts that the witch was supposed to use the same methods as the *āšipu*: substitute images, plants, minerals, and animal substances. Like the *āšipu* she could work on ghosts and demons, but she used her ability not to chase them away and cure the patient, but to do harm to her victims.

A final application of magic that remained mostly free of theistic framing is the confrontation of snakes, scorpions, dogs, and field pests, typically rural activities. It is telling that this type of incantations, well attested in the older material, is virtually absent from the canonical corpus.

CONCLUSION

The data presented in the second section of this paper would seem to indicate the potential of the general theoretical position advocated here: that which sees magic not as a universal of human action, but as a flexible reaction of uncaptured domains to a process of political and economic domination – a challenge to a theistic ideology of hegemony by reference to another, non-anthropomorphic, non-personalised, source of knowledge and power. In ancient Mesopotamia the latter source was designated 'the secret of Heaven and Earth'.

Limitations of space do not permit us to work out these ideas more fully, and more reflection will be required before we can hope to convince the reader that the fairly limited amount of data presented and interpreted here is best explained by application of the theoretical model presented in the first part of our argument. On the other hand, we do not feel that we have exhausted the explanatory potential of our approach, and suggest that its application to the history of theistic cults and to witchcraft in Mesopotamia may open up new historical perspectives.

Meanwhile a number of additional general points may be made.

One concerns the flexibility of the ideological component of the hegemonic process, which contrasts so strikingly with the dogged intransigence of the holistic pre-theistic world-view in the local society. In the earlier history of Mesopotamia, mythology (one of the main instruments of hegemonic ideology formation) shows a perplexing malleability and lack of definition. Rather than constituting a corpus of *ex cathedra* truths it offers a productive grammar of possible interrelations between divine characters and thus between the societal sections that are associated with certain gods and have appropriated them for their own hegemonic purposes; e.g. the genealogical relations claimed to exist between the gods keep shifting, and this allowed the Mesopotamians to redefine the relationships between the localized communities and polities associated with them. This feature of the theistic idiom in itself already reveals it as an instrument of ideological

[63] W.G. Lambert, 'An incantation of the maqlû type', *AfO* 18 (1957–58), 289:12f.

control: its very flexibility is part of the ideological technology, and enables it to cope with ever changing situations of alignment and opposition within the evolving power structure of the regional society.

We should also consider the potential of the magical, holistic world-view for shedding its prehistoric reference, and developing into a systematic body of thought and imagery, an ideological genre in its own right. This tendency is already detectable in the various textual examples we have considered above, where whenever we encounter evidence of the holistic world-view, it turns out to be embedded in theistic terminology. Such embeddedness indicates that the ideological contents of the system have in effect been severed from the modes of production and reproduction they once served; without their former constraints they can freely develop in any viable direction. One example of this capability for systematisation can be detected in the relations between stars and other elements of the natural world that are formulated towards the end of Mesopotamian ideological history. This systematisation amounts to the rise of astrology as an increasingly integrated and sophisticated system, which imposes itself upon a whole range of pre-existing sciences, from hepatoscopy to herbalism, mineralogy and dream interpretation. Despite a spate of studies, since the late nineteenth century, on the early history of astrology, few attempts have been made to explain this amazing success of 'the queen of sciences'.

In terms of the perspective offered in the present argument, two opposite interpretations would be possible.

On the one hand astrology with its emphasis on cosmological holism (the famous Hermetic adage 'as above, so below') could be viewed as the revival of an archaic world-view still present underneath the ideological sediment of hegemony. A Babylonian attempt at the integration of celestial and terrestrial omens is preserved in a canonical text from Nineveh called by its editor a Babylonian diviner's manual:

> The signs on earth just as those in the sky give us signals. Sky and earth both produce portents, (and) though appearing separately, they are not, (because) sky and earth are interrelated (*iṯḫuzū*).[64]

The final phrase seems to imply a form of the same cosmic holism as attested in the *Hermetic* tradition.

Or, on the other hand, astrology could be seen as the decaying aftermath of hegemonic theism, leading to hegemonic aspirations of such universalist, i.e. (in political terms) imperialist, dimensions that no longer individual gods, but the impersonal mechanism of the heavens as a whole, would offer the appropriate imagery. In the latter case the rise of astrology would be intimately related to claims on universal hegemony; cf. its central role in the state religion (when it was still mundane astrology, catering for the state and not yet for individuals) and its suitability for political imagery in the Persian, Seleucid and Roman empires. Perhaps we need not even choose between these alternatives: the success of astrology may have consisted in the fact that it combined, in a unique fashion, both hegemonic and pre- or para-hegemonic references. Certainly, more is involved here than merely a mutation in the hegemonic process: the expansion of astrology involved

[64] Oppenheim, 'A Babylonian diviner's manual', JNES 33 [1974], 204:38ff; 207.

a shift from mundane to personal astrology, and may be in part attributable to this very shift.

Baigent's claim that this change came about as a result of Persian influence cannot be supported, since there is no evidence of personal astrology in the Zoroastrian corpus.[65]

Finally a word on the authors of the corpus we have tried to elucidate: the magicians, diviners and healers of ancient Mesopotamia. On the one hand they were the champions of the theistic system, composing and adapting texts, and educating the public while making house calls; on the other hand they kept lapsing into holistic modes of thought and presentation. A likely explanation for this remarkable ambivalence lies in their position betwixt centre and population. They catered not only to the needs of the state, but also to that of the public, where at least part of their pay and unavoidably some of their ideas came from.

[65] Cf. Baigent, M., 1994, *From the omens of Babylon: Astrology and ancient Mesopotamia* (Harmondsworth: Arkana / Penguin Books); Mackenzie, D.N., 1964, 'Zoroastrian astrology in the Bundahis', *BSOAS* 27: 511–529; Gordon, R.L., 1975, 'Franz Cumont and the doctrines of Mithraism', in: J.R. Hinnells, (ed.), *Mithraic studies: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

The Poetry of Magic[1]

Niek Veldhuis

1 Incantations and the Literary Corpus

One of the Old Babylonian Eduba texts, commonly called 'The Supervisor and the Scribe', consists of a discussion between an ugula ('supervisor') and a pupil of the scribal school. The supervisor is the first to speak, and for almost thirty lines he showers the young scribe with admonitions and good advice. In short, he incites him to be a good, obedient pupil, and to listen carefully to what the ummia says, as he himself, the ugula, had always done when he was young. Then the schoolboy is introduced, ironically, as a humble man of learning:[2]

29 dub-sar umun-ak sun_5-na-bi ugula-a-ni mu-na-ni-ib-gi_4-gi_4
30 ud mu_7-mu_7-gin_7 ab-šid-dè-en-na-a ba-an-gi_4-bi a-ra-ab-ḫa-za
31 mu-gud-gin_7 i-lu dùg-ga-zu-šè giš ì-lá-a-bi
32 lú-nu-zu nam-mu-ni-ib-ku_4-ku_4 diš-àm ga-ra-ni-ib-gi_4

The scribe, the man of learning, humbly replied to his supervisor:
'As to the incantation that you recited, I have its antiphon (ready) for you,
And to your oxen-like sweet moaning its refutation.[3]
You will not turn me into a nitwit! I will answer you but once'.

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[1] This paper gained much from critical and stimulating remarks by Prof. Dr. Tzvi Abusch, Dr. Jan van Ginkel, Femke Kramer, Dr. H.L.J. Vanstiphout, and the participants in the Conference on Mesopotamian Magic. To all I wish to express my sincere thanks.

[2] Sources for these lines: *SLTN* 114 (Ni 4243) + *ISET* 2, 84 (Ni 4092); *SRT* 28; TMH NF 3, 37; FS Hilprecht, 19; *SEM* 59; *ISET* 2, 84 (Ni 9679); *SLFN* 47 (3N-T 917, 388); *SLFN* 47 (3N-T 906, 231); *SLFN* 47 (3N-T 927, 517). Variants are orthographic in kind, and are disregarded here. On Eduba C see C. Wilcke, *Kollationen zu den sumerischen literarischen Texten aus Nippur in der Hilprecht-Sammlung Jena* (ASAW 65, 4; Berlin, 1976), 34f., with additional sources in *SLFN* 47, and *ISET* 2, 84. The join of the prism fragments *SLTN* 114 (Wilcke's source B) with *ISET* 2, 84 (Ni 4092) has not been tested on the actual fragments, but is clear enough from the copies. The lines preceding Eduba C on this prism preserve the end of Schooldays, and must be added to the list of sources for this composition in P. Attinger, *Eléments de linguistique sumérienne. La construction de du_{11}/e/di 'dire'* (OBO Sonderband; Göttingen, 1993), 34. The prism fragment CBS 19826 (one side published in S.N. Kramer, *Schooldays: a Sumerian Composition Relating to the Education of a Scribe* (Museum Monographs; Philadelphia, 1949 =) *JAOS* 69 (1949), 199–215, Plate III; see p.4) may belong to the same piece.

[3] Lines 30 and 31 are parallel in construction, sharing one verb (a-ra-ab-ḫa-za). The construction ud ... a (temporal clause) with a second person verbal form in 30 corresponds to mu ... šè ('in exchange for') with a second person possessive pronoun in 31. Giš ì-lá-a-bi is interpreted here as a verbal form, corresponding to the fossilized form ba-an-gi_4 (see *PSD* B s.v.), which has the same inanimate possessive -bi. The tentative translation 'refutation' or 'fight' for giš ì-lá-a is based on a number of lexical texts: giš-lá-a = *namzaqum* (P-Kagal bilingual; *MSL* 13, 88), giš-lá = *anantum*, giš-lá-lá = *tuquntum* (Antagal III, 193f.; *MSL* 17, 157). See moreover SIG_7-ALAN 7, 135 (*MSL* 16, 109): giš-giš-lá = *epēšu ša kakki*. I am not aware of any other attestations of a verb giš – lá. It is assumed that the form used here is a playful derivation of the well known noun, in conscious parallelism with ba-an-gi_4. I owe these observations to Dr. H.L.J. Vanstiphout. For another interpretation of giš – lá (and this passage) see Heimpel, *Tierbilder* (Rome, 1968), 157f.

This speech of the dumu eduba might be deemed improper, but it is most revealing for the present subject. In order to say 'shut up, you're talking nonsense', the student compares his ugula first with someone reciting incantations, and second with a bellowing ox.[4] From the perspective of the eduba, the centre of literary learning, reciting incantations amounts to the same thing as bovine mooing. In other words, if we want to incorporate incantation texts into the literary corpus,[5] we are not likely to receive support from our ancient colleagues. Incantations are not literary texts. Therefore, the recent studies by Michalowski,[6] Reiner,[7] Cooper,[8] and the present writer,[9] in which incantations are analysed from the poetical point of view, require explicit justification. The perspective under which we analyse and interpret our material, and the labels we use, are important determinants for the outcome of our investigations. Incantations are not meant to entertain, to display verbal virtuosity, or to construct imagined worlds. They are meant to be used in magic rituals, in order to influence the course of events. Bearing this in mind, let us look in detail at a short Akkadian incantation from Ur. This example, as most examples I will use here, is from the Old Babylonian period.[10]

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[4] The two images may belong together, since mu_7-mu_7 is almost onomatopoeic for 'mooing'. That the scribal profession was felt to be higher than that of conjurer is confirmed in Proverb Collection 2 no. 54 (line 1): 'an unsuccessful scribe, he will be an incantation priest' (E.I. Gorden, *Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York, 1968), 211).

[5] That is, the corpus of literary or poetic texts strictly speaking. This is not to deny that incantations were treated in the eduba. Evidence of this use is found in a literary letter, edited by J.J.A. van Dijk, 'Ein spätbabylonischer Katalog einer Sammlung sumerischer Briefe', *Or* 58 (1989), 441–452, and in a number of incantation tablets, which appear to be school copies. See most recently Waetzoldt and Yildiz, 'Eine neusumerische Beschwörung', *OrAnt* 26 (1986), 291–298: edition of an Ur III tablet with an incantation written over an erased business text, probably both exercises. Old Babylonian examples of school copies may be *SLTN* 6; *OECT* V, 55 and *YOS* XI, 68. Michalowski (Review of *OECT* V, *JNES* 37 (1978), 343–346, esp. 345) identified the text on the 'bun' *OECT* V, 55 as an extract from *TIM* IX, 63:17′–20′ (*Lamaštum*; edition by M.V. Tonietti, 'Un incantesimo sumerico contra la Lamaštu', *Or* 48 (1979), 301–323). According to Westenholz, 'Old Akkadian Schooltexts. Some Goals of Sargonic Scribal Education', *AfO* 25 (1974–1977), 95–110, some of the Old Akkadian incantations should also be related to the school, either as exercises or as example texts, but the point is difficult to prove. The famous Plaque Diorite of Urnanše was interpreted by J.S. Cooper, 'Studies in Mesopotamian Lapidary Inscriptions II', *RA* 74 (1980), 101–110, esp. 103–104, as an exercise on a broken piece of stone, juxtaposing two unrelated texts: an incantation and a building inscription (see Civil in E. Reiner and M. Civil, 'Another Volume of Sultantepe Tablets', *JNES* 26 (1967), 154–211, esp. 211). This interpretation, however, was not accepted by T. Jacobsen, 'Ur-Nanshe's Diorite Plaque', *Or* 54 (1985), 65–72, who treated the text as a unity concerning the erection of a reed hut for incantatory purposes.

Theoretically, the extent of the literary corpus is not easy to define. Our own notion of literature and poetry is not likely to be equivalent to that of the ancients (see A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature. An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford, 1982), especially Chapter 12 on the concept 'Canons of Literature').

[6] P. Michalowski, 'Carminative Magic', *ZA* 71 (1981), 1–18.

[7] E. Reiner, 'The Heart Grass', in: *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut. Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria* (Ann Arbor, 1985), 94–100.

[8] J.S. Cooper, 'Magic and M(is)use: Poetic Promiscuity in Mesopotamian Ritual', in: *Mesopotamian Poetic Language: Sumerian and Akkadian* (eds. M.E. Vogelzang and H.L.J. Vanstiphout; Groningen, 1996), 47–57.

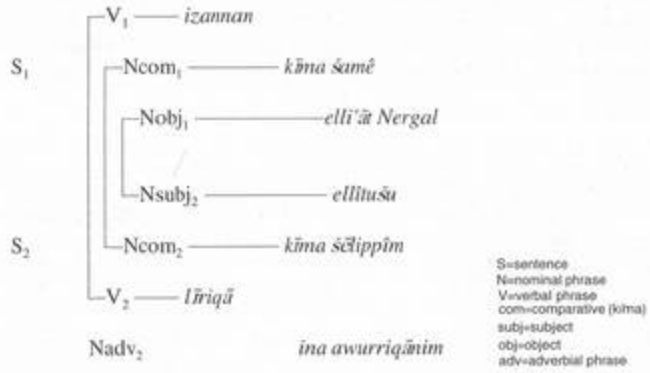
[9] N.C. Veldhuis, 'The Heart Grass and Related Matters', *OLP* 21 (1990), 27–44; idem, *A Cow of Sin* (Groningen, 1991); idem, 'The Fly, the Worm and the Chain. Old Babylonian Chain Incantations', *OLP* 24 (1993), 41–64.

[10] See A.L. Oppenheim, 'The Seafaring Merchants of Ur', *JAOS* 74 (1954), 6–17, esp. 6 n. 1; B. Landsberger and T. Jacobsen, 'An Old Babylonian Charm against *Merhu*', *JNES* 14 (1955), 14–21, esp. 14 n. 7; B. Landsberger, 'Über Farben', *JCS* 21 (1967), 139 n. 2; E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal* (AOAT 11; Neukirchen, 1971), 34; M. Stol, 'Babylonische Medische Teksten over Galziekten', in: *Schrijvend Verleden* (ed. K.R. Veenhof; Leiden, 1983), 301–307, esp. 306.

UET 5, 85

1	*izannan* [2]*kīma šamê*	Like a shower he is raining down
3	*elli'āt* [4d]*Nergal*.	Nergal's saliva.
5	*ellîtušu* [6]*kīma šēlippîm*	Let his saliva because of jaundice
7	*līr*[*iqā*] [8]*ina awurr*[*iqānim*]	turn as yellow as a turtle.
9	*šipat* [10]*awurriqān*[*im*]	Incantation against jaundice.

Leaving aside the subscript, this incantation consists of only two sentences. Both sentences contain a comparison, indicated by *kīma*, and both contain the same word for saliva. Both sentences are divided into two, with alternation of three and two beat verses. The three beat verses are those containing the word *kīma*.[11] The two sentences, thus connected by both formal and lexical means, are at the same time contrasted on various levels. The subject of the first verb, in the indicative, is the patient: 'he rains down', which is taken to mean here: he drools. This, apparently, is meant to be the actual description of one of his symptoms. The subject of the second verb, in the precative, is 'his saliva' ('may his saliva turn yellow'). The second sentence has an additional element, an adverbial phrase ('by means of the jaundice') by which the incantation is closed. In the first sentence *zanānu* is used transitively, with 'Nergal's saliva' as object. The second sentence is intransitive. However, the subject of *izannan* is only expressed in the verbal form, so that both sentences have (apart from the comparative) only one nominal phrase. The chiastic structure may be represented as follows:



[11] I mention the issue here because of the central place of rhythm and metre in discussions of poetic language, and because the pattern fits so well in our general understanding of the structure of this piece. For the time being, our poor understanding of Akkadian metre hardly goes beyond counting stressed syllables. Therefore, the essential tension between the normal linguistic rhythm and the poetic metre, which is a tension between two simultaneous systems, is lost to us. Poetic rhythm as a 'regulated violation' (Jakobson) or 'deformation' (Y. Tynianov, *The Problem of Verse Language* (tr. M. Sosa and B. Harvey; Ann Arbor, 1981; orig. *Problema stikhotvornogo iazyka*; Leningrad, 1924)) of the normal rules for stress in word and sentence is clearly perceptible in enjambment, where a major pause in the poetic rhythm does not coincide with a major syntactic pause. The phenomenon, however, is all-pervasive in verse language and essential to its nature. On this aspect of poetics, see Stephen Rudy's important appraisal of Jakobson's contribution to the study of verse (S. Rudy, 'Jakobson's Inquiry into Verse and the Emergence of Structural Poetics', in: *Sound, Sign and Meaning. Quinquagenary of the Prague Linguistic Circle* (ed. Ladislav Matejka; Ann Arbor, 1976), 477–520). For incantation texts there is the additional problem that standards of metre may differ for 'high' and 'low' literature (e.g. a sonnet as against nursery rhyme).

The relation between $Nobj_1$ and $Nsubj_2$ is lexical (*elliāt Nergal – ellîtušu*). 'Nergal's saliva' takes the final position in the first sentence, whereas 'his saliva' is put in initial position in the second. The juxtaposition of nearly identical expressions tightly connects the two halves of the incantation.

The two sentences display various linguistic oppositions, expressing the functional opposition between the description and the supplication. The symptoms of the patient are related to the supernatural world by equating his saliva with Nergal's saliva. To this is then transferred the 'yellowness' of the jaundice, and with it the patient will lose the illness. This, at least, is the way that I understand the idea behind the text.

This incantation against jaundice is not a literary text, and does not show any literary pretensions. The choice of the turtle in the comparison works as a rather arbitrary selection from anything green or yellow.[12] The lay-out of the tablet upon which the text is written is clearly not intended to raise the reader's expectations of literary enjoyment.[13] The mere fact that application of poetic analysis yields results does not suffice for its justification. Even superficial experience with statistical analysis will make clear that no matter how empty the question is, the computer will always provide an answer. In other words: a good answer is not worth much without a good question. If a literary methodology clearly yields results in analysing an incantation without literary pretensions, what do these results mean, and how are we going to use such results in a broader understanding of magic?

2 Poetics and Persuasive Language

We can turn to Roman Jakobson's definition of the poetic function of verbal communication.[14] The poetic function is one of the six functions distinguished by Jakobson, among which are the emotive and the referential. Each of the functions is directed at, or focused on, one of the six aspects of verbal communication. Thus the emotive function is directed at the sender of the message, the referential function at the context. The poetic function concentrates on the message itself. In a celebrated formula, Jakobson defined the poetic function as the projection of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. 'I like Ike', the slogan used in the campaign for Eisenhower's election, uses a phonemic relation to suggest and enhance a relation of meaning. By choosing other options from the axis of selection we would get 'We like Ike', or 'I want Ike', or even 'I want Eisenhower', which, in certain respects, are all more appropriate than 'I like Ike', but clearly less efficacious. Jurij Lotman, working in the same tradition of literary and linguistic research, defined poetic language by the principle of feedback, or repetition. The poetic text breaks the normal linear development of linguistic meaning by referring back to earlier pieces of the message. This is done

[12] From another point of view the turtle may have been relevant if something like turtle shell belonged to the medication.

[13] The tablet does not fit the typology of Old Babylonian literary tablets. The lay-out is the lay-out of a letter, with no correspondence between lines on the tablet and major syntactic caesurae (even the subscript is divided into two lines, which is very uncommon in Old Babylonian incantations). In the original publication, the text was taken to be a meteorological report, and classified among letters and related texts.

[14] R. Jakobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', in: *Selected Writings*, Volume III (R. Jakobson; The Hague, 1981; orig. in: *Style in Language* (ed. T.A. Sebeok; Cambridge, Mass., 1960)), 18–51.

by repetitions of all kinds: lexical repetition, syntactic parallelism, rhyme, or related phenomena.[15] Repetition of whatever kind always implies both similarity and contrast. Lotman's definition focuses on the reception of a poetic message, whereas Jakobson's can be understood as reconstructing the production of a poetic message. For our purpose the two definitions are equivalent. The advantage of Jakobson's definition is that he relates the concept of poetic language to a general theory of verbal communication.

Jakobson insisted that the poetic function is not restricted to poetry. Referential, conative, poetic and other functions are always present, in any verbal communication, but their relative importance varies. Thus the system of different functions is not a matter of exclusively discrete entities, but of the dominance of one function over the others. Consequently, the study of the poetic function should be extended beyond the limits of poetry strictly speaking, and the study of poetics should be extended beyond the limits of the poetic function. Jakobson's theoretical approach implies that we are justified in analysing the poetic function in any document, even a lexical list. But there may be better uses of time. We have to explore, therefore, the relative importance of the poetic function in incantations, and the place this function has in the pragmatics of magic.

Various authors have discussed the relation between rhetoric and magic, beginning with Gorgias in the fifth century BCE.[16] The common element is the intention not to express one's feelings, or to communicate a state of events, but to change something, be it the curing of an illness or the opinion of your adversaries. In Jakobson's terms, not the emotive or referential, but the conative function, directed at the receiver of the message, is central here. A convincing argument can be conceived of as the successful production of relations of meaning by the reciever. This production may be supported by poetic means. We can again cite the 'I like Ike' slogan here. The poetic function of language serves to associate sounds, words, or syntactic structures, which are similar, and thus suggests the relation of meaning which is to be communicated. In slogans the poetic function is subservient to the conative function, producing a balance of rhyme and reason.

Poetic language, used in support of an argument, is fairly common in incantations. I will take as an example one of the Old Babylonian childbirth incantations. I cite the first part of this text, with the translation by Jo-Ann Scurlock:[17]

1	*ina mê nâkim*	From the fluids of intercourse was
2	*ibbani eṣemtum*	created a skeleton,
3	*ina šīr širḫānim*	from the tissue of the muscles was
4	*ibbani lillidum*	created an offspring.
5	*ina mê ayabba šamrūtim*	In the turbulent and fearful sea waters,
6	*palḫūtim*	

[15] J.M. Lotman, *Vorlesungen zu einer strukturalen Poetik. Einführung, Theorie des Verses* (ed. K. Eimermacher; tr. W. Jochnow; München, 1972; orig. 1964), part. II, esp. 71ff.

[16] On Gorgias see G.E.R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience. Studies in the Origins and Development of Greek Science* (Cambridge, 1979), 83f., and J. de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975). Gorgias' texts have not been transmitted directly; his ideas are known from citations by other ancient authors. The authenticity, however, does not seem to be in doubt.

[17] J.A. Scurlock, 'Baby-snatching Demons, Restless Souls and the Dangers of Childbirth: Medico-Medical Means of Dealing with some of the Perils of Motherhood in Ancient Mesopotamia', *Incognita* 2 (1991), 135–183, esp. 141.

7	*ina mê tiāmtim rūqūtim*	in the distant waters of the ocean,
8	*ašar ṣeḫrum kussâ idāšu*	where the little one's arms are bound,
9	*qerbīssu lā ušnawwaru*	whose midst the eye of the Sun does not
10	*īn šamšim*	illumine,
11	*īmuršuma Asarluḫi māri Enki*	Asalluhi, the son of Enki, saw him.

(*YOS* XI, 86 1–11)[18]

The description of the condition of the baby is skilfully connected with mythological allusions, so as to include the world of the gods into the problem. This is a common device. It is also used, for instance, in the Heart Grass incantations, where the aetiology of a disease is traced back to the Sun god's picking of a forbidden herb (Reiner, 'The Heart Grass', Veldhuis, 'The Heart Grass and Related Matters'). The very invocation of magical means implies that a relation is sought with supernatural forces. The request for help is underpinned by arguing that otherworldly forces had a part in the problem from the start.

In the incantation, poetic means are used to support this argument. The first four clauses begin with *ina*: *ina mê nâkim*; *ina šīr širḫānim*; *ina mê ayabba*; and *ina mê tiāmtim*. The first two of these describe the situation as a natural phenomenon: procreation through intercourse, and the steady growth of the child in the womb of the mother. The second pair describes an awesome, mythic place: the turbulent, fearful waters of the sea, the distant waters of the ocean. The two pairs of clauses are marked as such by numerous similarities. The first two lines are perfectly parallel, using the same verbal form and the same syntactic construction. They intend to describe the same process:

ina mê nâkim ibbani eṣemtum
ina šīr širḫānim ibbani lillidum

The second pair is differentiated from the first in syntactic construction and in the extensive use of adjectives. The similarity between these two clauses is semantic, syntactic, and phonemic:

ina mê ayabba šamrūtim palḫūtim
ina mê tiāmtim rūqūtim

The phonemic similarities are mostly located in the masculine plural adjectives in *-ūtim*, and, of course, in the repetition of *ina mê*. Generally, in Akkadian poetic language, the second of a pair will be longer than the first. That is the case in the first pair, where *šīr širḫānim* has one syllable more than *mê nâkim*. In the second pair this is not the case, but the exception is only apparent. These are not sentences; they are adverbial expressions introducing two dependent clauses and a main clause. The two dependent clauses again take two perspectives: a natural one and a mythological one. First the child, with his arms bound, and then the sun, who is unable to reach with his light the place of terror.

[18] Edition in J.J.A. van Dijk, 'Une incantation accompagnant la naissance de l'homme', *Or* 42 (1973), 502–507, esp. 503.

The second member of this pair is clearly longer. Only then does the main clause tell us that Asalluhi, the son of Enki, saw the child. The construction of this introduction, with its neat intertwining of natural and mythological references, is working towards a climax. The absence of sunlight makes Asalluhi's observation of the child the more miraculous.

By various lexical and thematic similarities the introduction is linked to later parts of the incantation. The verb *banû*, 'to create', is used later on, again in a pair of sentences, to describe a birth-goddess. Very probably the theme of 'water' is again taken up at the end of the text, where the child is compared with a *dādu*. I prefer to interpret this word as an aquatic animal, more specifically a shell-fish, rather than 'beloved one'. The comparison with a 'beloved one' does not make sense; a comparison implies difference as well as similarity. 'Shell-fish' not only reuses the marine imagery, but has the added advantage of furnishing the idea of a living being hidden inside something.

3 Poetic Language as Materia Magica

To my mind, the comparison between persuasive language and verbal magic is useful but limited in its explanatory power. It does not take into account the specific nature of magic and the magic ritual. In Tambiah's terminology,[19] magic seeks an analogical transfer of a quality or attribute by symbolic means. Incantations are only the verbal part of a more complex ritual. In Trobriand garden magic all kinds of objects are manipulated. These objects may carry different relevant attributes. Some convey the aspect of luxurious growth, others the aspect of being firmly rooted, still others the aspect of being healthy. A whole complex of qualities is thus transferred from various manipulated objects to the garden. The process is accompanied by the recitation of incantations, which identify the relevant aspect. The attributes conveyed may have symbolic connections with other realms of Trobriand life. Thus, the attribute of whiteness is transferred to the garden by the manipulation of white carrots. This whiteness, however, is more generally connected with the symbolism of fertility and pregnancy. In other words: the ritual refers to the symbolic system of Trobriand culture. The structure of the ritual is one of redundancy and cross reference. The same attribute is transferred by various means, and the various attributes transferred are related by the symbolic system.

3.1 *The Magic Use of Poetics*

If we regard the incantation as one element within this multi-faceted symbolism, the first thing that stands out is the homology between the use of materia magica and the use of language in the poetic function. The transfer of attributes from the materia magica is based on similarity and contrast. Similarity and contrast are the two basic mechanisms for the transfer of meaning in poetic language. Similarity and contrast provide the building blocks of metaphor and simile, but also engender features like rhyme and parallelism. An interesting example is an Old Babylonian incantation against Lamaštu.

[19] See especially S.J. Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action. An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge/Mass., 1985). Trobriand magic is discussed in Chapter 1.

1	*Anum ibnīši Ea urabbīši*	Anum created her, Ea brought her up,
2	*pānī labbatim išīmši Enlil*	Enlil destined for her the face of a she-lion.
3	*īṣat rittīn arrakat*	She is short-handed, but her fingers are
4	*ubanātim ṣuprātim*	long and her fingernails
5	*arrakat ammāša? ...*	are long. Her elbows ...?
6	*bāb bīti irrub* [ ]-*ti*	She enters the house through the door [ ]
7	*iḫallup ṣerram*	she slips in past the door-pivot.
8	*iḫlup ṣerram ītamar ṣeḫram*	Now she slipped in past the door-pivot and saw this child.
9	*ina imšišu adi 7 iṣbassu*	Seven times she seized him in his belly.
10	*ushī ṣupriki*	Retract your fingernails!
11	*rummī idīki*	Loosen your grip
12	*lāma ikšudakki*	before the expert, sent by Ea, the hero,
13	*apkallam šipir Ea qardu*	reaches you.
14	*rapaški ṣerrum puttā dalātum*	The door-pivot is wide enough for you, the doors are open,
15	*alkīma atallakī ina ṣēri*	go and roam in the desert!
16	*epram pīki*	They will fill your mouth with earth,
17	*tarbuḫam pānīki*	your face with dust,
18	*saḫlê daqqātim*	with seeds of fine cress
19	*umallû īnīki*	your eyes.
20	*utammīki māmūt Ea*	I adjure by the curse of Ea
21	*u tattallakī*	and you will go away!

(*BIN* 2, 72)[20]

In this incantation the female demon Lamaštu is introduced in a threefold way: by an aetiology (1–2), a description of her appearance (3–7), and the description of the occasion that necessitated this ritual (8–9). The three elements from which this retrospective part is made up are connected in a sophisticated way by the alternation of similarity and contrast. The aetiology describes Lamaštu's creation by the major gods of the pantheon: Anum, Ea, and Enlil. The three verbal forms are preterites, all containing a long *ī* and the suffix *-ši*: *ibnīši*; *urabbīši*; *išīmši*. The first two sentences are syntactically parallel: *Anum ibnīši Ea urabbīši*. The third line is longer, because it has two objects, a direct and an indirect object. Moreover, the subject is placed at the marked final position: *pānī labbatim išīmši Enlil*. In rhythm, the third sentence, having four beats, counterbalances the first two sentences, which have two beats each. The aetiology is thus a fine example of balance between similarity and contrast on various levels. Moreover, the final sentence provides the transition to the descriptive part of the introduction, where Lamaštu's outward appearance is characterized. It is focused on her arms, including hands and fingernails. The description continues with a description of her known behaviour. The

[20] The text was edited by W. von Soden, 'Eine altbabylonische Beschwörung gegen die Dämonin Lamaštum', *Or* 23 (1954), 337–344. Collations in Farber, 'Zur älteren akkadidischen Beschwörungsliteratur', *ZA* 71 (1981), 51–72, esp. 72. A Dutch translation appeared in Wiggermann, 'Enige Lamaštu-bezweringen uit Oud-babylonische en Nieuw-assyrische tijd', in: *Schrijvend Verleden* (ed. K.R. Veenhof; Leiden, 1983), 294–300, esp. 296.

appearance is described in stative forms, the behaviour in durative forms. The behaviour described is entering a house and slipping through the door-pivot. The two verbs used provide an inner rhyme: *irrub, iḫallup*. The description of behaviour fades into the occasion: the last sentence of the description is repeated almost verbatim, but changed into the preterite, to indicate an actual event (indicated in the translation by the use of 'this'):

iḫlup ṣerram ītamar ṣeḫram
Now she slipped in past the door-pivot and saw this child.

The introduction, with its individual sections tightly connected, produces a verbal representation of Lamaštu, provided with a history and with various attributes. The verbal symbol is a verbal effigy, which can be manipulated much like a material effigy. A material effigy can be mutilated, destroyed or thrown into the river. A verbal effigy can be manipulated by verbal means. A number of imperatives in the second half of the incantation are aimed at her arms, her fingers, the parts of the body on which the description was concentrated:

Retract your fingernails!
Loosen your grip (literally: loosen your arms).

Other elements of the introduction resumed in the second half are Ea (line 20), one of the gods responsible for her creation, and the pivot of the door (line 14).

In the penultimate sentence Lamaštu is threatened:

They will fill your mouth with earth
your face with dust,
and with seeds of fine cress
your eyes.

The section has one verb, which serves in three syntactically parallel sentences. In each sentence a part of her face is filled with something. It gives a triple repetition of the suffix *-ki*, accompanied by an abundance of *i* sounds: *pīki*; *pānīki*; *īnīki*. This threefold *-ki* in the description of her elimination, resumes the threefold repetition of the suffix *-ši* in the description of her creation in the opening lines. The two sets of three lines have much in common, including the conclusion by a longer line, and the placement in this last line of the verb in the unusual penultimate position. Not only here, but in the whole second half of the incantation /*ki*/ appears as a prominent phoneme combination, mostly as the feminine suffix of the second person. It continues to be used in the concluding sentence:

utammīki māmīt Ea
u tattallakī

Let us pause for a moment to see these elements of rhyme in a wider context. A considerable part of the rhyme in this incantation and in the childbirth text discussed above

depends on morphological or syntactic similarities. This kind of rhyme is considered weak or poor in the poetic systems of modern European languages. The judgement that some types of rhyme are richer than other types implies that rhyme cannot simply be defined in terms of repetition of sounds. The most complete repetition of sounds is the repetition of the same word, but this is hardly considered 'rhyme' to modern taste. The quality of rhyme in some piece of poetry is, therefore, not only judged by the degree of audible similarity, but also by the way this similarity is produced. Rhyme is a device to connect linguistic entities, and is superimposed over the rules of normal syntax. It has a semantic function, and the richness or barrenness of rhyme is measured against this function. As any linguistic device, however, this function may differ in different traditions. Lotman argues that in modern poetry rhyme serves to connect the intrinsically unconnected.[21] Rhyme words, dissimilar in meaning or grammatical form, are related in the reading process in order to construct new and unpredictable relations of meaning. This novelty and originality belong to the pleasure of reading modern poetry. In medieval aesthetics, on the other hand, the new, unpredicted, or original was not valued in the same way. This is part of what Jauss has called the alterity of medieval literature. The appreciation of a piece of verbal art by a medieval public was not based upon the evocation of a unique, self-sufficient fictitious world, but primarily upon clever variations of well-known patterns. Medieval literature tends to use the 'already known' as stable material for the construction of a new work.[22]

Similarly, grammatical rhyme (repeating the same suffix) or even tautological rhyme (repeating the same word) may be used to create strings of lines expressing the same idea in a catalogue-like manner.[23] In other words: rhyme belongs to the prevalent poetic system. Its position within the system and its realisation will differ between individual literary systems. A comparable phenomenon is the wholesale repetition of narrative sections in literary texts. To our conception, this is a poor technique, sometimes explained away by referring to its advantage for memorization. Still, the device is so common that we must conclude that it appealed to Babylonian taste, and was, in fact, part of the poetic system. Its actual use is far more sophisticated and relevant for narrative strategy than is

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[21] Lotman, *Vorlesungen zu einer strukturalen Poetik. Einführung, Theorie des Verses* (ed. K. Eimermacher; tr. W. Jochnow; München, 1992; orig. 1964), 74–86.

[22] See H.R. Jauss, 'Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur', in: *Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1956–1976* (München, 1977), 9–47, esp. 14–18. This characterization does not imply, of course, that innovations are absent in medieval poetry or that modern literature is not rooted in tradition. Tradition and innovation necessarily belong together and are inconceivable without each other. The alterity is situated in the relative stress on one of the two poles and the conscious use of the one rather than the other in the literary production (as well as in the less conscious expectations of the public).

[23] The technique was described by J.M. Lotman, *Vorlesungen zu einer strukturalen Poetik. Einführung, Theorie des Verses* (ed. K. Eimermacher; tr. W. Jochnow; München, 1992; orig. 1964), 83–84, for Russian medieval poetry. Prof. Dr. Shaul Shaked kindly drew my attention to a similar kind of rhyme found in the piyyuṭim (medieval Hebrew liturgical poetry). For rhyme in the piyyuṭim of Yehudah see W.J. van Bekkum, *The Qedushta'ot of Yehudah according to Genizah Manuscripts* (Unpublished doctoral thesis; Groningen, 1988), 82–96, with brief discussions of classical and pre-classical piyyuṭim. Grammatical rhyme, based on suffixes, is discussed on pp. 87–89. A good example of a piyyuṭ with rhyme based on the single suffix *-ēnu* ('our') is 'From Soul to Flesh' by Yannai, edited and translated in *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (ed. and tr. T. Carmi; Harmondsworth, 1981), 215f. See furthermore Hrushovski, 'Notes on the Systems of Hebrew Versification', in: *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (ed. and tr. T. Carmi; Harmondsworth, 1981), 57–72, esp. 61–62.

usually accepted.[24] Similarly, grammatical rhyme may turn out to be rich rhyme in Old Babylonian aesthetics, as seems to be the case in the example at hand.[25]

3.2 *The Poetic Use of Magic*

The context of an incantation in a magic ritual and in the magic tradition affects the poetic effectiveness. The incantation text is one element of a more complex magic ritual, though for Old Babylonian magic this is often the only element we have. The poetics of the ritual are not confined to the verbal element but extend over the various symbolic systems used in the magical transfer of attributes. The Lamaštu incantation discussed above provides a negative example. Old Babylonian incantations in Akkadian are rarely accompanied by separate ritual instructions. In this incantation some passages clearly refer to the manipulation of symbols. This is especially the case in the section discussed above:

> They will fill your mouth with earth,
> your face with dust,
> and with seeds of fine cress
> your eyes.

It may be assumed that the recitation of this part of the text was accompanied by a ritual act on a symbol of Lamaštu's face. This symbol may have been a representation of a lion's face, but not necessarily so. The mechanics of association and symbolization allow the participants to use a symbol that is in some way related to Lamaštu's face or to a lion's face, but may not be readily recognizable as such to us. The assumed object, whatever it was, represented Lamaštu's face. The symbolic relations were not confined to inner textual features, but extended to the other materia magica. Since the object is unknown, the implications of this relation for our poetic understanding of the text are unknown as well, and this may explain why the passage affects us as an intrusion, an extrinsic piece.

Texts are part of a tradition, and receive their meaning against the background of that tradition. A text is understood and valued by putting it into relations of similarity and contrast with the rules, the possibilities and impossibilities governing the textual type at a given point in time.[26] The position of the *utammīka* formula at the end of the incantation works as an enforcement of the following imperative: go! In Old Babylonian Akkadian

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[24] See H.L.J. Vanstiphout, 'Repetition and Structure in the Aratta Cycle: Their Relevance for the Orality Debate', in: *Mesopotamian Epic Literature. Oral or Aural?* (eds. M.E. Vogelzang and H.L.J. Vanstiphout; Lewiston, 1992), 247–264.

[25] The theoretical problem here is similar to the problem of rhythm and metre, discussed in note 11. In order to understand any poetry, its poetics must be known. The problem is no doubt circular, since poetics can only be known from poetry. But this point is a general one, not differing in kind from the problems encountered in understanding poetry of a less remote past.

[26] This point was already made by Tynianov in 1924 (*The Problem of Verse Language*), but was forcefully restated by Jauss in his programmatic article 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft' (H.R. Jauss, 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft', in: *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970; originally published in 1967), 144–207). The relation between interpretation and the available set of genres and types makes apparent the historical character of interpretation (history of reception).

incantations such formulas are generally placed between a retrospective part, describing the problem, and a prospective part, announcing the elimination of the problem. The transfer of a conventional formula to the end yields a more than average force. Another example of how tradition works is the use of the words *ṣerru*, 'door-pivot', *ṣeḫru*, 'child', and *ṣēru*, 'desert', in this incantation. The phonemic similarities between the three words are exploited throughout the text. Lamaštu is associated with the *ṣerru*, the door-pivot past which she enters. First this word is used to emphasize the danger for the *ṣeḫru*: *iḫlup ṣerram ītamar ṣeḫram*. Later on in the text the same *ṣerru* is associated with Lamaštu's true homeland: the *ṣēru*. The poetic procedure is in itself understandable. It gets its true meaning, however, from the place of *ṣēru* and *ṣerru* in the general symbolic system within which the incantation is to be located. And this is not irrelevant to the poetic analysis. Along with other liminal images the door-pivot belongs to the stock symbols of Old Babylonian magic. The same holds true for the desert, the non-cultivated, non-human space, where demons roam freely. The associations of *ṣerru* and *ṣēru* with *ṣehru* are, therefore, no casual word plays. They are heavily charged with meaning within the system of Mesopotamian magic. Such connotations, determined by the magic tradition, cannot fail to influence the poetic production of meaning.

3.3 *'Mumbo-Jumbo' or the Magic Poetics of Gibberish*

The verbal parts of a magic ritual obey rules that do not fundamentally differ from those governing the other materia magica. The transfer of a property is achieved by the symbolic manipulation of similarities. In most cases, however, the materia magica is characterized by more than just some similarity. The objects used must be pure, they must be collected at night, or derive from a strange country. In other words, they must be set apart from ordinary objects. Thus, they are made appropriate for use in a sacred context.[27] This is another perspective from which we can discuss the language of incantations.

Magic language is usually distinguished from ordinary language.[28] There are, in principle, three ways to achieve such a distinction. The first is to use a sacred language. The second to use poetic, heightened language. These two options are, in fact, available for a large variety of purposes where a text must be marked as other than ordinary. Thus, a large proportion of the scholarly works in classical Greece are written in verse. During a long period of European history the same functional place was occupied by Latin, a language only accessible to the initiated. A third possibility is almost restricted to magic or ritualistic uses of language, and that is Mumbo-Jumbo.[29] All three possibilities are used in Mesopotamian magic. We have discussed the poetic use of language in a few

[27] The 'sacred' as against the 'profane' was redefined by Tambiah in more general terms as two orderings of reality, or orientations on the world. They are opposed by 'participation' as against 'causality'. See S.J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 84–110.

[28] For a general discussion, see S.J. Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action. An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), especially Chapter 1: 'The Magical Power of Words'.

[29] It should be stressed here that Mumbo-Jumbo is not meant as a derogatory term, and is not equivalent to nonsense or emptiness. 'Relevance' is an assumption underlying the interpretation and functionality of all communication, but this relevance is more often than not different from the literal (translatable) meaning of an utterance. For the concept 'relevance' see D. Sperber and D. Wilson, *Relevance. Communication and Cognition* (Oxford, 1986; 1995[2]).

Akkadian incantations. Sumerian incantations of the Old Babylonian period are partly directed against the same illnesses, demons, and animals as the Akkadian ones. There is one sphere where the Sumerian is clearly preferred: the ritual incantation meant for purifying ritual ingredients. There is every reason to believe that this has to do with the place these purifying rituals have in society and religion. Mumbo-Jumbo spells are known from all periods and genres of the Mesopotamian incantation literature. Modern discussion of these texts has in the main been limited to the identification of the language from which they are derived.[30] Some are clearly in garbled Sumerian, others seem to be in Hurrian or Elamite, in an unidentified language, or in no language at all.[31] The example I will discuss here represents the garbled Sumerian type. It is from a first millennium medical handbook, about a millennium later than the other texts discussed. The first tablet of the New Assyrian compendium for diseases of the eyes (*BAM* 510, 513, and 514[32]) contains a number of Akkadian incantations, introduced by one or two lines in mock Sumerian:

II 41′ EN$_2$ igi-bar igi-bar-bar igi-bar-ra bar-bar igi-bir igi-bir-bir igi-bar-ra bir-bir
42′ [igi]-⌜bar-ná⌝-a igi-bar-da-a igi-bar-ḫul-a *īnā abâtu īnā ašâ*[*tu*]

(The passage is repeated with minor variants in II 50′–51′ and III 8–9.)

III 17 EN$_2$ igi-bar igi-bar-bar igi-bar-ra bar-bar igi-ḫul igi-ḫul-ḫul igi-bar-ra ḫul-ḫul

III 24 EN$_2$ igi-bar igi-bar-bar igi-bar-ra bar-bar igi-sùḫ igi-sùḫ-sùḫ igi-bar-ra sùḫ-sùḫ

The three passages repeat the same pattern, which consists of permutations of igi-bar with the variable elements bir, ḫul, and sùḫ, much like the Old Babylonian Syllable Alphabets A and B.[33]

These passages are not devoid of meaning. The stubborn repetition of igi-bar bears the idea of seeing, or observing, which is most appropriate in this context. Each of the variable elements bears a negative meaning: bir: to scatter or destroy; ḫul: bad or evil; sùḫ: to be blurred or troubled. Without proper grammar or syntax, the message is clear enough: there is something diseased, wrong or generally evil connected with eyesight, which the incantation is supposed to heal. The relation between seeing and the illness is reflected in the first passage by the phonemic association of bar-bir. Bir-bir, moreover, conjures up the words *birratu*, a disease of the eyes, and *birbirrū*, terrifying brilliance. The regular repetition of the same or similar syllables is a common phenomenon in

[30] See the interesting discussion by van Dijk in the Introduction to *YOS* XI, 3–4.

[31] This seems to be the case in the last section of LB 1002 (F.M.Th. Böhl, 'Oorkonden uit de Periode van 2000–1200 v.Chr.', in: *Mededeelingen uit de Leidsche Verzameling van Spijkerschrift-inscripties* II (1934), 8): hu-ub hi-ib ha-ab etc. But it is not excluded that even this passage will prove to have a background in an existing language. This text was presented to our conference in its entirety by Prof. Dr. K. Veenhof.

[32] The lines are reconstructed from the three duplicates. See Köcher in *BAM* VI, pp. IX-XI, and the additions and corrections in Geller, 'Review of Franz Köcher: *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin* Volumes V and VI', *ZA* 74 (1984), 292–297. The unpublished fragment BM 98942 is known to me from photograph. The pertinent lines were edited and discussed previously in N.C. Veldhuis, 'Comments on IGI-ḪUL', *NABU* 1992/43.

[33] See M. Çiğ, H. Kizilyay, and B. Landsberger, *Zwei altbabylonische Schulbücher aus Nippur* (Ankara, 1959).

Mumbo-Jumbo. In language, even in Mumbo-Jumbo, a random string of sounds is inconceivable, since it would be mere noise. The absence of regularity on the levels of syntax and grammar is compensated by other linguistic means through an abundance of repetition.[34] The tension between 'rhythm' and 'syntax', described by Brik as the very essence of poetic language, is almost completely resolved in favour of rhythm (in this case the regular repetition of a word), much like the 'transrational poets' who treated semantics as a secondary, or even negligible element of poetry.[35] In Jakobson's terms, the absence of syntax is the neglect of the rules of contagion on the axis of combination. These rules have been taken over completely by the principles of equivalence normally governing the axis of selection. In other words, as far as these passages are effective, it is a poetic effectiveness. The passages discussed use simultaneously all three devices to distinguish their language from the ordinary. They are in poetic Mumbo-Jumbo Sumerian.

With these examples I hope to have demonstrated the existence and the importance of the poetic function in incantations. There is no need to include incantations in the literary corpus to allow for this conclusion. We are still not in the position, except in very impressionistic terms, to judge their poetic quality. I assume this quality cannot compete with the great works of literary art in the Old Babylonian eduba. But I, for one, take 'oxen-like moaning' for priggish conceitedness.

[34] See Lotman, *Vorlesungen zu einer strukturalen Poetik. Einführung, Theorie des Verses* (ed. K. Eimermacher; tr. W. Jochnow; München, 1992; orig. 1964), 108f. on 'Außersinn-Sprache'.

[35] O. Brik, 'Rhythme et Syntaxe', in: *Théorie de la littérature* (ed. T. Todorov; Paris, 1965; orig. in: *Novyj Lef* (1927), 3–6), 143–153, esp. 150–153.

Freud and Mesopotamian Magic[1]

M.J. Geller

It is a pity that Sigmund Freud knew so little about Mesopotamia. Freud's library, now housed in the Freud Museum in Hampstead, contains many more books on archaeology and Classical civilization than on psychology, and his collection of antiquities (many of which are presumed to be forgeries) reflects Freud's keen interest in the ancient world. His seminal work, *Totem and Taboo*, demonstrates that Freud somehow had a good grasp of ancient mentality, and had he had a knowledge of Mesopotamian magic, his analysis could have yielded interesting results.

There may be some point, therefore, in considering the possible psychological impact of Mesopotamian magic, such as the *Utukkū Lemnūtu* incantations which were presumably used in some form of therapy with a patient. *Utukkū Lemnūtu* is a useful compilation to begin with, since in some ways it is just what it purports to be, namely the fullest description of the evil demons from any Mesopotamian text, although without reference to etiology or any philosophy of demonology. *Utukkū Lemnūtu* provides rich accounts of demons and ghosts, replete with metaphors and similes, bringing us closer to a general understanding of demons as the agents which most directly affected a patient's psyche; the very appearance of the demon inspired fear, and the suggestion of the demon's presence acted as a threat.[2] The *utukku* demon is among the most commonly mentioned, and the term *utukku* is virtually generic for 'demon'. The *utukku* is described as a ghost, then as a 'herald', and even as a robber.

> The evil *utukku*-demon, who is hostile in appearance, and who is tall in stature,
> is not a god – but his voice is great, and his radiance is lofty.
> His shadow is dusky, it is darkened, there is no light in his body.
> He always slinks around in secret places, he does not come forth brazenly.
> Gall is always dripping from his talons, his tread is harmful poison.
> His belt cannot be loosened, his arms burn.
> He fills the target of his anger with tears, the world cannot restrain a lament.[3]

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[1] I wish to thank my NIAS colleagues Andrzej Nowak, F.A.M. Wiggermann, and Wim van Binsbergen for advice on Freudian, textual, and anthropological matters, respectively. A more general survey of this material has appeared in *Folklore* 108 (1997), 1–7, by the present author.

[2] Unfortunately, the descriptions in the texts do not often match up with the artistic representations of demons on cylinder seals and reliefs.

[3] *Utukkū Lemnūtu* (hereafter UḪ) 12:14–20. Since translations of the text are cited here throughout, it might be useful to provide a progress report on the edition of *Utukkū Lemnūtu* incantations. Work began on these incantations some 20 years ago, with some progress made with the edition of the Sumerian forerunners (M.J. Geller, *Forerunners to Udug-ḫul* [Stuttgart, 1985]). Since then other forerunners have been identified, and we now have OB and MB exemplars of *Utukkū Lemnūtu* for tablets 2–8 and 12. The full bilingual edition of *Utukkū Lemnūtu* consists of approximately 2000 lines of text, compiled by the ancient scribes into a sixteen-tablet series. All of the component tablets have now been identified, although Tablets 1 and 9 are fragmentary. The first two tablets contain an unusual mixture of Akkadian and bilingual texts, while Tablet 11 of *Utukkū Lemnūtu* incorporates the Akkadian incantation known separately as 'Marduk's Address to the

The demonic image is vague, and the same can be said for the other demons. The *alû* demon, for instance, is described as cloud-like and amorphous, having no human form.[4] There are certain culturally specific differences between Sumerian demons and their Akkadian counterparts, such as the difference between the Sumerian maškim or 'bailiff-demon' and its Akkadian correspondent, *rābiṣu* or 'croucher' demon. The Sumerian maškim demon can be understood etymologically as a figure of authority, namely as a bailiff or a police-like figure, but the Akkadian counterpart, the *rābiṣu* or 'crouching' demon has more of the image of a highwayman. The *asakku* demon is even more intriguing, since we have an anthropomorphic description of the demon in Lugale which is not actually reflected in the incantations.[5] On the other hand, the *asakku* represents a virulent form of disease in the incantations, as well as in legal texts in which a wife suffering from *asakku* disease instructs her husband to take another wife, so long as she herself receives maintenance.[6] Third, we must reckon with the meaning of *asakku* as 'taboo'.[7] It would probably be misleading to suggest that the *asakku*-disease was considered to be caused by guilt or violation of a taboo, since we have no evidence to that effect; the names of the demon, the disease, and the taboo may simply be homonyms. The problem is matching the demon to the deed. As with Campbell Thompson's unsuccessful attempts at defining Assyrian botany by etymologizing Akkadian plant names, one cannot simply parallel the names of the demons with their descriptions in the texts. It is necessary to adopt a somewhat unconventional approach in order to assess the impact of demons on the minds of the ordinary Mesopotamian man in the street. For this, we turn to Freud. One might argue that Freud's work has already been thoroughly digested in regard to his theories of magic and psychology. However, it is worth pointing out that there is no other system of Western or Near Eastern magic, either from Greece or Egypt or in Jewish magic, which is as well-preserved and as highly developed as Mesopotamian magic, in terms of the quantity and variety of genres of magical texts. Moreover, Freud's theories have rarely been applied to Mesopotamia on magic.

It is virtually impossible to identify any Mesopotamian equivalents for Freud's 'id', 'ego', and 'superego', for many good reasons. For one thing, although one might suggest analogues for 'id' (such as Sumerian ḫili), there is nothing very convincing for 'ego' except perhaps some uses of *libbu*, and certainly nothing for 'superego' in Mesopotamian terminology, nor should we expect any such terminology to have existed. More problematic is the lack of any idea about Mesopotamian toilet training, breast feeding and age of weaning, or even puberty. There is no way of knowing whether Mesopotamians were anal-retentive or oral-aggressive. Furthermore, there is no Oedipus or Electra mythology from Mesopotamia which would fit Freudian theories of male and female development.[8] Nevertheless, some observations from *Utukkū Lemnūtu*

Demons'.

[4] Cf. UḪ 8 5–8:
whether you may be the evil *alû*-demon who has no mouth,
whether you may be the evil *alû*-demon who has no physique,
or whether you may be the evil *alû*-demon who does not listen,
or whether you may be the evil *alû*-demon who has no facial features...

[5] See Thorkild Jacobsen, 'The Asakku in Lugal-e', in *FS Sachs*, 225ff.

[6] *NSG* II no. 6, 8–10.

[7] Cf. K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (Assen, 1985), 42 (et passim), cf. also M.J. Geller, *JCS* 42 (1990), 111[31].

[8] The so-called Ḫarab Myth (or Myth of Dunnu) has the divine protagonist marry his mother and/or sister

incantations might be worth considering, such as the following description of the *alû* demon:

> Whether you be the evil *alû*-demon who copulates with a man in his sleep in bed at night, or whether you be the evil *alû*-demon, the 'sleep-robber', who stands ready to deprive a man (of sleep). Or whether you may be the evil *alû*-demon who is a god stalking at night, who does not recoil from filthy hands, whether you be the evil *alû*-demon who urinates like an ass while crouching over a man.[9]

This combination of sex and filthy bodily functions is nicely Freudian, and could reflect some attitude towards toilet training, if one wished to press the point. But a more conservative approach is to say that such descriptions of demons may well reflect the commonest of defence mechanisms known to Freud, viz. the so-called 'denial', in which a person's thoughts or feelings which cause anxiety are repressed into the unconscious, and the person then denies any awareness of the cause of the anxiety. If the repression is not completely effective, then a state of anxiety can be stimulated by the unconscious mind producing these threatening feelings, without the patient being aware of the reason for the state of anxiety. This is where the descriptions of the demons may help. The process of denial can now be influenced by focusing on the demon as the cause of the anxiety, particularly if it reminds the patient of those intimate feelings which were originally repressed.

There is another psychological basis for descriptions of the demons in the incantation literature. According to the so-called 'white bear' theory of modern psychology, trying to repress thought actually creates it.[10] If people are told not to conjure up white bears, they invariably do so, with the result that the repressed thought vanishes temporarily, but then re-emerges more vividly. The proposed solution to this syndrome is similar to what we might expect from our incantations: to repress an idea or a thought, one needs to create an image of the thing that one is trying to repress. From the perspective of Mesopotamian incantations, such an approach sounds eminently reasonable. Consider the following descriptions from *Utukkū Lemnūtu*:

> They circle the high, broad roofs like waves,
> and constantly cross over from house to house,
> but they are the ones which no door can hold back, nor any lock can turn away.
> They slip through the doorway like a snake,
> and blow through the door-hinge like the wind.
> They turn the wife away from the husband's lap,
> make the son get up from his father's knee,
> and oust the groom from his father-in-law's house.
> They are the sleep and stupor which follow behind a man.[11]

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and kill his father; cf. Thorkild Jacobsen, SANE 2/3 (1984), 99–120, and W.G. Lambert and P. Walcot, *Kadmos* 4 (1966), 64ff. The Akkadian myth, however, is not as clearly presented as the Oedipus story, nor are the psychological dimensions of the Ḫarab myth clear.

[9] UḪ 8: 10–13.

[10] D.M. Wegner, *White bears and other unwanted thoughts* (New York, 1989).

[11] UḪ 5: 11–19.

This description of the demons has many features worth noting, including the fear of demons moving around in public, going from house to house, but at the same time slipping into the house like a snake or invisibly like the wind. The demonic penetration into the house brings about two undesirable results. First, we note the interruption of normal sexuality, by driving the wife from her husband's lap and the groom from the wedding house.[12] Second, the demons bring sleep and stupor upon a man. There is little reason to assume that depression was unrecognized in Mesopotamia, since depression is one of the most common categories of known psychological disorders. The general descriptions of the various demons as a 'storm' which darkens everything or as a cloud which covers the man like a garment may well represent the fear of demons as representations of depression. One cannot, of course, point to any one demon and say, 'this is the depression-demon', since the attributes of the demons are insufficiently distinct to assign specific malevolencies to each. The significant point here is that the descriptions of the demons actually describe the interruption of normal intimate family life, as well as depression, which are precisely the types of situations which would produce states of anxiety.

In his celebrated article in the *Landsberger Festschrift*, James Kinnier Wilson wrote about delusion, psychoses, and schizophrenia in Babylonian medical and incantation sources.[13] Although laudable as a first attempt at presenting the case for a psychological interpretation of Mesopotamian texts, the clinical labels used by Kinnier Wilson are far too specific to be applicable. Nevertheless, Kinnier Wilson made the convincing point that Egalkurra incantations were intended to treat the neurotic patient who is overwhelmed by fear and hatred of his enemies at court, but that the enemies referred to in Egalkurra may only have existed in the patient's psyche. In other words, Egalkurra is treating a mild form of paranoia. These incantations were not necessarily composed for someone who actually faced intrigues at court – a Mesopotamian Richelieu – but were more likely used for the ordinary individual within the great paternalistic bureaucracy who imagined rivals and competitors. Yet how could reciting such incantations possibly solve his problem? From where would the incantation derive the power over rivals? A Freudian approach might suggest that Egalkurra incantations represented a type of 'defence mechanism', in which an individual projects onto others his own repressed feelings, so that his hatred of his colleagues is described as the hatred of his colleagues towards himself. The appeal to the patient of the Egalkurra incantation does not necessarily reside, therefore, in a magical vanquishing of a potential enemy, but rather in the fact that the patient feels better because his repressed anxieties and hatred against his colleagues are described as their jealousy and hatred of him. This defence mechanism is commonly known as 'projection'; it attributes to others unacceptable feelings which are actually one's own. Such defence mechanisms occur in contexts in which social aggression is not acceptable, so that the Egalkurra incantations may have actually assisted the patient in sublimating his original feelings of alienation.

[12] The reference to the son being driven from his father's knee looks perfectly straightforward until one recalls that the word 'knee' in Akkadian is used as a euphemism for penis (cf. *CAD* B 257).
[13] 'An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry', AS 16, 289–298.

This may sound far-fetched, and perhaps it is. But there is no reason to assume that the Mesopotamians had an entirely unique psychological make-up. Fear is commonplace, and it can constitute fear of the unknown as well as fear of something which actually takes place, such as a thunderstorm or an enemy camped outside the city. In fact, fear of the unknown, fear of the dark, or fear of criminal assault often exceeds the actual dangers of reality, so that it is the fear itself which becomes the clinical problem.

We can detect another type of anxiety in Mesopotamia which deals with sex and sexuality. Freud, of course, focused on sex as the central mechanism for explaining many key psychological traits. His theories have been hotly disputed, and often discredited as stemming from a repressive Victorian society, but something useful can still be gained from them for the interpretation of Mesopotamian incantations. Freud's position was that males necessarily repress the desire to have sex with their mothers or other incestuous relationships, and much of such repression is necessarily unconscious rather than conscious.

Demonic sexuality in Mesopotamia takes various forms, and the sexiest Mesopotamian demon is, of course, the *ardat lilî*, the maiden ghost who is frustrated by never having had normal sexual relations. She is described thusly,

> the maiden is like a woman who never had intercourse,
> like a woman who was never deflowered,
> one who never experienced sex in her husband's lap,
> one who never peeled off her clothes in her husband's lap,
> one for whom no nice-looking lad ever loosened her garment-clasp.[14]

The maiden ghost returns to have sex with a human subject. It is quite normal for men to fantasize about having sex at night with a strange woman, and the experience of the fantasy is certainly pleasurable. However, the nightly visitation of the *ardat lilî* was something to fear, since Ishtar herself is often identified with this pure maiden ghost; sex or marriage with Ishtar was considered to be not just dangerous but actually lethal, which is why Gilgamesh avoided it, to his cost. What is the fear here? Later Jewish magic was also afraid of nocturnal emissions, since demons could presumably be spawned from such events.[15] A Freudian interpretation would suggest that fear of copulation with a demon represents the unconscious repression of the desire for illicit sex, perhaps an incestuous relationship, or simply with the goddess herself as the symbol of illicit sex. Without belabouring the point, it seems clear from both *Utukkū Lemnūtu* and from *Ardat Lilî* incantations that the young girl is a virgin who had previously never had sex, which might well invoke the repressed desire of a man to have illicit intercourse with a daughter or young sister or some liason otherwise forbidden. It is that very repression of the desire which is projected onto the demon in the incantation, namely that she wishes to have intercourse with the patient. The ritual then displaces the object of repressed desire when the statue or image of the *ardat lilî* is married to a male ghost, in order to deflect her attentions away from her human victim.

The role of sex in Mesopotamian incantations is also evident in rituals and incanta-

[14] Cf. *AfO* 35 (1988), 14.

[15] Cf. J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (New York, 1974), 51f. Late amulets were written against the *qeri'*, 'nocturnal emission'.

tions to help a man get or maintain an erection by having a woman rub his member with oils, while making salacious comments comparing the man to various priapic animals. What is most surprising is that no one has yet considered these incantations from a psycho-sexual perspective, although the incantations directed at the man's inability to achieve an erection are hardly culture-specific. Here then is an example, from Šaziga:

> Wild ass, wild ass, wild bull, wild bull! Who has made you limp like loose ropes, who has blocked your passage like a street, who has poured cold water on your heart (i.e. penis)? Who has caused depression in your mind, and sleepiness ...? The three womenfolk of Nanaya... .[16]

Or another incantation in which the impotent man claims, 'I am the one against whom a spell has been done, and figurines of me have been laid in the ground'. One does not have to be particularly Freudian to grasp the point that it may be performance anxiety which caused the impotence, and in some cases the Šaziga incantations may have been effective in being able to deal with the anxiety. This is the defence mechanism known as 'displacement', which in this case redirects the cause of the anxiety onto a witch. Externalizing the problem in the form of a witch can potentially allow a patient to control that which is beyond control, namely his own fear. This question of treating witches as the ultimate cause of human problems is relevant to the entire witchcraft corpus, which employs a different cast of characters than do other *āšipūtu* incantations, although the mechanisms may be similar: it is the patient's anxieties which are projected upon imaginary agents which are called witches.[17] Witchcraft thus represents uncontrollable fear or neurosis, in this case stemming from purely imaginary threats.

An alternative case of repression may actually present itself in the form of Walter Farber's Baby Incantations.[18] There are actually two distinct types of incantations among the so-called Baby Incantations, which do not comprise a single corpus or genre.[19] One type of incantation focuses on the causes of the baby's crying, such as Lamaštu or an epilepsy-like illness, in which case the baby is the victim. In the other and older type of Baby Incantation, the baby's crying is actually the demonic problem, tantamount to the demon itself; it is the baby's howling which will disturb the gods, and must be stilled through the incantation. Farber never posed the question as to how magic is supposed to help either the baby or the parents, but any armchair psychoanalyst would see the point immediately. It is often the case that a parent may feel angry and hostile towards a child, and particularly a crying child, and at the same time feel intense guilt and anxiety for the repressed feelings which are triggered by the baby's crying. The Baby Incantations offer a reasonable solution, by allowing the parents to express their hostility in a harmless way through an incantation, rather than indulging in a more physical form of dealing with the problem, such as striking the child. Here again, magic could have been effective as a type of defence mechanism in which the protective parents, while actually harbouring

[16] R.D. Biggs, TCS 3, 19–20 (No. 3: 19–24), and 28:1. Cf. also G. Leick, *Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London and New York, 1994), 201–210.

[17] T. Abusch, 'The Demonic Image of the Witch in Babylonian Literature', in *Religion, Science, and Magic*, ed. J. Neusner et al., (New York, 1989), 27–58. The predominance of the female witches may further suggest a sexual threat, which is not specifically spelled out.

[18] W. Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!* (Winona Lake, 1989).

[19] See the review of Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, in *AfO* 36/37 (1989/90), 132–34.

feelings of hostility towards the baby, are able to express hostility in a constructive way.

There are other kinds of psychological problems which might be cast as demons, and this is certainly true of the more extreme cases of phobia. It is remarkable that the subject of the so-called early non-canonical incantations is frequently scorpions, and even more often snakes.[20] In these incantations there is scant reference to demons, since the snake itself is the object of fear, and in one case we even find a long list of different types of snakes.[21] It may at first seem obvious why such incantations were used, since poisonous snakes would have been an obvious threat. Nevertheless, within the course of human experience down to the third millennium, it was probably clear that snake-bite could not be cured by magic, and one must therefore look elsewhere for the popularity of these texts. In modern Western psychological thought, the snake itself represents the most common manifestation of phobia: at first one might fear the snake in the grass, then perhaps in the city itself, and finally within the house. In extreme cases, the fear of snakes may be completely debilitating in preventing the patient from normal functioning; he begins to fear the snake in the toilet or bath, or coming out of holes in the house (which is of course another sexual image). It is, thus, the *fear* of the snake rather than the snake itself, that becomes the problem. *Utukkū Lemnūtu* incantations likewise refer to the snake 'that coils up in the human womb', corresponding to the 'womb-snake' (Sum. muš-šà-tur), which certainly has the appearance of a phobia.[22] The demons in *Utukkū Lemnūtu* are frequently compared to serpents that crawl under the door of the house[23], and the many names of snakes in the lexical lists are graphic.[24]

The point is that an incantation is effective, not against snake-bite or prevention of snakes, but against the fear of snakes. The recognition of the phobia and the projection of the phobia by identifying the snake exactly may have been psychologically therapeutic for the patient, because it deals with the patient's fear rather than any supposed reality. For this reason, this type of snake incantation became popular in early periods, since such phobias are easy to detect. Later the same methods of dealing with anxieties were incorporated into more sophisticated and complex types of incantations.

There is much more to say about this approach to Mesopotamian incantations. Incantations may have actually been effective to a certain extent by defining or repressing fears. Some of these repressed fears are idiosyncratic and peculiar to a single individual, while other forms of repressed fears are general and may even have been universal in Mesopotamian society, such as fear of death, or incest taboos. Freud himself might agree with the proposition that the incantations are designed to help counter the patient's fear which is represented by the demons, but not the demons themselves. So, in effect, there is no magic in magic. The incantations provide the defence mechanisms which are specific to Mesopotamian culture against various forms of anxiety, repression, and neurosis.

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[20] S. Shaked (oral communication) points out that spells in later Cairo Genizah texts are often aimed against scorpions, but not against snakes. A closer parallel with earlier Mesopotamian incantations might be suggested by the fear of impotence which is commonplace in Genizah incantations.

[21] J. van Dijk, VAS 17, No. 1.

[22] UḪ 16:187.

[23] UḪ 4:74; UḪ 5:14; UḪ 6:20 and 172; UḪ 16:8.

[24] MSL VIII/2, 6–10.

Psychosomatic Suffering in Ancient Mesopotamia

Marten Stol

To a Babylonian, illness was not just a corporeal disorder. It had been inflicted upon him by supernatural forces. This terrifying thought brought him into an apprehensive state of mind, and we should not be surprised if this spiritual suffering brought about its own symptoms – 'psychosomatic', in modern terminology.[1] One who has been seized by a spirit of the dead suffers from diseases 'plutôt du secteur que nous appellérions neurologique ou psychopathologique, affectant plus immédiatement "les nerfs" ou "l'esprit" que les organes, et le comportement que la physiologie'.[2] To the Hittites, the symptoms of a bewitched person are largely psychosomatic, most prominently, fears.[3] In this contribution, we will show that in Babylonia sorcery could have similar effects. By way of parenthesis, we remark that sorcery also can result in purely physical symptoms. In the Diagnostic Handbook, the affliction called 'Hand of Man' (sorcery) has its effects only in the digestive tract.

It has been suggested that the Babylonians were aware of the categories of modern psychiatry, the handbook *Maqlû* being directed against psychoses, and *Šurpu* against neuroses.[4] This position has been criticized.[5]

Symptoms of Impotence

We will begin with an example from medical practice, sexual impotence, moving from its somatic to its psychosomatic symptoms. Impotence can be caused by gods or by men

[1] Cf. M. Stol, 'Psychosomatisch lijden in het oude Mesopotamië', in: H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, *Pijn en balsem, troost en smart. Pijnbeleving en pijnbestrijding in de Oudheid* (Rotterdam, 1994), 23–32. – The Babylonians were aware of psychosomatic symptoms due to natural factors; a letter to Esarhaddon ends as follows: 'Good advice is to be heeded: restlessness (*ka-[ru-u ī]k-ki*), not eating and drinking disturbs the mind (*ṭēma uššaša*) and adds to (?) illness (*murṣu u-rad*)' (*ABL* 5 rev. 14–18; we follow S. Parpola, *LAS*, no 143; SAA X, no. 196). The symptoms are the consequence of three days of fasting; thus K. Deller, AOAT 1 (1969), 54 f.

[2] J. Bottéro, *ZA* 73 (1983), 164–7; citation from p. 166. Cf. J.C. Pangas, 'La 'mano de un espectro'. Una enfermedad de la Antigua Mesopotamia', *AulOr* 7 (1989), 215–233 (primarily psycho-pathological complaints; also abdominal disorders). Complete survey by J. Scurlock, *Magical means of dealing with ghosts in ancient Mesopotamia* (Diss. Chicago, 1988), 19–26.

[3] V. Haas, 'Magie und Zauberei. B', *RLA* 7/3–4 (1988), 234–255; specifically 241, par. 6. Also paralysis, impotence, miscarriage or even death can be caused by sorcery. And for more physical ailments (eyes; cough), see A. Ünal, 'The role of magic in the ancient Anatolian religions according to the cuneiform texts from Bogazköy - Hattuša', in: T. Mikasa, *Essays on Anatolian studies in the second millennium B.C.* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 52–85; specifically 71, sub I, 'Human suffering'.

[4] J.V. Kinnier Wilson, 'An introduction to Babylonian psychiatry', in: *Studies Benno Landsberger* (= AS 16) (1965), 289–298. For the handbooks, see 294a and 296a.

[5] W. Farber, *BID* (1977), 39; T. Abusch, *JCS* 37 (1985), 95; J. Bottéro, *ZA* 73 (1983), 166; J.C. Pangas, *AulOr* 7 (1989), 225f., 232 f.

and in an actual case the expert is first expected to establish the exact cause. The ritual is as follows:[6]

> You mix together dough made of emmer-wheat and potter's clay; you make figurines of a man and a woman, put them one upon the other, and place them at the (sick) man's head, then recite [the incantation] seven times. You remove them and [put them n]ear a pig. If the pig approaches, (it means) *Hand of Ištar*; (if) the pig does not approach [the figurines], (it means) that *Sorcery* has seized that man.

So the expert stages a scene in which the behaviour of the pig determines the nature/origin of the disease. Here, the behaviour of an animal interprets the present situation (diagnosis); it could also predict the future, as the Babylonian handbook *Šumma ālu* shows (prognosis). The first conclusion, 'Hand of Ištar', means that the goddess of love is the cause of impotence. She is more than once associated with sexual problems.[7] The other conclusion is 'Sorcery', a human activity often named 'Hand of Man'. After these two conclusions, the handbook of the conjurer continues with prescriptions against Sorcery: 'If a man is bewitched, he has stiffness, his knees are ...' (etc.).[8] A better preserved description of impotence ends in diagnosing the precise method of sorcery that had been used by the witch: 'the semen of that man has been laid with a corpse'. We translate:[9]

> If a man is bewitched, his flesh is 'poured down', he has stiffness (*mungu*), his knees are bent (?), he desires a woman and he sees a woman but his 'heart returns': the semen of that man has been laid with a corpse.

This text says that by drinking a potion of crushed plants in wine he will be healed. Another text on impotence gives prescriptions in column I for impotence caused by sorcery, in column II for impotence caused by 'the wrath of Marduk and Ištar'. Here, again, the depositing of a man's semen with a dead body is given as the cause of impotence (I 13, 25). This text concentrates on one apotropaic therapy, the preparation of leather bags to be hung around the neck.[10] From another text we learn that impotence can have its origin in 'Hand of a Ghost' as well.[11]

More serious is the case of divine abandonment, in that the symptoms are more than impotence alone. The man looks like a sick man; he has problems in communicating with others; he has involuntary emissions:[12]

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[6] *KAR* 70:6–10, with R.D. Biggs, *Sà.zi.ga* (= TCS 2) (1967), 46. Dupl. *SBTU* I 9:5–7 (not seen by the editor).
[7] M. Stol, *JEOL* 32 (1991–92), 45, with notes 17 and 18.
[8] *KAR* 70:11–14, with Biggs, *op. cit.*, 53; M.-L. Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien* (Copenhagen, 1987), 55–57, 'Impotenz'.
[9] Biggs, *op. cit.*, 69:9-1-2; dupl. *BAM* 3 205: 7–10, with variants in *SBTU* I 9:19–21. See Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose*, 55 (with note 133).
[10] *STT* 2 280, with Biggs, *op. cit.*, 66–68.
[11] *AMT* 76,1:6.
[12] *BAM* 3 319 Vs. with dupl.; see W. Farber, *BID* (1977), 227, 236, Hauptritual B:1–14.

> If the limbs of a man are 'poured out' as in a sick man, [...] the joints of his feet are loose, he speaks but does not have success, his potence has been taken away, his belly is bad, when urinating or spontaneously his semen 'falls' as if he were cohabiting with a woman: that man is not clean, the god and goddess have turned away from him, his speaking finds no acceptance (with people).

The text explains that a particular technique of sorcery has been used against this man: 'machinations have been practised against him in front of Ištar and Tammuz; figurines representing him have been laid in a grave'. The wording 'in front of Ištar and Tammuz' is unique in a description like this; performing black magic before them may be the cause of the impotence and emissions. All this is worse than in the previous cases where the symptoms were relatively innocuous and potions were sufficient to heal him. Here, the patient is

> to be released by magical means (*paṭāru*) and to be saved (*eṭēru*) from the Hand of Murder, to be reconciled with the god and man; in order to release (DUḪ) the wrath of god and goddess, and to undo (*pašāru* Š) the machinations (*ipšū*) that a woman has performed against him.

We learn that the god and goddess are angry; these are his personal gods rather than Ištar and Tammuz. It is surprising that a woman is the witch. The ritual prescribes that figurines of a male and a female person, both 'witches', are made.[13] Can we think that they are the patient's wife and her lover, and that they are planning murder?

The effects of the ailment are more than physical alone: the gods are angered and the people the patient talks to do not listen. We are now in the realm of 'psychosomatic medicine'.

We learn from these texts that the ultimate cause of impotence can be witchcraft. The witch has succeeded in provoking the wrath of the gods against the patient. She indeed is able to make a man 'hated' by his god and goddess (*zenû* D).[14] They do not accept his prayers. By sorcery he can be induced to speak lies and curses; as a consequence, he is cursed by them.[15] That the sorceress was able to alienate the victim's personal gods from him and make him lose his social stature, is implied by two lines at the beginning of *Maqlû*.[16] She has acted like an accuser, a *diabolos*, and her calumny has convinced the gods.[17] One of the effects is that the patient has difficulties in answering; his 'mouth is seized', other texts say. This is why we find more than once as symptom 'the wrath of his god and his goddess is upon him', and as purpose of the ritual: 'to reconcile his god and his goddess with him, to find and seize the sorceries practised, all of them, to save

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[13] *BID*, 236:29, 238:17′.

[14] W.G. Lambert, *AfO* 18 (1957–58), 293:68. Cf. Abusch, *JCS* 37 (1985), 93 note 16.

[15] *SBTU* II 112, no. 22 IV 15–16, (15) *šumma amēlu ana ilišu u ištarišu sarrāti u arrātu idabbub kišpī epšūšu* (16) *itti ilišu u ištarišu šuzzur*. Cf. *BAM* 3 316 II 9–10, *ilu u ištaru* (10) *ittišu zenû kišpī epšūšu itti ili u ištari šuzzur*.

[16] *Maqlû* I 6–7, with T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature* (Atlanta, 1987), 101.

[17] Note that one text deals both with witchcraft and slander; UET 6/2 410. O.R. Gurney, *Iraq* 22 (1960), 224 has not seen that line 28 ends in 'That man is bewitched (*ka-šip*)'. Read DIŠ NA É.GAL-*šú* [so] *i-ta-dar a-na da-ba-bi* ŠÀ-*šú* NU ÍL-*šú* ⌜NA.BI *k*⌝*a-šip*.

that man and to spare him, to remove those sorceries from his body'.[18] Our conclusion is that this way the wrath of the god(dess) and sorcery can go together. One therapy indeed aims both at removing the sorcery and reconciling the god: 'That man is bewitched; figurines of him have been made and laid in the lap of a dead man. In order to undo the sorceries, save his life (?), reconcile him with the angered god – in order to heal him (...)'.[19] Other texts show that first sorcery and later divine wrath is combated.[20]

We now return to the man against whom machinations had been practised in front of Ištar and Tammuz and wish to say something on the therapy it prescribes. The god Pētû ('Nedu'), gate-keeper of the Nether World, is invoked to declare the patient released and clean, by returning the figurines from the grave after the performance of some rituals. It is said of the patient that 'He is saved, he is freed ([*eṭ*]*ir zaku*), Šamaš is the judge'. It ends by promising good relations with god and man, and no more sorcery. '[If, like] before, he becomes afraid (*šaḫātu*), he should set up an offering table for his god and his goddess; that deity will hear his prayer'.[21] We note with much interest that fear is here the first emotion leading to the actualisation of all kinds of disasters. However, the verb used here (*šaḫātu*) is different from that of the symptoms of fear to be studied below (*adāru*).

Revealing is the section that follows: 'On the day that his semen will drip (?) (*ṣarāru*), he shall drink iron from a mace in beer (and) he will be clean (*elēlu*)'. So one symptom, the emissions, 'dripping', is singled out. Although the patient may be totally cleansed, this particular symptom is liable to return and a simple therapy will now suffice. A similar simple therapy for 'dripping' is found in medical texts.[22] Below, we will meet with another man in fear (*adāru*) suffering from 'dripping' semen, due to divine wrath.[23]

Dejection and Rejection

We will now leave sexual problems and study a text where the effects of sorcery and divine wrath are all-encompassing: the man is thrown into a bottomless pit where he feels isolated from God and man. The diagnosis is: 'Hand of Man' (= sorcery); the wrath of the god Marduk chases him'.These are the symptoms:

> If a man acquired an enemy (*bēl lemutti*) (and) his accuser (*bēl dabābi*) surrounded him with hatred, unjustice, murder, aphasia, works of evil – he is rejected by king, patrician and prince. He is constantly brought into fear, he feels bad day and night, he suffers constant (financial) losses, they calumniate him, his words are being changed,

[18] *LKA* 154:8–10, dupl. 157 I 20–23; [*ana*] DINGIR-*šú* ^{d}XV-*šú ittišu sulluni* [*ana*] *ipšûšu saḫārimma ana kališunu ṣabāti ana* NA.BI *ana eṭērišu u gamālišu ana kišpī šunūti ina* SU-*šú nasāḫi*. For joins and duplicates of this ritual, see Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature* (Atlanta, 1987), 120.

[19] *BAM* 5 438:13–16; (15) *ana kiš-pi* BÚR ZI-*šú* KAR *it-ti* DINGIR *kam-li su-lu-me* (16) *ana* TI-*šú*.

[20] *LKA* 154:1–6, followed by 7–10; dupl. 157 I 1–15 and 17–23. In *STT* 2 280 columns I and II (impotence; see above).

[21] *BID*, 244:80–83.

[22] S. Dunham, *ZA* 75 (1985), 254 sub 23.

[23] *SBTU* II 109, no. 22 I 20 f.; below, note 28, MS. *E*. – Note 'to fall' (ŠUB-*su*) in the symptoms, 'to drip' (*ṣarāru*) in the therapy (*BID* 227:6, 233:84).

> his profits stop, he is not welcome in the palace, his dreams are confused (= without explanation), he sees in his dreams dead people, an evil finger is pointing at him behind him, an evil eye chases him all the time, he fears the verdict because (?) the extispicy expert and the dream interpreter do not provide him with a verdict or decision (= forecast on his future).[24]

The ritual promises that the patient will be 'reconciled with god, king and patrician' and that he will 'be made to stand above his accuser' (= the sorcerer). Again, the sorcerer who succeeds in arousing the wrath of the god effectuates the spiritual and social isolation of the patient. It will not surprise us that another text adds mental disorders to the list of ailments caused by witchcraft.[25] Another text yet tells us that a witch can give you 'her bad disease, the seizure by an Oath'.[26] There is one long standard passage where all evils caused by witches are summed up: 'They put to me love, hatred, injustice, murder, aphasia, ... (KA.GÌR.RA), appeasing anger, dizziness, returning from the river ordeal, entering the Palace, fall of the mind, madness, Hand of the Goddess (Ištar), Hand of the God, Hand of the Ghost, Hand of Man, Hand of an Oath, Spirit of Evil, Provider of Evil'.[27] It surprises me that we find in this list positive manifestations like 'love', 'entering the Palace'. Furthermore, Hand of Man, as sorcery, seems to be the cause of all this; but why was sorcery incorporated into the list under the name 'Hand of Man'?

Fear and Concomitant Symptoms

We will now concentrate on the fears of the patient.

A number of symptom descriptions *begin* with the remark 'If a man is constantly brought into fear' (*ginâ šūdur*). After this first 'symptom', a long list of serious problems or terrible ailments follows. The text translated above (*SBTU* II 110, no. 22 II 8–16) is a good example: financial losses, calumniations, rejection by authorities, confused dreams, evil eye. Another version of this 'standard list' is attested in several contexts; T. Abusch gives an analysis of it elsewhere in this volume. The list runs as follows:

> If a man is constantly brought into fear, he feels bad day and night, he suffers continuing (financial) losses, his profits have stopped, they calumniate him, his interlocutor does not speak the truth, a finger of evil is stretched out at him, in the Palace his presence is not welcome, his dreams are confused, in his dream he always sees dead people, he is beset with melancholy.

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[24] *SBTU* II 110, no. 22 II 8–16.

[25] *BAM* 3 214 III 12–13, DÍM.MA KÚR-*e u ši-ni-it ṭé-mi*. See T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 62 note 83. This 'change of mind' is 'madness', as its cognate in Syriac proves; C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 789f.

[26] BRM 4 18:6; *ušaṣbitanni* GIG-*su lem-nu-šá ṣi-bit ma-mit*. Cf. T. Abusch in: J. Neusner, *Religion, science and magic* (New York, 1989), 36f.

[27] W.G. Lambert, *AfO* 18 (1957–58), 289f., lines 11–15; dupl. *SBTU* II 95, no. 19:25–30. Cf. T. Abusch in *Studies W.L. Moran* (Atlanta, 1990), 33 note 60.

The diagnosis is: 'The wrath of god and goddess is upon him; god and goddess are angry with him'.[28] The five manuscripts (A-E) continue in various ways but they all express the hope that (through the ritual) an oracular decision will be given and that its verdict over the patient will be favourable.

Manuscripts A, B, and E, after having established the wrath of the gods as the cause, add: 'sorcery has been practized against him, he has been made cursed (*nazāru* Š) by god and goddess'. The two other manuscripts do not have this reference to sorcery (they speak of divine wrath only) and we observe that the symptoms and the therapy remain the same in all manuscripts. The therapy in A (sorcery) is almost identical with that of C (no sorcery). But there is a difference: B and E (both sorcery) recommend that leather bags are to be hung around the neck of the patient and the last line is: 'The sorceries (...) shall not come near to him'. The bags are an apotropaic measure for the future.

Another section in manuscript E has a different arrangement (II 8 ff.). Here, the symptoms 'If a man is constantly brought into fear' (etc.) are preceded by an introduction which puts the 'fear' into perspective.[29] The text opens by describing the following situation, as introduction: 'If a man has acquired an enemy (*bēl lemutti*), his accuser is surrounding him with hatred, injustice, murder, aphasia, evildoings; he is dismissed before god, king, patrician and prince'. Only now begins the description of symptoms: 'He is brought into constant fear, he feels bad day and night, he suffers continuing (financial) losses' (etc.). I have the impression that his fear has been caused by the situation described at the beginning: he knows that he is surrounded by enemies and rejected by the authorities.

This beginning has several points in common with another one that starts like this (*STT* 2 256):[30]

> If a man has acquired an enemy (*bēl lemutti*), his heart has been brought into fear, with [...], he always forgets his (own) words – otherwise: he co[nverses] (?) with himself – his heart is 'low', he has made himself apprehensive, his heart ponders foolish things, he is shivering when lying (in bed) – otherwise: he is apprehensive.

The symptoms that now follow are confused or bad dreams, social rejection, economic losses.

Again, we may say that the man is fully aware of the existence of his 'enemy' and this is enough to provoke the first symptoms, all attesting to a crisis of the mind. The very first symptom is 'fear'. The text continues with dreams, social isolation, losses. Social alienation indeed is what this 'enemy' provokes.[31]

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[28] Texts: *A. BAM* 3 316 II 5–10 (only here 'presence', *uzuzzu*, in the Palace; 'wrath' = *šib-sat*), *B. BAM* 3 315 III 1–7 (with K. Deller apud U. Magen, *Assyrische Königsdarstellungen* (Mainz a.d. Rhein, 1986), 103a no. 25, disregarding the parallel texts), *C. STT* 1 95:130–134 ('wrath' = DIB = *kimiltu*), *D.* M.J. Geller, *AfO* 35 (1988), 21f., BM 64174:1–5, *E. SBTU* II 110, no. 22 I 39. As to *E*, note that this line ('ditto') summarizes I 16–19, 21f. where we find this insertion: 'The dream that he saw he does not 'keep' (remember), in his dream (he is) like one who cohabits with a woman but his semen drips (?)' (I 20f.); for further argumentation on this point see n. 48 in Abusch's study in this volume.

[29] *SBTU* II 110 no. 22 II 8–16. – The parallel for the first lines as quoted by E. von Weiher in his commentary, *AMT* 87/1, is now *BAM* 5 434 VI 1–4.

[30] *STT* 2 256, with T. Abusch, *JCS* 37 (1985), 96–98; *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 51–53 note 69; 103 note.

[31] Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 101ff.

The last symptoms in manuscript E are 'The evil eye pursues him, he is always afraid of the verdict' (II 14). This phrase is unique. The verdict is the oracular decision. In the other texts this decision is simply desired in a neutral phrase (as in 'in order to decide his verdict and to clear his case', *ana purussêšu parāsimma dīnšu ana šutēšurim*). Here, the man already has the feeling that the oracle will forecast doom. This is fear without hope.

The diagnosis in E is: 'The Hand of Man and the wrath (*kimiltu*) of Marduk are pursuing that man'. Here, again, we observe the combination of sorcery and divine anger.

We have seen that manuscript E has several points in common with *STT* 2 256; we will now say more on the latter. The diagnosis is elaborate:

> Hand of Man [has ...] that man; [figurines representing him] have been laid down in a ..., they have been inserted in a hole of a wall on the North side; he has been made to eat [sorceries] in breads, made to drink (them) in beer and wine.

The last section of the ritual provides instructions to make figurines of a male and female witch and to burn them in hot bitumen.[32] In the last line the ritual promises 'they will speak true words with him' (T. Abusch: They will say 'So be it' to him). This means that it promises social acceptance and we infer that all other problems (mental disorder, losses) will disappear at the same time. Our conclusion is that they are secondary, 'psychosomatic' side-effects of the social isolation caused by the 'enemy'.

We can show that they are also secondary in another text where the first and main problem are confused dreams. This text opens by saying that the wrath of god and goddess is upon a man and decribes his alienation from palace and king.[33] Then follows the line: 'He has been affected with fears' (*tādirāti ultadar/dir*). As in the two other texts (manuscript E and *STT* 2 256), this fear seems to be the consequence of the foregoing and the text now continues by describing a range of 'symptoms' of social expulsion, confused dreams and bad omina. Here, no human actor is visible as 'enemy' and the ritual copies incantations from a handbook for acquiring good dreams. Indeed, the closing rubric says that the ritual is for this purpose: 'You shall pronounce this three times, you shall lay down and you will see a good dream'. So the ritual focusses upon only one symptom (confused dreams) and takes care of that. Note that this symptom is solely due to the gods, not to sorcery. We assume that the other, 'secondary', problems will now disappear as well; that is what the last lines of the list of symptoms had promised: 'In order to make Palace and king feel good and reconciled, in order to chase away his evil'. Now that the gods give the man good dreams, he has regained the possibility to know and do their will.

Fear as Initial Symptom

We will now concentrate on the concept 'fear'.

A Babylonian already had fears when his dreams were confused or if he did not get

[32] Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 142f.
[33] *STT* 2 247 with E. Reiner, *JNES* 26 (1967), 190; dupl. *BAM* 3 316 II 26 ff.

a clear oracle; these were signs that the gods had left him: they even did not bother to reveal to him their opinion on his future – be it good or bad. Unexpected deaths were a sign of 'the foot of evil' entering the house and panic was the first reaction (*palāḫu, parādu*).[34] A related text gives 'Curse and Oath' as the cause of the 'foot of evil'.[35] In this text and in those studied above, the first symptom is 'he is constantly afraid (*ginâ adir*)', or 'he has been brought into fear constantly (*ginâ šūdur*)' ('he is very much afraid' is another acceptable translation). Fear is the first reaction. We have seen that elsewhere sorcery and/or divine wrath were the cause. Eight amulet stones helped to ward off this symptom of constant fear.[36] One passage is more explicit on the causes of fear: amulet stones are to be used

> If a man is constantly afraid, worries day and night: in order that 'Any Evil' (*mimma lemnu*) not approach that man, there be no bad sign (*ittu*) to the man or his house, evil plans (*kipdu*) not reach that man.[37]

The first is a supernatural power, the second a bad omen, the third witchcraft. The man is frightened by all three. Etymologically related are the two words meaning 'fear', *adirtu* and *tādirtu*. The latter word is mostly attested in the plural, in the phrase 'he has been brought into fears' / 'he has a fear'. *Tādirtu* is one among many other symptoms, and not singled out as conspicuous.[38] We suggest that in literary Standard Babylonian *tādirtu* stands for single moment(s) of fear and *adirtu* for a continuous state of fear.

Most important is the word *adirtu*. An Old Babylonian omen says, 'The man – his fears will reach him'.[39] In a later omen the behaviour of a snake means that 'His fears will not come near to him'.[40] Clearly, 'fears' is here a well defined symptom. Two magico-medical texts state that the purpose of the ritual is 'To undo the wrath of the god and goddess so that (*-ma*) his fears do not reach him, and to remove these illnesses from his body'.[41]

(1) In his introduction to the first of the two texts, Farber said that the man when learning of the angered gods already gets his 'fears' which threaten to 'reach' (*kašādu*), that is overwhelm him. They are 'Befürchtungen, Vorahnungen, ganz ohne Zweifel psychopathische Zustände wie bei Delusionen und Verfolgungswahn'.[42] Further on, he

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[34] F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian protective spirits. The ritual texts* (Groningen, 1992), 91–96. Panic in I 15 (p. 6) and 302 (p. 20). In an Old Bab. omen 'fears' (*adirātum*) follow 'foot of evil'; see note 39, end.

[35] *KAR* 74:7, with Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 93.

[36] *BAM* 4 372 II 17, dupl. 373 II 5, 8 NA_4.MEŠ DIŠ NA *gi-na-a a-dir*. Similar prescriptions in *STT* 2 281 I 25, II 31. Cf. *LKA* 9 I 17, [N]A_4 *i-dir-tim gi-lit-ti*. Note that there were also herbs and amulet stones against the fears named *gilittu* and *pirittu*; some examples are *BAM* 4 379 III 3, 8 (Ú *gilitti*), 344:15 f. (NA_4 *gilitti*), UET 7 121 II 6 f. (NA_4 *piritti gilitti*).

[37] *BAM* 3 316 V 4–6.

[38] *BAM* 3 316 II 28 (*ta-di-ra-tu ul-ta-dir*), *STT* 2 247:4 (E. Reiner, *JNES* 26 (1967), 190); *BAM* 3 231:4 (*ta-dir-tú* TUKU), dupl. 232:8 (*ta*-DAR-*ta* TUKU); *AMT* 71,1:7 (with E. Ebeling, *ZA* 51 (1955), 167).

[39] J. Nougayrol, *RA* 65 (1971), 73:36, LÚ *a-di-ra-tu-su* SÁ-*šu*. Another Old Bab. reference is YOS 10 20:17: 'Foot of Evil, fears, the sick man will die'. First the Foot of Evil, then the fears because of it. (*CAD* A/1 127 was wrong in listing this ref. under *adirtu* A, 2.b; followed by Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 94: 'calamities').

[40] *KAR* 386:2, [... *a*]-*di-ra-tu-šú* NU TE.MEŠ-*šú*.

[41] *BID*, 56, 64:13.

[42] *BID*, 39–40.

seems to say that all the illnesses summed up in lines 1–12 are still *potential* dangers for the patient; he just fears that they will befall him. Here lies a problem in that this explanation is against the simple text: the illnesses are there, even in the patient's body. Let me make another suggestion. Let us identify the 'Hands' and the other clearly defined ailments in lines 1–4 with those to be 'removed from his body' (13), and the symptoms of lines 6–12 with his 'fears'. They reflect abnormal behaviour, psychosomatic, and 'fear' would characterise most of them. These symptoms are, in Farber's translation:

> seine Ohren dröhnen, er hat Verstörungsanfälle (*ḫīp libbi* = melancholy), das Wort, das er spricht, vergisst er, redet immer mit sich selbst vor sich hin, ...-t, ist wankelmütig, kann sich zu nichts entschliessen (*ṭēmšu ul ṣabit*), ändert dauernd seine Absicht (*qabû u enû šakinšu*), ihn entstehen immer und überall Einbussen (*ṣītu*), nachts überkommt ihn Schrecken (*pulḫu*), den ganzen Tag lastendes Schweigen, zu Haus erwartet ihn Unfriede, auf der Strasse Streit, dem, der ihn trifft, fällt er zu Last, er steht unter dem Fluch aus dem Mund vieler Leute, einer Göttin (oder Ištar?) gegenüber gibt er sich mit gemeinen Gedanken (*nullātu*) ab.

(2) We have only one more text where the formula on being 'reached' by fears occurs again (not discussed by Farber). This second text is concerned with a non-medical problem which is to be resolved by applying the classical medico-magical methods. It is about a man who loses all property that he has (his cattle and slaves die, etc.), he is rejected by people and becomes depressed. Economic losses (*ṣītu*, etc.) are the principal theme of a few more 'medical' texts; its cause seems to be a broken oath (*māmītu*) ('Hand of the Oath') which activates the curses going with an oath.[43] The direct cause is here the wrath of his personal gods provoked by various Hands and sins of his family. One is reminded of the sufferings of the rich landlord Job. The purpose of the ritual is 'To undo (it) so that (*-ma*) his fears do not reach him'.[44] It is possible that here, again, the 'fears' reflect the symptoms listed after the losses, starting with 'melancholy' (lines 4–9):

> 'He always gets melancholy, speaking but not acceptance, shouting but no answer, the cursing in the mouths of people is much, he is apprehensive when lying (in his bed), he contracts lameness, ... his body, towards god and king he is full of anger, his limbs are 'poured out', he is panicking from time to time, he does not sleep day and night, he always sees confused dreams, he contracts lameness all the time, he has little interest in food or beer, he forgets the word that he has spoken.[45]

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[43] Economic disaster and Oath: *BAM* 3 234 (our text; ritual against Oath, line 33; also in the pertinent ritual *STT* 2 254 obv. (!) 24, 36 ff.); *AMT* 71, 1 with E. Ebeling, *ZA*, 51 (1955), 167–179 (the word Oath is not certain; lines 12, rev. 5); *SBTU* II 130 no. 25 with W. Farber, *WO* 18 (1987), 40 (a rodent, *aburriṣānu* [thus line 3!] has burrowed in a dike leading to flooding; causes: sorcery and Oath. For lines 1–3, cf. *BAM* 3 244:41–43). 'Disaster' is *miḫru*; *BAM* 3 234:1; *SBTU* III 116 no. 84:17, 20.

[44] *BAM* 3 234, with E.K. Ritter and J.V. Kinnier Wilson, 'Prescription for an Anxiety State: A Study of *BAM* 234', *AnSt* 30 (1980), 23–30. Line 12: *ana* DUḪ *-ri-ri*[sic]*-ma a-di-ra-te-šú la ka-šá-d*[*i-šú*]. – Note that *STT* 2 254 obv. (!) is the ritual; E. Reiner, *JNES* 26 (1967), 192. I would explain [..B]AD.BAD-*tú* in line 23 as *im-da-na-tú*, in *BAM* 3 234:4.

[45] The text has some scribal errors. In the edition we can correct this: end of line 5, *i-zi-ir* (!)-*tú* KA UN.MEŠ ḪI.A.M[EŠ] (= *ma'dat*) (Farber, *BID*, 76 ad 11).

I have the impression that the symptom 'his fears reach (the patient)' is Old Babylonian and that the phrase was abandoned by later scribal tradition. It was replaced by the introductory line 'If an man is constantly afraid / brought into fear'. The symptoms following this line would be the illustrations of the fearful state.

Nothing but Fear

Most feared was witchcraft aimed at murdering a person; it was named 'Cutting the throat / Cutting off life'. The victim is aware of what is going on because he sees some of the acts of black magic being performed.[46] Undoubtedly he is afraid and we may assume that more than one symptom is conditioned by the patient's fear of being murdered; they are mental, then. We give the text:[47]

> If a man's skull h[urts him all the time], he is dizzy, his limbs are always 'poured out', he gets sadness (*ašuštu*), his 'mouth is troubled' (KA-*šú ittanadlaḫ* [LÚ.LÙ-*aḫ*]), his 'heart is low' (= he is depressed) (*libbašu šapil*), 'his breath is short' (= he is restless) (*ik-ka-šú ku-ri*), he gets fever, stiffness, ..., fear (NE *munga li'ba tādirtu*), his chest and his upper back hurt him all the time, he sweats (?) (I[R Š]UB-*su*), his hands and his feet hurt him all the time, his groins become displaced (*šapulāšu* BAL.B[AL]-*šú*), he is slow (*muq*) to get up, stand and speak, his neck muscles hurt him all the time, he is often cold, when lying down (in bed) his saliva flows, he turns over and over and is in anxiety and sadness (*ittablakkat uštānaḫ ittanaššaš*), he opens his mouth time and again (but) all the time he forgets the speaking (*qibītu*) of his mouth (= how to speak?), his dreams are many but he does not remember the dreams that he saw, he always sees dead people (in his dreams?), he talks with himself (*itti libbīšu*), his inside chokes and he vomits [gall (?)], the 'limbs of his flesh' 'beat him' (*maḫāṣu*) and give him a stinging pain (*zaqātu*), [...] turns red and ..[...], his *nipqu*s are close, he says 'Woe', he cries 'Ah', his appetite for bread and beer has diminished: That man is bewitched, water of Murder for him has been broken.[48]

That abnormal mental behaviour was identified as a separate category of symptoms of a sick patient is clear from other texts. They are prayers. In a prayer to Šamaš: melancholy, fear, shivering (in the middle of physical complaints); the cause is sorcery.[49] In another prayer to Šamaš the sorcerer has caused a general weakening of the patient's body (including impotence) and three lines on fears and depressions follow (*Bīt rimki* II).[50]

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[46] M.-L. Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien* (Copenhagen, 1987), 40–47, with S.M. Maul, *WO* 19 (1988), 167f.

[47] *BAM* 3 231:1–15. Dutch translation by M. Stol in: Horstmanshoff (see note 1), 27. Not discussed by Thomsen. A similar description is 232:1–20; here, the victim had been given bewitched food and was anointed with a bewitched salve, figurines of him had been laid with a dead man and given over to pursuing ghosts.

[48] Obscure. Also in (a) *SBTU* II 95 no. 19:4, *lu-u* A(!).MEŠ ZI.KU$_5$.RU.DA-*šú ḫe-pu-ú ana* IGI x [...]. The *ina* A.MEŠ of the edition is not certain; see the copy; (b) W.G. Lambert, *AfO* 18 (1957–58), 292:45. Manuscripts: *C* (Lambert, Tafel XII), [..] KI A.MEŠ Z[I].K[U$_5$.R]U.D[A ...]; *B* (Langdon, PBS X/2 no. 18 obv. 44), MIN KI ⌜A⌝.[MEŠ ZI].KU$_5$.RU.DA *a* x *an šá* x [...], *D* (Lambert, Tafel XIII), [.....] *ru*.

[49] *LKA* 155:21–23; [*ḫū*]*ṣ ḫīp libbi gilitti* [...] *ḫurbašu artanaššû u atanamda*[*ru*]. The prayer is Šamaš 67 in W. Mayer, *UFBG* (1976), 418.

[50] *Bīt rimki* II; see ed. J. Laessøe (Copenhagen, 1955), 39:25–27; new mss. *STT* 1 76 and 77; M.-J. Seux,

A text opens with an elaborate description of physical symptoms (A) caused by sorcery (*KAR* 80).[51] Then follows a (first) prayer to Šamaš. The situation of the patient is described in terms completely different from the physical symptoms (B): it is here a general weakening (including impotence), social estrangement and various fears.[52] They are stock-phrases used in prayers. The next step is that in a ritual before Šamaš the witches are burned *in effigie*. The text concludes with a second prayer to Šamaš where physical problems (C) are ascribed to eating bewitched food and bewitched ointments; it is a standard list.[53] These physical problems (C) are not identical with those at the beginning (A) but may cover them in more general terms.[54] Having described this cause, the prayer continues with a picture of the patient as a pitiable human being who has lost all attractiveness (D).[55] So we see that the whole text gives four different descriptions of the patient (A – D).

What interests us most of the four are those in the first prayer to Šamaš (B): fears and alienation, strongly reminding us of the list in *Bīt rimki* II. These are psychosomatic symptoms (in a large sense) whereas the second prayer to Šamaš lists the physical problems (C). We have many such lists of physical problems in prayers. We note with interest that impotence is named both among the psychosomatic *and* physical symptoms (*nīš libbiya iṣbatū*, *KAR* 80 rev. 6, 28).

Social Death

We have seen that the symptoms in medical texts are not exclusively physical. Several complaints and modes of behaviour have a psychosomatic origin; we tried to relate them to the 'fears' of the patient. A third group of symptoms testify to alienation from gods, authorities and fellow men.[56] A fourth category is that of suffering financial losses. We have studied only the second group but wish to conclude by making some general remarks on all four groups.

'Isolation' is what unites them all. In objective terms: illness is already a sign of divine abandonment, the patient's community knows this and distances itself from him,

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Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie (= LAPO 8) (Paris, 1976), 390; *ṣaltu puḫpuḫḫû nissatu adīru ḫattu pirittu arratu gilittu tēšû diliptu qūlu kūru nissatu*.

[51] (A) *KAR* 80:1–5, 'If a man's skull is seized all the time, he is dizzy, his nostrils hurt him, he throws his spittle, he always forgets his words, his belly is bloated, his arms are paralysed and become lame from time to time, his feet sting, his ankles become loose from time to time' (descending from head to toe!).

[52] (B) *KAR* 80 rev. 1–10; Seux 399. Seux: 'M'ont [.....] ..., ont fait [contre moi] la 'suffocation' (*zikurrudû*, Murder), ont irrité contre moi [dieu, roi, nota]ble et prince, m'ont pr[is] ma puissance sexuelle, ont irrité [mon propre coeur contre mo]i, m'ont infligé querelle (*ṣaltu*), échauffourée (*puḫpuḫḫû*), affliction, [friss]on, douleurs internes (*ḫīpi libbi*, melancholy), troubles visuels (*ipītu*), verti[ge] (*ṭimītu*), [effroi], frayeur (*pirittu*), malédiction (*arratu*), insomnie (*diliptu*), mu[tisme, abattement] (*qú-l[a ku-ra]*), désagrément (*la ṭūb libbi*), malaise'.

[53] (C) *KAR* 80 rev. 26–29. 'You know them, I do not know them, (those) who stung me (in) my flesh, seized my temples, bound my muscles, 'poured out' my joints (?) (*piṭru*), made my arms lame, took away my potence, made my spittle dry up, poured stiffness (and) debility on my flesh'. Cf. Mayer, *UFBG*, 417, Šamaš 53; E. Ebeling, MVAG 23/1 (1918), 30.

[54] Two relations can be seen: 'He throws his spittle' (obv. 2) and 'They made my spittle dry up' (rev. 28); 'His arms are paralysed, they become lamed (*eṣēlu*) time and again' (obv. 4) and 'They made my arms lame' (rev. 28).

[55] (D) *KAR* 80 rev. 31–33. Gone are his *šidaḫ pāni, liptu, ḫasīsu, diglu, melammu*.

[56] T. Abusch, 'Dismissal by authorities: *šuškunu* and related matters', *JCS* 37 (1985), 91–100.

and his business cannot prosper in this environment. In subjective terms: his experience of physical deterioration takes away his strength, his awareness of divine wrath makes him desperate, the attitude of people drives him into a corner. And this is exactly the picture of the Sufferer that Babylonian 'wisdom literature' draws for us in stark images.[57] To name a lesser known composition: A woman who had been hit by a demon (á.zág) leading to lameness complains about only one thing: that her 'house' wants to see (?) her no more, that her acquaintances turn away from her, that she has no provider.[58] Illness is a stigma transposing a person into the realm of social death. Modern cultural anthropology knows this.[59] In the ancient Near East, a person was only happy if he was a respected member of society. Only the community guaranteed him a feeling of freedom and ease. What is outside must be integrated – the motive for hospitality – and if this does not happen, it is the enemy.[60] Biblical psalms and Babylonian prayers speak of the reviving of persons 'from death'. This is no belief in any resurrection but it refers to saving a person from the region of virtual death, physical and social.[61] Job and the Babylonian Sufferers are excellent examples of such isolated individuals.[62]

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[57] K. van der Toorn, 'The emblematic sufferer', in his *Sin and sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (Assen, 1985), 58–67. In his discussion of the symptoms in one of our 'medical' texts he points out that they are stock phrases taken from the literary texts. In his example the symptoms are only social and economic (p. 67; *BAM* 3 316 II 5–10 and dupls.). We remark that the physical *and* psychosomatic symptoms are not so standardized.

[58] Sumerian Letters, Coll. B:17, with W.H.Ph. Römer, TUAT II/5 (1989), 715–7.

[59] H.-P. Hasenfratz, 'Zum sozialen Tod in archaischen Gesellschaften', *Saeculum* 34 (1983), 126–137.

[60] O. Keel, *Feinde und Gottesleugner* (Stuttgart, 1969), 36–44. He goes on by saying that all that does not fit the community is 'projected' to the outside as the enemy (51–92). For the enemy in Israel, see E.S. Gerstenberger, *Der bittende Mensch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1980), 144–6.

[61] H. Hirsch, 'Den Toten zu beleben', *AfO* 22 (1968–69), 39–57; esp. 50b ('in the Nether World'), 54–57 ('in the grave').

[62] It is little known that the Babylonians also used amulet stones to regain esteem and happiness: stones for a 'good finger' (= good reputation), for profits and riches (*iš̆diḫu u ṭuḫ̆du*), for a protective spirit (*šēdu*), for joy / being greeted (*ḫidûtu*), for being heard and finding acceptance. *BAM* 4 376 IV 12 (fuller text in *STT* 2 271 III 4–5), 14, 18, 20, 23, 24.

Physician, Exorcist, Conjurer, Magician: A Tale of Two Healing Professionals

JoAnn Scurlock

One of the most vexing questions in the study of ancient Mesopotamian medicine is the problem of how to distinguish between the two healing specialists who shared the practice of healing, that is, between the *asû*, conventionally translated, as 'doctor/physician'[1] and the *āšipu*, usually characterized as an 'exorcist', 'conjurer', or 'magician'.[2] The most common solution to this problem is to see in the *asû* the representative of a putative 'medical' healing tradition which used 'rational' treatments, and which attributed diseases to 'natural' causes. The *āšipu*, by contrast, is linked with a putative 'magical' healing tradition which made exclusive use of rituals and prayers, and which attributed diseases to 'supernatural' causes.[3] Given that these two approaches to medicine are radically different (and theoretically mutually exclusive), it would be a simple enough matter to sort through the available medical materials and to separate out *asûtu* from *āšipūtu*, assuming that this understanding of the relationship between the two healing experts were correct.

It is, moreover, generally agreed that the 'diagnostic omens' collected in *TDP* were intended for the exclusive use of the *āšipu*,[4] whereas the prescriptions contained in the therapeutic texts (*AMT* and *BAM*) are generally considered to be a mix of *asûtu* and *ašipūtu* with the work of the *asû* predominating. Nonetheless, separating the 'magic' from the 'medicine' has proved anything but easy, as all those who have attempted it have discovered.

> S'il est parfois possible de dissocier les paragraphes et de restituer au médecin et au magicien ce que revient à chacun d'entre eux, d'autres fois la tâche s'avère

[1] See, for example, *CAD* A/2 344–347, 351–352; R.D. Biggs, 'Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia', in: *CANE* 3 (New York, 1995), 1911, 1913, 1918–1919; F. Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1896), 107; G. Contenau, *La médecine en Assyrie et en Babylonie* (Paris, 1938), 30–42; P. Herrero, *La thérapeutique mésopotamienne* (Paris, 1984), 22–31; R. Labat, 'Review of H.E. Sigerist: *A History of Medicine*', *JCS* 6 (1952), 129–133; R. Labat, *La médecine babylonienne* (Paris, 1953), 6–23; A.L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago, Rev. Edition 1977), 294; E. Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia* (Philadelphia, 1995), 47; E.K. Ritter, 'Magical-expert (= *āšipu*) and Physician (= *asû*): Notes on Two Complementary Professions in Babylonian Medicine', in: *FS Landsberger* (AS 16; Chicago, 1965), 299–321; M. Stol, 'Diagnosis and Therapy in Babylonian Medicine', *JEOL* 32 (1993), 42, 58-65.

[2] See, for example, *CAD* A/2 431–436; Biggs, in: *CANE* 3, 1911, 1913, 1919–1921; Contenau, *Médecine*, 43–45; Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, 247; Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 22–31; Labat, *JCS* 6, 129–133; Labat, *Médecine*, 6–23; Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 294; Reiner, *Astral Magic*, 47; Ritter, in: AS 16, 299–321; Stol, *JEOL* 32, 42–49, 58–65.

[3] See, for example, the exposition in Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 22–31; Labat, *Médecine*, 6–23; Labat, *JCS* 6, 129–133; Ritter, in: AS 16, 299–321; Stol, *JEOL* 32, 58–65.

[4] See, for example, Biggs, *CANE* 3, 1920; Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 30–31; A.L. Oppenheim, 'Man and Nature in Mesopotamian Civilization', in: *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (New York, 1978), 643; Idem, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 294; Reiner, *Astral Magic*, 47; Ritter, in: AS 16, 300–301; Stol, *JEOL* 32, 42. Ironically, the exception is the editor of *TDP*, R. Labat (Labat, *JCS* 6, 131; Labat, *Médecine*, 19–22; R. Labat, *Traité akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics médicaux* (Paris, 1951), xii–xlv).

> fort difficile du fait que certaines méthodes, voire la terminologie des préscriptions, semblent être identiques.[5]

What makes such separation particularly difficult is the fact that the healer who is meant to be following the instructions given in medical texts is usually designated simply as 'you' (when the writing system indicates the subject), leaving the reader to guess which specialist is meant in any given context.[6] Those who wish to see the *asû* as the main performer of the *AMT* and *BAM* texts are, therefore, forced to assume that the 'you' refers to the *asû* whenever what they consider to be a 'rational' treatment is mentioned and to the *āšipu* only in those cases when it is a question of some form of 'magical' procedure.[7]

Such assumptions seem to receive support from the odd text where a 'rational' treatment is being recommended and where the text states that 'you' are to do such and such after the *āšipu* has had no success in healing the patient.[8] Even better from this point of view is the following, where a shift in subject would seem to confirm the work of two different specialists:

> The *āšipu* should continually do what he knows (to do). (You) rub him with marrow from the fibula [of a ram]. (You) crush dried *maštakal*. (You) sift (it). You decoct

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[5] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 22. Compare: 'Si l'on veut étudier correctement la 'médicine' mésopotamienne, il importe donc de répartir judicieusement entre ces deux sciences les textes que nous possédons. Pour certains, la chose est aisée. Pour d'autres, la discrimination est plus difficile. C'est le cas notamment pour les recueils thérapeutiques néo-assyriens qui, étant des compilations, semblent parfois mêler les deux genres' (Labat, *JCS* 6, 130); 'The dichotomy that we established in order to make a clear and distinct separation between *āšipūtu* and *asûtu* holds for many texts; for others, however, in which the two streams converge, it proves to be an oversimplification' (Ritter, in: AS 16, 314). The reader is reminded that the Neo-Assyrian texts in question comprise the majority of the available material.

[6] Contra Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 49, 64 n. 10, 81, the a priori presumption is that the 'he' in medical texts (unless the healer is explicitly mentioned) refers to the patient. Neither is it the case, contra Ritter, in: AS 16, 315, 317, that the presence of a 'you' is, in and of itself, a mark of *asûtu*; there are any number of examples of purely 'magical' procedures in which the healer is instructed with a clearly written 'you'. See, for example, J.A. Scurlock, *Magico-Medical Means of Expelling Ancient Mesopotamian Ghosts* (forthcoming), nos. 4: 6 (= CT 23.15–22+ iii 38′); 8: 2, 3 (CT 23.15–22+ iii 18–19//*KAR* 234 r. 3–6); 10: 8–9 (=CT 23.15–22+ i 46–48//*KAR* 21: 13–17); 11: 5, 6 (=CT 23.15–22+ ii 5–6); 12: 3 (=CT 23.15–22+ ii 15); 14: 4, 5, 6 (=CT 23.15–22+ ii 34–36//*KAR* 234: 6–8//K 2781: 5–10); 15: 2, 4, 9 (=CT 23.15–22+ iii 2, 4, 9//*KAR* 234: 15, 17–18, 24); 17: 6, 8 (=*KAR* 21 r. 16–18); 90a: 6, 7 (=*BAM* 323: 94–95//*BAM* 228: 29–31/*BAM* 229: 22–24); 114: 10, 22, 23, 49–51 (=*LKA* 88: 10, 22, 23, r. 17–19//*LKA* 87: 11–12, r. 6, 7, r. 15–19//*LKA* 86 –, 11, 13, [ ]); 130: 3, 6, 18, 19, 20, 21 (=*KAR* 22: 3, 6, 18, 19, 20, 21); 215: 2, 3, 5 (=*LKA* 84: 2–3, 5); 216: 5, 6, 21 (*BAM* 323: 43–44, 59//Gray, *Šamaš* pl. 20: 8–10, [ ]); 217: 3, 6, 7, 14, 15 (=*KAR* 32: 3, 6, 7, 14, 15); 222: 8, 10, 38 (=*BAM* 323: 8, 10, 38); 224: 3, 4, 5, 7 (=*BAM* 323: 81, 82, 83, 85//Gray, Šamaš pl. 18: 7–13); 227: 2, 4, 8, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20 (=*BBR* 2 no. 52, 2, 4, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20).

[7] Thus, for example, Ritter, in: AS 16, 315–317 where the recitation of 'incantations' and the manufacture of amulets are assigned to the *āšipu*, whereas other procedures are presumed to be performed by the *asû*. Similarly, the healer mentioned in a number of MB letters is *assumed* (Ritter, in: AS 16, 317) to be an *asû* on the grounds that he offers 'rational' treatments. It is circular reasoning, then, to use these letters as proof that the *āšipu* offered no 'rational' treatment: 'In none of these communications is there evidence that *āšipūtu* was ever applied therapeutically' (318).

[8] 'If (you want to cure) a persistent attack of 'hand of ghost' which the *āšipu* is not able to remove, to remove it' (Scurlock, *Ghosts*, nos. 239: 1 [=*BAM* 9: 55]; 272: 1–2 [=*BAM* 469 r. 11–12], quoted in Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 22 and Ritter, in: AS 16, 315 [incorrectly, however, given as parallel texts]). Cf. also Scurlock, *Ghosts*, nos. 229: 1 (=*BAM* 312: 1); 235: 1 (=*BAM* 470: 24′); 284: 1 (=*BAM* 323: 75//*BAM* 471 iii 17–18//*BAM* 385 iv 4–5//*BAM* 221 iii 14′–15′//*BiOr* 39, 598f.: 4–5); 343: 1–2 (=*AMT* 95/1: 4′–5′).

> (it) in *kasû* juice. [(You) sprinkle ...] flour (on it). [(You) s]have [his head]. (You) bandage him (with it).[9]

Unfortunately, it is just as easy to find examples of cases where a 'rational' treatment is being recommended and where the text states that 'you' are to do such and such after the *asû* has failed to heal the patient.[10] Moreover, there are cases where an apparently dramatic shift in persons can hardly refer to a change in specialists.

> You plant three cedar shavings around (the figurine). (You) surround it with a magic circle. You put an unbaked fermenting vessel over it as a cover. Let Šamaš see the fermenting vessel by day; let the stars see it by night. For three days, (by) day, the *āšipu* ... (and) sets up a censer (burning) juniper before Šamaš; by night, (he) scatters emmer flour before the stars of the night. Before Šamaš and the stars, for three days, he repeatedly recites over it. ... (You) put it (the figurine) in a jar and then you administer an oath to it. ... You bury it (the pot) in an abandoned waste.[11]

I suspect that no one would care to assert that, in this case, the *asû* was intended to be performing the part of the ritual designated with the 'you'.

There is a tendency in the literature to quote the former set of examples as proof of the assertion that the 'you' of medical texts is generally the *asû*, while failing to appreciate the fact that the latter set could equally well have been used to prove the opposite, or at least that the presence of these 'dread counter-examples' casts serious doubt on the validity of the exercise. For those who remain unconvinced, however, it is rather disconcerting, to say the least, to have passages in which 'you' are to take over when the *āšipu* fails and in which 'you' are to move in when the *asû* fails quoted together, without comment or apparent embarrassment, as proof 'que le magicien n'intervient jamais après un échec du médicin, alors que ce dernier peut intervenir après un échec de son collègue'.[12]

Ignoring such problems might seem justified if the results which followed from the application of theoretical differences between *asû* and *āšipu* to the determination of who was meant by the 'you' produced consistent results. Unfortunately, it does not. If one vets the issue on the question of 'rational' treatments, one is soon forced to admit that 'natural' and 'supernatural' causes do not seem to be sorting out quite the way one had expected.[13] Conversely, if one vets the issue on 'natural' vs 'supernatural' causes or

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[9] Scurlock, *Ghosts*, no. 67: 1–3 (=*BAM* 482 iii 7–9), quoted in Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 22–23; Ritter, in: AS 16, 315, cf. 317.

[10] 'If after treatment by (lit. 'in the hands of') the ^{LÚ}A.ZU, he has a return of the illness ... you fumigate him' (*AMT* 101/3: 15, 16; cf. *AMT* 2/7: 4′). 'If the man's eyes have obstinate opaque spots which have not gone away after treatment by the ^{LÚ}A.ZU, but keep coming back on him ... (you) daub his eyes' (*BAM* 22: 12′, 15′).

[11] Scurlock, *Ghosts*, no. 222: 8–13, 36, 38 (=*BAM* 323: 8–13, 36, 38).

[12] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 22–23; cf. Ritter, in: AS 16, 315–317. This is cited also by Stol, *JEOL* 32, 59.

[13] Labat's solution to this problem is to define 'hand of ghost', 'hand of curse' and even witchcraft as 'natural' causes, when the treatment is 'rational' and as 'supernatural' causes when the treatment is 'magical': 'Nul recours à la religion, nulle allusion à une origine surnaturelle du mal ... Dans un seul passage ... il est fait allusion à la maladie dite *qât-mâmiti*. Mais cette appelation est toute empirique et désigne seulement un ensemble de troubles pathologiques. La même observation vaut pour la mention de UḪ$_4$.BÚRU.DA dans

in accordance with the presence or absence of incantations, one soon runs into trouble trying to keep all of the 'rational' treatments on the right side of the line.

Thus, Herrero makes the assertion that 'La différence entre les techniques curatives de l'*asû* et de l'*āšipu* découle directement de la compréhension qu'ils se faisaient de la nature de la maladie'.[14] If that were really so, it should be possible to make a better separation than 'Pour le second la maladie est un processus morbide déclenché le plus souvent par des forces surnaturelles *et parfois par des forces apparemment naturelles*' and 'le médecin ne voit dans la maladie qu'un processus pathologique, sans lui attibuer, *sauf quelques rares cas, une cause surnaturelle* (*qāt mamiti, qāt eṭemmi*)' (italics mine).[15] 'It is hardly a satisfactory result either that the *asû* 'a très rarement recours aux incantations'[16] when he should theoretically not be using any at all.[17]

Finally, Herrero argues:

> Cependant un certain nombre d'opérations accomplies incontestablement et avec fréquence par l'*āšipu* auraient pu l'être et en fait l'étaient aussi par le médecin. Ils appliquaient parfois des méthodes communes, notamment la fumigation non rituelle, les pansements et surtout les frictions et les massages.[18]

Since, under this system, individual prescriptions have typically been assigned to one or the other expert in accordance with whether the treatment consists of figurines, amulets and the like[19] *or* bandages, daubs, washes, etc.,[20] this admission is startling, to say the

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ABL 1370 ... car il ne faut pas oublier que si la 'délivrance des sortilèges' est justiciable de rites magiques, elle requiert parfois aussi des traitements purement médicaux' (Labat, *JCS* 6, 133 with n. 19, cf. 129–130).

[14] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 23.

[15] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 23–24, 38; cf. Ritter, in: AS 16, 305–306; Labat, *Médecine*, 14. Compare: 'The *āšipu* qua healer views disease as a particular expression of the wider beliefs that he holds, namely that a chain of events, initiated under the influence of 'supernatural' powers or forces, proceeds on a predetermined course to an outcome that can be predicted by the skillful reading of 'signs' ... The patient's symptoms indicate that he has become the victim of malignant influences ... in circumstances that for our present purpose we designate as 'natural' ' (Ritter, in: AS 16, 301).

[16] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 25; cf. Ritter, in: AS 16, 309, 311–312.

[17] Neither is it the case, contra Labat, *JCS* 6, 130, that although the *asû*'s 'traitements au moyen de plantes ou substances médicinales' may be found with the *āšipu*'s 'rites magiques et les incantations' (p. 129) attached in the so-called 'mixed texts', 'les principes et les applications des deux sciences ne sont jamais confondus à l'intérieur d'un même paragraphe' (cf. *Médecine*, 15–16, 17). In the first place, there are a number of texts (admittedly rare) as, for example, *BAM* 49: 18′, where right in the midst of an otherwise perfectly ordinary purgative enema, the healer is instructed to set up a censer burning juniper. Moreover, there is a tendency in 'hand of ghost' texts (which Labat, *JCS* 6, 129–130 was inclined to classify as 'medical' where 'rational' treatments were recommended) to cite the 'incantation' which was to be recited by incipit in the paragraph containing the dromena. See, for example, Scurlock, *Ghosts*, nos. 59: 6–7 (=*BAM* 3 iii 5–6//*BAM* 469: 42′//*BAM* 472: 6′–7′//*AMT* 33/3: 12//*AMT* 82/4: 7′//*RSO* 32.109ff. vi 6–8); 116: 4 (= *BAM* 216: 15′); 243: 3 (= *BAM* 216: 50′) (fumigations); 109: 3 (*BAM* 221 iii 13′/*BAM* 471 iii 16′/*BAM* 385 iv 2′–3′); 112: 4 (*BAM* 9: 45//*AMT* 102/1 i 5–6//*BAM* 483 ii 10′–11′//*BAM* 216: 40′// Jastrow, *Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* (1913), 365ff., r. 33); 113b: 6 (=*BAM* 216: 46′//Jastrow, *Transactions*, r. 38) (salves); 148: 2 (= *BAM* 503 i 21) (tampon); cf. 117: 5 (= *AMT* 9/1 iv 13′//*BAM* 482 iv 32′). Compare Scurlock, *Ghosts*, no. 176a: 4–7 (=*AMT* 97/1+: 4–7//*BAM* 471 iii 23′–24′//*BAM* 385 iv 17–19//*BAM* 221 iii 22′–24′) where one of the 'incantations' is quoted in full in the same paragraph with the instructions for the preparation of a salve.

[18] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 29.

[19] See Ritter, in: AS 16, 310–311; cf. 316.

[20] See Ritter, in: AS 16, 313–134.

least and it is hardly reassuring to be told 'mais les principes d'utilisation et le but recherché n'étaient pas le même'.[21]

Neither does it make any logical sense to say that the 'physician' 'établit ou il n'établit pas de diagnostic' or that '*sauf dans des cas exceptionnels* il ne renonce jamais au traitement et son pronostic, énoncé après le traitement, est toujours favorable'.[22] What the author is glossing over are two facts, both of which are fatal to the notion that the therapeutic texts are the work of a different medical tradition from the 'diagnostic omens'. These are, firstly, that *AMT* and *BAM* texts sometimes give diagnoses and, when they do, these diagnoses match exactly those given in *TDP* and, secondly, that in neither set of texts is the healing specialist allowed, let alone encouraged, to treat hopeless cases.[23]

Equally problematic is the assertion that, whereas *TDP* is a mere 'traité divinatoire',[24] the very language of the *Symptombeschreibungen* in the *AMT* and *BAM* texts mark them out as part of a separate 'medical' tradition.

> Il faut souligner que le verbe de la proposition énonçant les symptômes est au permansif ... ou bien à l'inaccompli (présent), contrairement aux protases des texts divinatoires. L'accompli sert exclusivement à rappeler les causes qui ont provoqué l'état pathologique ou à souligner un fait qui a précedé l'apparition des symptômes ... Dans les textes divinatoires le verbe de la protase est toujours à l'accompli (préterit) indiquant ainsi que les faits ou états décrits sont considérés comme terminés et donc irréversibles et qu'il ne reste donc plus au devin qu'à en tirer les conséquences omineuses. Dans les textes médicaux par contre, les symptômes ou états morbides sont décrits au présent parce que ce sont des processus non encore achevés dont le cours peut être changé grâce à un traitement adéquat. En cela donc la médecine apparaît comme une technique éminemment pratique.[25]

It is certainly true that the verbs in the protases of the first two tablets of *TDP* (which contain all of the sightings of serpents mating and other chance occurrences which are supposed to prognosticate good or ill for the *āšipu*'s patients) are, where written out, generally phrased in the preterite.[26] The verbs in the protases of the rest of the series, however (which contain all of the diagnoses and prognoses which are based on the actual observation of the patient) are, where written out, either stative or present tense, except under the conditions laid out by Herrero for the *AMT* and *BAM* texts. It follows not only that there is no justification, on these grounds, for separating the 'diagnostic

[21] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 29. Note also similar arguments on p. 47 for how it is that we find 'noxious' ingredients being used by the *asû*, when such 'Dreckapoteke' ought by rights to be a smoking gun for the interference of the *āšipu* (50; cf. Contenau, *Médecine*, 162) and on pp. 80–82 similar difficulties involving the practice of leaving out ingredients under the stars. For the latter procedure, see now Reiner, *Astral Magic*, 48–60.

[22] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 24–25. Compare: 'he may or may not make a diagnosis ... He does not make prognosis before treatment; with the rare exceptions noted (II A 2′–3′) he does not withdraw from treatment, since he makes no fatal forecasts' (Ritter, in: AS 16, 302, cf. 304–305, 306–307).

[23] On this point, see also Labat, *Médecine*, 16.

[24] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 30–31.

[25] Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 36.

[26] For a new edition of Tablet I of *TDP*, see A. George, 'Babylonian Texts from the Folios of Sidney Smith. Part Two: Prognostic and Diagnostic Omens Tablet I', *RA* 85 (1991), 137–167.

omens' from the therapeutic texts, but that, if the latter may be considered 'medical' on grammatical grounds alone, then the former (with the exception of the first two tablets) qualify as 'medical' as well.

Most troublesome, however, is the often overlooked fact that there is no need to guess as to which of the two experts was typically meant to be designated by the 'you'. This is for the simple reason that the colophons of the Aššur texts not infrequently give the profession of the person to whose library the text belonged and/or for whose 'specific performance' they were excerpted. This being the case, there is a perfect opportunity, grounded in purely internal evidence, to sort out the difference between *asû* and *āšipu*.

Unfortunately, E.K. Ritter, whom most scholars (including Herrero) use as a basic reference on the question of *asû* vs. *āšipu*, did not make appropriate use of these colophons. While claiming to use the 'somewhat more direct indications of the colophons to determine whether a given context is *āšipūtu* or *asûtu* or possibly both',[27] what she did, in fact, was to use such evidence only when it seemed to support her 'limited and highly artificial universe of discourse'.[28] When she wished to quote a particular *AMT* or *BAM* text as an example of *asûtu*, the fact that the text in question had a colophon indicating it to belong to the library of an *āšipu* was simply ignored.[29] It is incorrect to understand the *āšipu*s who appear in colophons as simply the scribes who copied the tablets.[30] The colophons in question do not describe the *āšipu* as the copyist, but as the owner. It is in any case hard to imagine why an *asû* would want to have his texts copied for him by an *āšipu*. If he was literate, he could copy them himself and if he was illiterate, then what good would a *written* copy do him?

Ritter's contention that the therapeutic texts are essentially *asûtu* with some 'intrusion' by *āšipūtu* is not, then, grounded in the colophons of the Aššur tablets. Instead, it rests on the evidence of *BAM* 574 iv 56–57, a tag of Assurbanipal's library, in which the text is described as including remedies (*bulṭū*) which belong to the *azugallutu* of Ninurta and Gula.[31] *Azugallūtu* is not, however, a learned synonym for *asûtu* as opposed to *āšipūtu* as this argument requires, but a global referent which is meant to include all aspects of the medical art taken as a whole.[32] This may readily be seen from the fact that the goddess Gula, to whom the epithet *azugallātu* is most commonly ascribed,[33] describes herself in a hymn as an *asû*, a *bārû*, and an *āšipu*.[34]

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[27] Ritter, in: AS 16, 300.

[28] Ritter, in: AS 16, 299.

[29] *BAM* 52 r. 58 is quoted in Ritter, in: AS 16, 306 under *asûtu*; on p. 303 n. 3, she quotes the colophon of *BAM* 52 which describes it as the tablet of Kiṣir-Nabû, the *āšipu*. On this point, see also O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur* (Uppsala, 1985), 58 n. 36.

[30] Ritter, in: AS 16, 303 n. 3. (Similarly with the rare reference to an *asû* in a colophon).

[31] Ritter, in: AS 16, 300.

[32] The reason for the confusion is, quite simply that the Sumerian ^{LÚ}A.ZU performed functions later divided off into separate specialties (i.e. he was a 'diviner' as well as a 'physician'; for references, see *PSD* A/1 205–208).

[33] For references, see *CAD* A/2 529 s.v. *azugallatu*.

[34] *Or* 36 (1967) 128: 183, cited *CAD* A/2 431b s.v. *āšipu* mng. a1′. Compare *ap-kal-lat ba-ra-at muš-ši-pa-at mu-us-sa-at ka-la-ma* (C.J. Mullo-Weir, 'Four Hymns to Gula', *JRAS* 1929, 15: 29). Note also that Ninisinna is referred both as A.ZU.GAL.KALAM.MA and as ŠIM.MÚ, an epithet which is equated lexically with *āšipu* (M. Geller, *Forerunners to UDUG-ḪUL* (FAOS 12; Stuttgart, 1985), 92–93; cf. *Šurpu* VII 71–72).

When used as they should be, the colophons have a very interesting tale to tell. Very few texts, in fact, provably belonged to *asûs*,[35] the most important exception being the so-called 'pharmakologisch-therapeutischen Handbuch', about which we shall have more to say presently.[36] Most unfortunate for current theory on the subject, however, is the fact that any number of texts containing exclusively what we would consider 'rational' treatments, and hence would be otherwise inclined to attribute to the *asû*, viz. bandages or other 'medical' procedures containing medicinal plants, apparently unaccompanied by incantations, and designed to cure ills ostensibly attributed to 'natural' causes such as headache,[37] provably belonged to the libraries of, or were 'excerpted for specific performance' by, known *āšipus*.[38] What is worse, a very interesting text which would otherwise appear to be 'exhibit A' for the existence of a separate medical tradition predicated on 'natural' causes, in which such provably demonic complaints as 'hand of god', 'hand of goddess' and 'hand of ghost' are said to be caused by the malfunctioning of internal organs such as the heart or stomach,[39] was, according to its colophon, also the property of an *āšipu*.[40]

This being the case, the a priori presumption is that *TDP* and the majority, at least, of the *AMT* and *BAM* texts belong to the same corpus, reflect the same understanding of the nature of disease, and were intended for the use of the same expert, namely the *āšipu*.[41] One might have guessed this already from the fact that, not only do the therapeutic texts contain any number of prescriptions which we would consider 'magical', sometimes directly intermixed with 'medical' ones,[42] but also, included among the rare places in the *AMT* and *BAM* texts where the prognosis is quoted in full, is one of the most obvious bits of *āšipūtu* in *TDP*, namely the assertion that ringing in the ears is an omen of 'profit'

[35] There is a MB text from Jena (*BAM* 394: 37); cf. K 8663 iv 4–5 (apud H. Hunger, *Assyrische und Babylonische Kolophone* (AOAT 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), no. 528). For the remaining examples, see below.

[36] One of these texts was, according to its colophon, the property of a junior *asû* (^{LÚ}A.ZU *a-ga-aš-gu-u*) by the name of Nabu-le'i (*BAM* 1 iv 27 = Hunger, *Kolophone*, no. 234); see also Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 17. Ritter, in: AS 16, 303 n. 3 would prefer to emend this text to read ^{LÚ}A.BA, 'scribe'.

[37] As, for example, *BAM* 33 r. 20; *BAM* 78: 18–19; *BAM* 81: 17′; *BAM* 99: 57; *BAM* 106 r. 9′–10′; *BAM* 121: 25–26; *BAM* 122 r. 24′; *BAM* 131 r. 11′; *BAM* 164: 36–37; *BAM* 177: 13–14; *BAM* 186: 33; *BAM* 188: 12; *BAM* 303: 25′–27′. Note also *BAM* 263 and its parallel VAT 18057 (edited in W. Farber and H. Freydank, "Zwei medizinische Texte aus Assur', *AoF* 5 (1977), 255–258) which record the receipt by a named *āšipu* of a series of medicinal plants destined for a salve to be used to treat a prince.

[38] Other texts with such colophons contain either purely 'magical' prescriptions or ostensibly 'medical' prescriptions, intermingled with more obviously 'magical' ones or purely 'medical' prescriptions designed to deal with illnesses with explicitly 'supernatural' causes. See, for example, *BAM* 9: 71; *BAM* 40 r. 20′; *BAM* 52: 103–04; *BAM* 68: 19–20; *BAM* 101: 13–14; *BAM* 102: 4–5; *BAM* 129: 26′–27′; *BAM* 147 r. 28′–29′; *BAM* 168: 82; *BAM* 178: 9′; *BAM* 191: 18–19; *BAM* 199: 15–16; *BAM* 201: 46′–47′; *BAM* 202 r. 14′; *BAM* 212: 49–50; *BAM* 214 iv 3′–5′; *BAM* 300: 6′–7′. On this point, see also Stol, *JEOL* 32, 49.

[39] *SBTU* 1 no. 43, 3–4, 14 (see F. Köcher, 'Spätbabylonische medizinische Texte aus Uruk', in: *Medizinische Diagnostik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (FS Heinz Goerke; Munich 1978), 24–25).

[40] *SBTU* 1 no. 43, 33–35 (see Köcher, in: FS Goerke, 24–25).

[41] With the exception of the attribution, I am thus in agreement with Labat, *JCS* 6, 131; Labat, *Médecine*, 19–22; Labat, *TDP*, xii–xlv.

[42] See, for example, *BAM* 323, which consists of two figurine prescriptions, followed by a salve, two amulets, another salve, another figurine, and a magic circle (Scurlock, *Ghosts*, nos. 222 [*BAM* 323: 1–38//Gray, *Šamaš* pl. 12: 2′–15′//*KAR* 74: 16–20], 216 [= *BAM* 323: 39–64//Gray, *Šamaš* pl. 20: 1-r. 5], 221 [=*BAM* 323: 65–68//*BAM* 471 ii 26′–29′//*BAM* 385 i 23′–26′], 219 [=*BAM* 323: 69//*BAM* 471 ii 29′–31′], 231 [=*BAM* 323: 70–74//*BAM* 471 ii 32′–34′], 284 [=*BAM* 323: 75–78// *BAM* 471 iii 17′–20′//*BAM* 385 iv 4–13//*BAM* 221 iii 14′–18′//*BiOr* 39, 598f.: 4–8], 224 [=*BAM* 323: 79–88//*BID* pl. 18: 1–13], 90a [=*BAM* 323: 89–107//*BAM* 228: 23–32//*BAM* 229: 17′–26′]). For other references, see above, n. 38.

or 'hard times' depending upon which ear is affected.[43]

This granted, the notion that there existed a separate etiology of disease based on 'natural' causes and falling under the purview of the *asû* is simply untenable.[44] It is, in any case, hardly imaginable that two professional specialties that genuinely differed to the extreme of attributing diseases exclusively to 'natural' or 'supernatural' causes and which allegedly utilized different procedures, and even a different market basket of materia medica, could have been on the same side of the law, let alone have not merely cooperated[45] but actually made a practice of borrowing each others' prescriptions as we know the *asû* and the *āšipu* to have done.[46] It is high time that the consistent 'failure' of the texts to show a clear separation between specialties which ought, according to our theory, to be trenchantly separated indeed, be taken, not as 'proof' of the inherent irrationality of ancient Mesopotamians, whose records we must 'distort' if we wish to render them 'intelligible'(!)[47] but of the incorrectness of our theory. If we cannot separate *asû* from *āšipu*, it is because we are looking for binary opposites where there are not any.

None of this is to say that the ancient Mesopotamians had nothing worthy of the name of medicine. On the contrary, as I have argued elsewhere, ancient Mesopotamian medicine, as practised by the *āšipu*, was fully rational, if by 'rational' one means not that it contained no 'magic', but that it generated treatments which worked and that were used because they had been observed to do so.[48] Our realization that the therapeutic texts

[43] DIŠ NA GEŠTU ZAG-*šú* GÙ.GÙ-*si me-si-ru* DIB-*su*: 'If a man's right ear continually rings, hard times will seize him' (*BAM* 155 ii 5′//*RSO* 32 109ff iii 10′; *BAM* 506: 8′; *TDP* 68: 10a). DIŠ NA GEŠTU GÙB-*šú* GÙ.GÙ-*si ne-me-lam* IGI: 'If a man's left ear rings, he will experience profit' (*BAM* 506: 10′; *TDP* 68: 10b). Compare: DIŠ SAL *qer-bi-sa re-ḫu-tam im-ḫur-ma* DUMU.NITA [Ù.TU] *gi-mil-li* [DINGIR]; DIŠ SAL *qer-bi-sa re-ḫu-tam im-ḫur-ma* NU Ù.TU *šib-sat* DINGIR NU DÙG-*ub* [ŠÀ] (*BAM* 240: 69′–70′). In the case of bad omens, the performance of the requisite NAM.BÚR.BI would certainly have been the duty of the *āšipu*. For other examples of such 'intrusions', see Stol, *JEOL* 32, 54–55.

[44] Cf. also, with different arguments, H. Avalos, *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East* (HSM 54; Atlanta, 1995), 142–167.

[45] 'Let him entrust an *āšipu* and an *asû* to me ... let them do [their] work [tog]ether' (*ABL* 1133 r. 11–13); [If] 'hand of ghost' seizes [a ma]n so that, (despite) either the performance of *asûtu* or of *āšipûtu* it stays continuously and can not be dispelled' (Scurlock, *Ghosts*, nos. 301: 1–2 [=*BAM* 221 ii 8′–9′//*AMT* 81/7: 11–2//*AMT* 97/6 i 1–2//*BAM* 155 i 9′–10′]; 313a: 1–2 [=*BAM* 52: 1–2//*BAM* 225 r. 3–6]; 341: 1–3 [=*AMT* 94/6: 1–3]). Compare *BAM* 190: 34–35; *BAM* 228: 14–18//*BAM* 229: 8′–12′.

[46] Note, for example: 'This lotion is from the hands of an *asû*' (*BAM* 228: 22//*BAM* 229: 16′). It has been suggested (S. Parpola, 'The Forlorn Scholar', in: *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner* (AOS 67; New Haven, 1987), 269–271; cf. Biggs, *CANE* 3, 1920) that an [...]-Gula *asû* who appears in the colophon of a Neo-Babylonian report on seasonal hours (E. Reiner, 'A Neo-Babylonian Report on Seasonal Hours', *AfO* 25 (1974–77), 50–55) from the time of Assurbanipal and an Urad-Gula, assistant to the *rab asî*, who appears as a witness to a slave sale (*ADD* 277=SAA 6 no. 193: 8′) from the time of Sennacherib are to be identified with the Urad-Gula known from letters to have been an *āšipu* in the court of Esarhaddon. If so, this would again show the close relationship of the two professions. It should be noted, however, that the slave sale is dated to 681 B.C., ten years earlier than the letters and that, not only is the astronomical text separated by another ten years from the letters (650 B.C.), but the original editor was not confident that the first part of the name was to be read Urad (Parpola, *FS Reiner*, 271 n. 8). 'Servant of Gula' may be a rare name among the population as a whole, but it is hardly likely to have been rare among families connnected in any way with medicine. It is, therefore, not entirely clear whether these references are to one, to two, or even to three separate persons.

[47] 'The hands of the twin powers of space and time threaten to seize us, so that we present here only a few twigs of the overabundant jungle of material ... Our superstructure in modern terms is a distortion inevitable for intellegibility; we are aware that such transposed approximations make distinctions where none exists and fail to discriminate those that do' (Ritter, in: AS 16, 302).

[48] Labat's insistence in his *La Médecine babylonienne* that there was, in ancient Mesopotamia, 'une science

were intended for the use of the *āšipu* means that it would have been his job, in addition to his more obviously 'magical' activities designed to expel evil influences, not only to diagnose but also to treat illnesses, as these were understood by ancient Mesopotamians, whether by means we would deem 'medical' or characterize as 'magical'. He was, therefore, the closest equivalent to our 'physician', and it is only because we do not share the Mesopotamians' theories of causation that we insist on dubbing him, even when we see him in a medical capacity, a 'magician' or 'conjurer'[49] or, perhaps more kindly, an 'exorcist'.[50] The fact that 'magic' was intermixed with the *āšipu*'s bandages hardly made the medicine work any less well; on the contrary, a bit of 'magic' (as, for example the modern physician's white coat) will increase the effectiveness of even the most active of specific remedies.

Associated in the practise of medicine with the *āšipu* were the *bārû* and the *asû*, for whose activities we need still to account. The 'diviner' presents no particular difficulty; since his specialty was prognostication,[51] one might expect him to overlap with the *āšipu* in this area of his practice.[52] Indeed, according to a Babylonian literary text, it was his duty, once the *āšipu* had 'made clear' (*ušāpi*) the nature of the illness (i.e. provided a diagnosis), to determine, if called upon to do so, how long it would be before the patient could expect to get well.[53] He seems also to have been able to warn either of his colleagues that any treatment of a particular patient was ill advised.[54]

There remains the problem of the *asû*. If he was not a 'physician', then what was he?

médicale indépendante de la magie' (p. 7) was based, as his own account makes clear, on his observation that 'rational' treatments were not only mentioned in the therapeutic texts (pp. 13–18), but also described as being administered in contemporary letters (pp. 7–11). He was also favorably impressed by the descriptions of symptoms given in the diagnostic series (pp. 19–22; cf. *TDP*, xii-xlv). Labat was quite right that there is ample evidence for scientific medicine in ancient Mesopotamia, indeed more than he realized since only part of the texts now available were known to him; where he erred, to my way of thinking, was in clinging to the notion that any healer who performs 'incantations' and 'magical rites' cannot possibly recognize diseases let alone dispense effective medicines.

[49] To 'conjure', according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is 'to call upon, constrain a devil or spirit to appear to do one's bidding by the invocation of some sacred name or the use of some sacred 'spell' ' or, according to *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second College Edition* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), 'to summon a demon, spirit, etc., by a magic spell'. Since the expert about whom we are speaking was not in the slightest interested in summoning a demon or 'constraining him to appear', but quite the contrary in getting rid of one who was already present, 'conjurer' is inappropriate and should really be dropped altogether.

[50] 'The former of the two [the *asû*] specialized in the 'empirical' treatment, using herbs and bandages and occasionally the scalpel, while the second [the *āšipu*] sought to exorcise the primary causes of the disorder ... Having a mind formed by our contemporary culture, we can hardly conceive of this difference otherwise than as an opposition between natural and supernatural ... 'natural' refers to causes that can be perceived by the senses, while 'supernatural' refers to causes hidden from direct sensorial perception' (K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (SSN 22; Assen, 1985), 69). Compare also: 'It was in accordance with this view that a sick man might be treated either by rational medicine (or possibly surgery) to reduce the symptoms, or by magical procedures ... to expel the supposed evil influence' (H.W.F. Saggs, *The Greatness That was Babylon* (New York, 1962), 434; cf. G. Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (Harmondsworth, 3rd ed. 1992), 367).

[51] For references, see *CAD* Q 249b s.v. *qību* mng. 4.

[52] See also Labat, *JCS* 6, 130–131; Stol, *JEOL* 32, 56–58; Avalos, *Illness*, 168.

[53] *Ludlul* II, 110, cited *CAD* A/2 432a s.v. *āšipu* mng. b.

[54] '(The omen) is not favourable for the performance of *asûtu*'; 'If you make a pronouncement about the performance of *asûtu* ... the *asû* should not lay hands on the patient'; '(The omen) is not favourable for the performance of *asûtu* or *āšipūtu*' (for references, see *CAD* E 204a s.v. *epēšu* mng. 2c; *CAD* A/2 351–352 s.v. *asûtu* mng. a2′). Compare passages in hemerologies where, on certain inauspicious days, the *bārû* is forbidden from making a prognosis and the *asû* from laying hands on the patient (see *CAD* B 123a s.v. *bārû* mng. a4′a′).

Whatever his profession, it clearly overlapped fairly dramatically with that of the *āšipu*, but in a way which made them compatible rather than conflicting specialists. We also know that the *asû*'s forte was neither prognosis nor diagnosis but lay somewhere at the treatment end of the medicine business. These facts given, the only obvious possibility is to see in the relationship between the *asû* and the *āšipu* an analogy to that between the European pharmacist and physician.[55] This is naturally suggested by the fact that the only sub-group of texts in the medical corpus which provably were owned or used by *asû*'s are those belonging to the so-called 'pharmakologisch-therapeutischen Handbuch' (texts listing plants in accordance with the illness they could be used to treat and the manner of preparation).[56] It fits, moreover, perfectly with the fact that, not only is this a sensible division of labor still followed today, but both Hippocratic and later Arabic medicine also make a clear distinction between these two complementary professions.[57]

This understanding of the distinction between the two ancient Mesopotamian healing specialists would make perfect sense out of what we know of the division of labour between them as reflected in explicit references to the *asû* acting alone.[58] Like the European pharmacist, the *asû* compounded drugs which were observed to have practical value in relieving the complaints of patients. He also knew how to set bones, bandage wounds, lance boils, and stop nosebleeds, none of which require a particularly sophisticated knowledge of medicine. It would also have been his responsibility to recognize medicinal plants, to know where they grew, when best to gather them, and how to store and prepare them.[59] The *asû* did not, however, diagnose complex illnesses; the extensive diagnostic literature that we possess indisputably formed part of the repertory of the *āšipu*.[60] If the *asû* was ever called upon to treat patients with illnesses requiring a diagnosis, then, he could only have done so with the cooperation, perhaps even the consent[61] of his colleague, the *āšipu*.

An interesting question to ask in this regard is whether the presence of a specialist (the *asû*) who could compound drugs for complex diseases, provided that they had been diagnosed for him by a colleague (the *āšipu*), may account for the otherwise puzzling fact that medical prescriptions, even leaving aside those formatted as incantations with accompanying ritual, still divide neatly into two types: those where the plant list and preparation instructions are preceded by a symptoms' list, and those which simply list the plants and the preparation instructions, with nothing more than a label ('so many plants for such and such problem') to indicate the purpose for which the prescription

[55] Perhaps this is a little unfair to the *asû*, since there are indications in the Hammurabi Code that he performed minor surgery in addition to his other duties (CH §§ 215–225).

[56] One of these texts was, according to its colophon, the property of a junior *asû* (^{LÚ}A.ZU *a-ga-aš-gu-u*) by the name of Nabu-le'i (*BAM* 1 iv 27); see also Herrero, *Thérapeutique mésopotamienne*, 17. Note also Ritter, in: AS 16, 316; D. Goltz, *Studien zur altorientalischen und griechischen Heilkunde* (Sudhoffs Archiv Beiheft 16; Wiesbaden, 1974), 12 n. 47; Geller, FAOS 12, 92–93; Avalos, *Illness*, 167.

[57] See J. M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin, 1985), 5–6.

[58] For references, see *CAD* A/2 344–347, 351–352. It should be noted that in a distressingly large number of cases, what is quoted as evidence for the *asû*'s activities in the literature is in fact based on texts in which he is not stated but merely assumed to have been at work.

[59] Note that one of our hemerologies was 'quickly exerpted' for the perusal, inter alia, of Rimut-ilāni, the junior *asû* (*STT* 301 vi 6′–7′, 12′, apud Hunger, *Kolophonen*, no. 382).

[60] For references, see above.

[61] Note: 'If a man is sick with *aḫḫazu* and his head, his face, his whole body and the base of his ton[gue are affected], the *asû* is not to lay his hands on that patient; that man will die; he will not [live]' (*BAM* 578 iv 45–46).

was intended. The former, to judge by the occasional presence of explicit diagnoses, were probably designed to be used by the *āšipu*; the latter, however, although obviously usable by an *āšipu*, would also have been particularly well suited for use by an *asû* to whom a patient had referred an *āšipu*'s diagnosis. In other words, such types of texts would make it possible for the *asû* to help the patient even if he were suffering from a complex ailment beyond the *asû*'s ken, provided that the patient arrived at the *asû*'s door armed with the knowledge of what disease he was suffering from. The *asû* here is not unlike a modern European pharmacist, who, although not qualified to diagnose patients with complex ailments, could still recommend a treatment for, say, arthritis, if called upon to do so.

It was the task of the *āšipu* to treat diseases, as these were understood by Mesopotamians – that is, he was responsible for dealing with the spirit whose irritation or malevolent activities were producing the observed symptoms presuming, of course, that the condition which he was attempting to treat was not known to be incurable. In some cases, buying off the spirit with offerings in the form of medicines was unproblematic, a generic Sumerian or 'Subarean' incantation and perhaps the odd 'special' ingredient being all that was really needed to ensure success. In others, more elaborate (and expensive) rituals involving the manipulation of figurines, the preparation of libations or other 'magical' procedures were appropriate. Whatever the patient's requirements, however, the *āšipu* is unlikely to have had time to acquire more than a basic working knowledge of the medicaments which he was attempting to use.[62] He was also a very busy man with a host of duties to perform and, although (unlike modern physicians) he was not too preoccupied to make house calls,[63] he was likely to have welcomed some assistance.

It is not hard, then, to understand why, except for minor problems with which the *asû* could deal by himself, and purely supernatural problems (such as impending doom) which were the exclusive field of the *āšipu*, these specialties were typically combined in the treatment of illness in ancient Mesopotamia, as, indeed, the professions of physician and pharmacist are still combined in the treatment of illness in our own day.

[62] According to a text from Aššur (*KAR* 44; see J. Bottéro, 'La littérature des questions divinatoires posées aux dieux', in: EPHE *Annuaire* 1974–1975, 95–142), he was responsible for learning *šammu šikinšu* and *abnu šikinšu* (r. 3), but alongside a multitude of other texts.

[63] The chance omens observed by the *āšipu* were considered to be medically significant only if they were seen when he was on his way to the patient's house (*TDP*, 2: 1; 6: 1). Compare also Geller, FAOS 12, 20: 4–11; 24: 74–86; cf. 93: 180–185 (recitations to protect the *āšipu* when he enters a patient's house in order to examine him).

II Surveys and Studies

Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God[1]

Tzvi Abusch

Introduction

This study is part of a larger set of studies which attempt to understand the relationship of Mesopotamian ideas about witches and witchcraft to other areas of belief and to uncover the socio-cultural significance of these relations. Here I take up the relationship of witchcraft and the anger of the gods.

At the outset, a word about method may be in order. It is my intention to approach the task of understanding and reconstruction less by means of overarching conceptual schemes and more by focussing on and prying open chinks in the armour of the system of magical thought and behaviour. I regularly make use of textual, literary, and conceptual clues that reveal logical and structural difficulties, difficulties that sometimes simply reflect inconsistencies in the material but often are indices of development and change. In fact, many incongruities and redundancies discernible in the body of *āšipūtu* as regards witchcraft beliefs and practices reflect historical developments and attest to changes. My approach is basically an internal, analytic one, an approach not wholly dissimilar from internal reconstruction used in such disciplines as linguistics and text criticism; I then combine the working assumptions or hypotheses that have been suggested by my critical study of the material with forms of analogical reasoning and generalization. In this manner, I try to reconstruct historical situations and developments. Such an approach is admittedly speculative but all the more necessary if we are to make sense of arcane aspects of an articulate but distant set of voices.

It may make my presentation a bit easier to follow if I begin by stating in broad terms a few of my present assumptions about the formation of Mesopotamian witchcraft literature, beliefs, and practices.

In the main, anti-witchcraft literature is now part of the corpus of the exorcist (and the herbalist). Originally, however, witchcraft and *āšipūtu* belonged to different social or cultural worlds; thus, witchcraft beliefs (the conception of the witch and her

[1] An earlier draft of this paper was written while I was a Fellow of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, during the academic year 1994–95. A short form focussing upon the texts and their development was read at the NIAS conference on Mesopotamian Magic in June, 1995, while an extemporaneous version of the whole was presented at one of the Wednesday night sessions of the NIAS research theme group 'Magic and Religion in the Ancient Near East'. I thank my colleagues in the group – Wim van Binsbergen, Mark Geller, Shaul Shaked, Karel van der Toorn, and Frans Wiggermann – for stimulating discussions, helpful advice, and good companionship. I also thank Diane Baum, Stephen A. Geller, and Kathryn Kravitz for comments on the final draft of this paper. I am deeply grateful to NIAS and its staff for the opportunity as well as for the wonderful working conditions that allowed me to think through and compose this study. I thank Brandeis University as well as Hebrew College, Boston, for leaves of absence and some support during my tenure as a NIAS Fellow.

An abbreviated statement of the thesis of this study appeared in 'Some Reflections on Mesopotamian Witchcraft', in: *Public and Private Religion in the Ancient Near East* (A. Berlin, ed.; Bethesda, 1996), 21–33.

activities) as well as the rituals performed and the incantations recited against the witch did not originate in the main stream of professional exorcism but, rather, in other more popular circles. It seems that early on, other professional groups – and even earlier, no professional group – dealt with the witch. For originally, the 'witch' manifested forms different from those of the unmitigated evil women of the standard handbooks of exorcism. In the popular early form to which I am alluding, the 'witch' was not of necessity an evil being. She took the form of both the 'white' and 'black' witch; she frequently performed useful and constructive acts, and thus there was often no need for anyone to fight against her.

Initially, then, the *āšipu*, a main-stream 'white magician', was probably not the primary person who fought against witchcraft. But at some point, perhaps in the early second millennium, witchcraft became a concern of the *āšipu*, perhaps because the female witch had changed her character but more likely because of the expanding role of the male *āšipu* as a result of the increasing centralization and stratification of state, temple, and economy.

A new function was now incorporated into *āšipūtu* or, at least, an older function was further developed. But regardless of whether anti-witchcraft activity was newly integrated into exorcism or whether the *āšipu* already possessed a rudimentary function in combatting primitive forms of witchcraft, the contact of witchcraft beliefs and practices with the exorcist's other functions now transformed the exorcist's approach to witchcraft as well as his approach to the phenomena associated with his other functions.

Here, I should acknowledge that when I first started studying witchcraft literature and trying to make sense of all appearances of witchcraft in Sumerian and Akkadian literature, I interpreted those instances where witchcraft terminology seemed out of place as examples of the intrusion of witchcraft beliefs into other bodies of literature and could only imagine a one-way process. But when I tried to place the process into a social context and to understand its dynamic, it became clear that the evidence could be better understood as the result not of a one-way process but of an interactive process involving mutual influence between witchcraft and these other bodies of literature. I have already pointed to some examples of this in my 'The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists'.[2]

Thus, as regards witchcraft beliefs and practices, there are many textual indices discernible in the body of *āšipūtu* that reflect historical developments and attest to changes subsequent to the incorporation of anti-witchcraft responsibilities and material into the duties of the exorcist or, at least, consequent upon the assimilation of anti-witchcraft materials to the other materials of his craft. Let us now turn, then, to our actual purpose here: *to discuss witchcraft and divine anger, with particular focus upon the conjunction and relationship of these two supernatural forces*. I wish to solve problems of both a textual and a conceptual nature that occur in texts that belong to the world of the *āšipu* and are occasioned by the interaction of the afore-mentioned two entities. Among other things, I shall demonstrate how an important therapeutic text-type evolved into its present form; I hope to provide thereby both a better understanding of

[2] In *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict* (J. Neusner, *et al.*, eds.; New York/Oxford, 1989), 27–58; see, especially, 44–50, where I note the imposition of demonic forms upon the witch.

this text-type as well as a way of understanding the development of other text-types that possess similar features and reveal similar processes at work in their formation.

But I take up the problem of witchcraft and divine anger here not only for its own sake or for the purpose of elucidating arcane texts. I undertake its study also for an additional reason. One of the best ways to reconstruct the social background of the development and increasing importance of witchcraft in Mesopotamia is to examine the relationship of witchcraft and the anger of the personal god. The conjunction of these two forces may then serve as a prism through which to observe the social and intellectual landscape. Thus, in addition to commenting on the relationship between witchcraft and divine anger, I shall also speculate about some dimensions of social/religious evolution that might explain the increasing importance of witchcraft. And if I here focus more upon the growth of witchcraft and its influence upon other forms of religious belief, let me emphasize that elsewhere I will isolate and explicate instances where the world of witchcraft is molded by conceptions and ceremonies deriving from other areas of religious thought.[3]

Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God

It is well-known that witchcraft serves the Mesopotamian as an explanation for misfortune. But there are also many other explanations for misfortune, and among the other causes of harm is 'anger of the personal god'. For example, *BAM* 234,[4] lines 1–10a, which begins by describing a patient's symptoms and misfortunes and then provides an aetiological diagnosis thereof:

> If a man has experienced something untoward and he does not know how it happened to him; he has continually suffered losses: losses of barley and silver, losses of male and female slaves, cattle, horses, and sheep; dogs, pigs, and servants dying off altogether; he has heart-break time and again; he constantly gives orders but no (one) complies, calls but no (one) answers; the curse of numerous people; when lying (in his bed) he is repeatedly apprehensive, he contracts paresis, he is filled with anger against god and king until his epileptic fit (?), his limbs are hanging down, from time to time he is apprehensive, he does not sleep day or night, he often sees terrifying dreams, he often gets paresis, his appetite for bread and beer is diminished, he forgets the word he spoke: that man has the wrath of the god and/or the goddess on him; his god and his goddess are angry with him.[5]

this is what scared of / baby screams

[3] See, e.g., my 'Considerations When Killing a Witch: Developments in Exorcistic Attitudes to Witchcraft', to appear in *General Magic and Jewish Magic* (I. Gruenwald and M. Idel, eds.; Groningen), where I argue that the treatment of the witch as a ghost to be dispatched to the netherworld is a secondary development and that witchcraft beliefs and rituals are reshaped in accordance with standard conceptions about the netherworld, burial, and ghosts.

[4] For an edition of this text, see E.K. Ritter and J.V. Kinnier Wilson, 'Prescription for an Anxiety State', *AnSt* 30 (1980), 23–30.

[5] This translation largely follows M. Stol, *Epilepsy in Babylonia* (CM 2; Groningen, 1993), 29; for line 1, I have followed *CAD* M/2, 59. In transcription, the diagnosis (lines 9b–10a) reads: *amēlu šū šibsāt ili u* ^{d}*ištari elišu ibašši ilšu* <*u*> ^{d}*ištaršu ittišu zenû*. (*ibašši* – written here GÁL-*ši* – is probably a mistake for *bašâ*, for which see the texts quoted later in this paper; the erroneous singular form may be due to a (con)fusion of *kimilti* and *šibsāt*.) For the remaining lines of this portion of the text (10b–12), see below, Excursus II.

Thus, in Mesopotamia, witchcraft and anger of god are treated as two different and independent causes of misfortune and may even represent two separate systems of thought, as we shall see below. In any case, many texts mention one and not the other as the cause of misfortune.

Occasionally, however, we are told that the witch may affect the personal god and goddess and cause this deity to distance itself from its human protégé or to grow angry with him.[6] Note, for example, the following passages from *Maqlû*:[7]

The witch saw me and came after me,
With her spittle, she cut off (commercial) traffic,
With her witchcraft, she cut off (my) trading,
She drove away my god and goddess from my person.
(III 13–16)

Bad luck hot sickness

Because a witch has bewitched me,
A deceitful woman has accused me,
Has (thereby) caused my god and goddess to be estranged from me (and)
I have become sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me,
I am therefore unable to rest day or night.
(I 4–8)

(Because) I have been made unclean[8] by witchcraft,
I stand before you,
(Because) I have been cursed in the presence of god and man,
I come before you,
(Because) I am sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me,
I bow down before you.[9]
(II 86–88)[10]

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[6] I noticed this very early in my research on the witchcraft corpus; this has since been noted by others as well: see H.W.F. Saggs, '"External Souls" in the Old Testament', *JSS* 19 (1974), 8, and K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 22; Assen/Maastricht, 1985), 71, who point to the fact that the witch is said to remove the sufferer's personal god and personal goddess from his body. However, the implications of this statement have not been pursued by others, perhaps because they have either not seen or not been willing to acknowledge that this belief stands in some tension with the belief in the power of the personal god and occasionally constitutes a problem.

[7] For the reader's convenience, I retain the line count in Meier, *Maqlû*.

[8] So, *CAD* L, 91; perhaps, simply, 'smeared' or 'afflicted'.

[9] *ina kišpī lupputākuma maḫarka azziz / ina pān ili u? amēli? (...) šuzzurākuma* (instead of *na-an-zu-ra-ku-ma*, I read ⌜*šu*⌝*-zu-ra-ku-ma*) *e-li-ka* x (var. GIN-*ka ana maḫ-ri-ka*; the restoration *elika a*[*sḫur*], found in *CAD* N/2, 140, for the final verb in line 87 does not seem possible) / *eli ā*[*meriy*]*a marṣākuma* (*lum* on VAT 10009 is a mistake for *mar*; the scribe here accidentally copied *lum* of the preceeding line.) *šapalka akmis*.

[10] Cf. *Maqlû* V 73–74, where, however, 'god' probably refers to the city god: *uzzi ili šarri kabti u rubî yâši taškunāni / uzzi ili šarri kabti u rubî ana kâšunu liššaknakkunūši*; 'The anger of god, king, nobleman, and prince you have set upon me. / May the anger of god, king, nobleman, and prince be set upon you'. These lines probably provide a more explicit rendering and explanation of *ila šarra kabta u rubâ šuškunu*. For this usage, see Abusch, 'Dismissal by Authorities: *Šuškunu* and Related Matters', *JCS* 37 (1985), 91–100.

Note that there are also passages outside of *Maqlû* where witchcraft and the personal god stand in a causal relationship or, at least, occur in conjunction with each other; see, e.g., *LKA* 154 (+) (and duplicates) cited below, note 31.

And so, the ability of the witch to cause divine abandonment immediately presents us with a problem that is far from trivial, for, at the very least, it poses the question: What relationship obtains between the witch and the god, between witchcraft and divine anger, and how did the Mesopotamians themselves understand the relationship of these two otherwise independent entities? Moreover, even if this conjunction of witchcraft and divine anger did not occasion some conceptual difficulties, our question could still not be answered by a simple rehearsal of the information contained in the texts that attest to a connection between witchcraft and divine anger, for there are a number of passages where witchcraft and divine anger are set alongside each other, or placed together, in such a way that we cannot (or, at least, are not immediately able to) understand or define the nature of the relationship from the textual context alone.

As an example, let me quote a text not so very different in style and thematics from the text *BAM* 234 cited above. This text is structurally typical of many scribal descriptions and prayers in which witchcraft is mentioned as a cause of misfortune. But I choose this text for the present occasion because it forms part of a group that exemplifies a solution to the central problem of this paper and to the nature of composition (or, rather, transmission and revision) of such texts. I have in mind *BAM* 316[11] ii, 5′–25′, though only later will we discuss its forerunner *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 130–144 // BM 64174[12]: 1–8 and its parallel: *BAM* 315 iii, 1–16 // Bu 91–5–9, 214,[13] and the latter's variant duplicate *SBTU* 2, 22[14] i, 39′–46′.

BAM 316 ii

5′ DIŠ NA *gi-na-a šu-dur ur-ra u* GI$_6$ *ina-ziq* ZI.GA *sa-dir-šú*
6′ *iš-di-iḫ-šú* TAR-*si*[15] *kar-ṣi-šú* KÚ.MEŠ *da-bi-ib* KI-*šú kit-te*
7′ NU KA.KA-*ub* ŠU.SI ḪUL-*tì* EGIR-*šú* LAL-*ṣi ina* É.GAL GUB-*zu*
8′ *la maḫ-ra-šú* MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú par-da ina* MÁŠ.GI$_6$-*šú* ÚŠ.MEŠ IGI.IGI-*mar*
9′ GAZ ŠÀ GAR-*šú šib*!-*sat* DINGIR *u* ^{d}U.DAR UGU-*šú* GÁL-*a* DINGIR *u* ^{d}U.DAR
10′ KI-*šú ze-nu-ú kiš-pi ep-šú-šú* KI DINGIR *u* ^{d}U.DAR *šu-zu-ur*
11′ [Ḫ]UR.MEŠ-*šú dal-ḫa* DINGIR MAN IDIM NUN *šu-zu-qú-šú*
12′ [K]I LÚ.ḪAL *u* LÚ.DINGIR.RA *di-in-šú* EN 7-*šú* NU SI.SÁ

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[11] F. Köcher, *BAM*, vol. 3, pp. xxv–xxvi, s. nos. 315 iii, 1–8, and 316 ii, 5′–10′, already referred to *STT* 95, *BAM* 315, and *BAM* 316.

[12] BM 64174 (82–9–18, 4143) was published in copy and transliteration by M.J. Geller, 'New Duplicates to SBTU II', *AfO* 35 (1988), 21–22, on the basis of an identification by I.L. Finkel. Geller already noted that our text duplicates *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 16′–25′, 'although the British Museum text is much more abbreviated than the Uruk version' (p. 21).

[13] I identified this text among the copies of the late F.W. Geers around 1970; cf. Abusch, 'Dismissal', 96–98. My transliteration (see below) is based upon his copy and upon a photograph of the original, from which it has been possible to derive more readings, especially with the help of the duplicates and parallels.

[14] E. von Weiher, *SBTU* 2, p. 109, already noted that *BAM* 315 iii, 8–16 duplicates *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 39–44.

[15] In lines 6 and 7, the scribe has mistakenly written infinitive forms (TAR-*si*, LAL-*ṣi*) for finite verb forms. These infinitive forms probably derive from purpose clauses, e.g., lines 14′–16′: *ana* ... TAR-*si-im-m*[*a*] ... *ana* LAL-*ṣi*. The correct form TAR-*is* is preserved in BM 64174: 2, quoted below; the correct form LAL-*a*[*t*] is preserved in *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 132′, Bu 91–5–9, 214: 5′, and *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 18′. As an aside, I would note that at least one of these mistakes is shared by some of the other texts – indicating the closeness of the manuscript tradition. Thus, TAR-*si* in *BAM* 316 ii, 6′, *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 17′, and, possibly, *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 130′(?).

13′ [D]UG$_4$.⌜GA⌝ NU ŠE.GA GAR-*nu-šú*
14′ *ana* EŠ.BAR-*šú* TAR-*si-im-m*[*a di-i*]*n*-⌜*šú*⌝ *ana* SI.SÁ
15′ MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú ana* SIG$_5$-*t*[*i*] A.RÁ-*šú ana* ZU-*di*
16′ ŠU.SI SIG$_5$-*tì* EGIR-*šú ana* LAL-*ṣi*

17′ DÙ.DÙ.BI Ú.*tar-muš*$_8$ Ú.IGI.LIM Ú.IGI.MAN
18′ Ú.*er-kul-la* Ú.UGU-*kul-la* Ú.LÚ-*a-nu*
19′ KA A.AB.BA GIŠ.ŠINIG GIŠ.BÚR *ina* KUŠ DÙ.DÙ
20′ ÉN a.la.aḫ sa <šu>.la.[aḫ] ba.ši.in.[ti] ⌜tu$_6$⌝.én
21′ ÉN a.ra.zu šu.te.ma.ab 7-*šú ana* UGU ŠID-*nu* GÚ-*šú*! GAR
22′ NA BI DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}U.DAR-*šú* KI-*šú* SILIM-*mu* INIM.GAR-*šú* SI.SÁ
23′ MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú* SIG$_5$.MEŠ DUG$_4$.GA *u* ŠE.GA GAR-*an-šú*
24′ DINGIR MAN IDIM *u* NUN KI-*šú* GUB-*zu*
25′ *e-em ana di-ni*$_6$ GIN-*ku di-in-šú* SI.SÁ

If[16] a man is constantly frightened and worries day and night; losses are suffered regularly by him and his profit is cut off; people speak defamation about him, his interlocutor does not speak affirmatively,[17] a finger of derision[18] is stretched out (i.e., pointed) after him; in the palace where he appears he is not well received;[19] his dreams are confused, in his dreams he keeps seeing dead people; heartbreak is laid upon him; the wrath of god and goddess is upon him, god and goddess are angry with him; witchcraft has been practised against him; he has been cursed before god and goddess; his omens are confused; (city) god, king, noble, and prince are annoyed with him; as many as seven times his case (lit., judgement) is not cleared up (lit., is not straight{ened out})[20] by diviner or dream interpreter; he is beset by speaking but not being heard (and responded to favorably).

In order that a verdict be rendered for him, that a successful judgement be given to him, that his dreams become propitious, that an oracle be manifest[21] for him, that a favorable finger be stretched out after him:

Its Ritual: ....

That man: his god and goddess will be reconciled with him; the utterances about him will be well disposed; his dreams will become propitious; the power to speak

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16 In preparing the translations of *BAM* 316 ii, 5′–10′ and duplicates, I have drawn upon van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 66; for lines 12′–16′, see Abusch, '*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*: Oracular Decision, Divine Revelation', *HTR* 80 (1987), 27–28, and for lines 22′–25′, see Abusch, 'Dismissal', 99–100.

17 For this understanding of *kittu*, see Abusch, 'Dismissal', 97-98.

18 Or 'an accusing finger' (so van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 66); but, given the context of its opposite below in line 16 and elsewhere, perhaps simply, 'an unfavourable finger', which rendering would convey both the divinatory (portending misfortune) and social significance of the act.

19 Lit., 'they do not receive him' (i.e., are not agreeable to him). *lā maḫrāšu* is a third person plural form. 'They' must refer to an understood feminine plural noun; perhaps that noun is *nīšū*, a feminine noun that usually appears in plural form.

20 That is, the divination for him does not work out well.

21 For this understanding of *alaktu* and of *alakta lamādu*, see Abusch, '*Alaktu*', 15–42.

and be heard will be his; god, king, noble, and prince will stand with him; whenever he goes for a hearing/oracle, a successful judgement will be given to him.

What is the place of witchcraft here, and what is its relationship to the anger of the personal god? What is the primary cause of the misfortune? Answers to these questions are not immediately apparent from a reading of this text alone, for there are no clear lexical or syntactical indications regarding the place of witchcraft. Moreover, the fit of witchcraft in this example is clumsy, for in the description, the statement that witchcraft has been performed against the patient follows upon divine anger but itself is followed by statements that the patient has been cursed before god and goddess (cf. *Maqlû* II 86–88), that his portents are confused, that god, king, noble, and prince are annoyed with him, that diviners cannot arrive at a clear divination, and that he speaks but is not answered. The meaning of this order is not immediately apparent. Moreover, it is unclear which of these elements are symptoms and which causes and which causes are primary and which secondary. In fact, neither the statement of purpose of the ritual (ii, 14–16) nor the stated outcome expected or predicted from its performance (ii, 22–25) clarifies the place of witchcraft in the diagnosis, for neither even makes any mention of witchcraft but both indicate that the ritual is performed for the purposes of the reconciliation of the personal gods and the attainment of favorable omens.[22] In the parallel to this text, *BAM* 315 iii, 1–16 // Bu 91–5–9, 214 and the latter's variant duplicate *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 39′–46′, the place of witchcraft is a bit clearer but even there, as we shall have occasion to note below, there are still some difficulties.[23]

Thus, we may grant that the witch can cause the god to distance himself; but given the difficulties that we have seen, we cannot mechanically apply a picture derived from texts where witchcraft and divine anger seem to link up in what appears to be a coherent manner (as in the examples from *Maqlû* cited above) to texts of a more indeterminate nature. Rather, we must look more closely at the nature of the relationship of the witch and the personal god and try to understand the implications of such a relationship.

The problem of the conjunction of witchcraft and divine anger does not disappear and is actually placed in even sharper focus when we move, as we must, to a more abstract level and try to see how witchcraft and divine anger would fit together in the normative modern understandings or constructions of Mesopotamian religious history and thought. For we are often told that Mesopotamian religion as reflected in Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian literatures recognizes the power of the gods and their rule and ascribes suffering or misfortune to human disobedience or infraction of divine norms.

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[22] More specifically, the statement of purpose of the ritual (ii, 14–16) indicates that the ritual is performed in order that there be clear and favorable divination (*purussû, dīnu, šuttu, alaktu*) as well as a favourable finger pointed at the patient (could also the latter be a form of omen?); and the prediction (ii, 22–25) states that the performance of the ritual will lead to the reconciliation of the personal gods, the appearance of unprovoked omens that are favourable, the ability to speak effectively, the favourable attitude or support of divine and human authorities, and the attainment of successful judgement, whether religious (divination) or secular (law).

[23] To prevent any misunderstanding, I should here note that, in the main, texts of this sort are not intended as lists from which one might choose a symptom or a cause (when a choice is intended, the text will usually provide an indication that that is the case; see below, Excursus II); rather, the individual text is meant to form an organic whole and to present a portrait or narration of misfortune; the presentation may combine perspectives that are diachronic and synchronic, that is, it may contain a description of the patient's present state that includes a sequential and/or causal definition and ordering of selected aspects.

In order to exemplify this understanding in a fair way, I would cite selections from the writings of two of the finest interpreters of Mesopotamian religion, Jean Bottéro and the late Thorkild Jacobsen.

Recently, Bottéro stated the case in the following, somewhat abstract, terms:

> The same basic vision of the gods in the image of the kings provides a religious and plausible explanation to this other universal and urgent problem of human life: the existence of evil – of 'suffered' evil, of course. .... The religious ideology provided an answer that was entirely acceptable as well as definitive, even if it was only 'likely,' as was the entirety of mythological thought. Evil is the punishment ordered by the gods for any transgression of their sovereign will, just as a punishment is the sanction of the authorities on earth for any infraction of the law.
>
> It is true that religious imagination had at first invented a certain number of personalized causes to explain the various evils that prey on human life: supernatural beings of the second rank, those which we would call 'demons,' who intervened like vicious animals that throw themselves on anyone to bite or to terrify, without any other motive than their own fantasy or their wickedness. The majority of the names of these evildoers come from the Sumerian, which reveals their origin, even if the Semites have added a few others. When the 'theology' of sovereignty was universally imposed on belief, the 'demons' ceased to act spontaneously. They became like the gendarmes of the gods, charged with the execution of their decisions, and with the bringing of evil and miserable punishments to those who had offended the gods' authority by some 'sin,' by some transgression of their will.[24]

In his contribution to *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, written some fifty years ago, Jacobsen formulated the issue somewhat more concretely:

> As the human state grew more centralized and tightly organized, its policing grew more effective. Robbers and bandits, who had been an ever present threat, now became less of a menace, a less powerful element in daily life. This decrease of the power of human robbers and bandits seems to have influenced the evaluation of the cosmic robbers and bandits, the evil demons. They loomed less large in the cosmic state. It has been pointed out by Von Soden that there was a subtle change in the concept of the personal god around the beginning of the second millennium. Before that time he had been thought to be powerless against demons who attacked his ward and had had to appeal to some great god for help. With the advent of the second millennium, however, the demons had lost power, so that the personal god was fully capable of protecting his human ward against them. If now they succeeded in an attack, it was because the personal god had turned away in anger and had left his ward to shift for himself. Offenses which would anger a personal god came to include, moreover, almost all serious lapses from ethical and moral standards.
>
> With this change, minute as it may seem, the whole outlook on the world actually shifted. Man no longer permitted his world to be essentially arbitrary; he demanded

[24] J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (tr. Z. Bahrani & M. Van De Mieroop; Chicago and London, 1992), 228–229.

> that it have a firm moral basis. Evil and illness, attacks by demons, are no longer considered mere happenings, accidents: the gods, by allowing them to happen, are ultimately responsible, for only when an offense has been committed should the personal god be angered and turn away.[25]

Here, as he himself noted, Jacobsen relied on W. von Soden's observations in his 'Religion und Sittlichkeit nach den Anschauungen der Babylonier';[26] for our present purposes, von Soden's position is nicely summarized by the following passage:

> Für unsere Feststellung, dass die Babylonier jedenfalls in der späteren Zeit Krankheit und jegliches Leiden als Sündenstrafe auffassten, bieten uns diese und andere nicht als Beschwörungen bezeichnete Gebete eine Fülle von eindrucksvollen Belegen. In sumerischen Gebeten finden wir nur verhältnismässig selten Hinweise auf eine ähnliche Erklärung des Leidens; denn die sumerische Religion führte das Leiden im allgemeinen auf das Einwirken böser Dämonen zurück, die ohne ersichtlichen Grund den Menschen angreifen, während diese Dämonen nach dem Glauben der späteren Babylonier erst dann über einen Menschen Macht gewinnen konnten, wenn diesen sein Schutzgott aus Zorn über seine Sünden verlassen hatte.[27]

To be sure, this chronology is not quite correct, for we now know, for example, that the Sumerian *Eršaḫunga* prayers already existed in the Old Babylonian period,[28] and therefore that the Sumerians were not strangers to the belief in the power of sin to anger the personal god and to bring about illness and misfortune. Conversely, to be sure, also in the late period suffering need not only be the consequence of wrong-doing. Still, it is not incorrect to say that in later periods there is a stronger emphasis on the nexus sin/divine anger/suffering and that this is an important theme in Standard Babylonian texts that treat suffering. But as we have seen, the witch, too, is able to drive away the personal god, and she is able to achieve this end even when the sufferer has done no wrong (see, e.g., *Maqlû* III 1–16, where there is no indication of wrongdoing). And the statements about the power of the witch to drive away the personal god come from a corpus of texts (anti-witchcraft literature) that, in the main, belongs to a late stage of Babylonian literature. Thus, while our material is late, it does not agree with and seems to contradict the notion that the personal god abandons his human charge only as a consequence of his wrongdoing. Accordingly, in addition to our previous questions, we must also ask: If sin or transgression had come to be regarded as a primary cause of divine anger, how can and why does witchcraft cause the anger and alienation of the personal god and the subsequent suffering of the god's protégé?

Let me state immediately that approaching the problem in a spirit of harmonization does not resolve the difficulty and answer the question fully and satisfactorily. It is insufficient to try to fit witchcraft and divine anger neatly together by asserting that in

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[25] 'Mesopotamia', in: H. Frankfort, *et al.*, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man. An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago, 1946), 212–213.

[26] *ZDMG* 89 (1935), 143–169.

[27] *Ibid.*, 159.

[28] See S.M. Maul, *'Herzberuhigungsklagen': Die sumerisch-akkadischen Eršaḫunga-Gebete* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 8–10.

all cases where witchcraft occurs together with divine anger, the witch had provoked divine anger against the victim by the imputation of sin or wrongdoing to him or, stated more simply and anthropomorphically, that the witch had caused her victim to be in disfavour with his patron god by accusing him of misdeeds either publicly or only in the presence of his god, thereby imputing sin to him.

Admittedly, there may be some instances where the afore-mentioned explanation would fit (e.g., *Maqlû* I 4–12[29]), but explicit statements to this effect are rare. And in any case, there are instances where the texts themselves implicitly or explicitly exclude this possibility: for example, the passage from *Maqlû* III quoted above; note, moreover, that some texts state explicitly that the witch had alienated the god not by an accusation but by feeding the victim bewitched food, an act which does not imply accusation: see, e.g., *LKA* 154 (+) 155 obv. 6–7 (and dupls.[30]);[31] cf. the Vassal Treaties of Esarḫaddon, lines 262–265,[32] where we find the anger of god in asssociation with the feeding of poisonous plants and the performance of witchcraft.

Actually harmonizing will not work for two other, more general reasons:

(A) Sin and witchcraft as causes of divine anger and alienation are brought together only with difficulty because these two causes or perspectives are diametrically opposed; at the very least, they fit together poorly.

(B) In many of our texts, the relationship of witchcraft and divine anger is textually clumsy, and thus they do not join together easily.

Let us now take up these two points in some detail, for they also provide a means to answer the more general question of relationship.

(A) Sin versus Witchcraft

Sin and witchcraft are opposed to each other: they are part of two distinct mentalities or ways of thinking, the one focussing on forces internal to the individual, the other on forces external to him; the one emphasizing power and guilt, the other powerlessness and innocence. When the individual sins, he is powerful, responsible, and guilty, for sin implies guilt and guilt implies the power to do wrong and to affect another. But when he is affected by witchcraft, he is powerless, bearing neither responsibility nor guilt. Hence, sin is of little importance in the body of therapeutic texts intended to counter witchcraft.

Witchcraft: powerlessness and innocence. When the cause of one's suffering is externalized and others (human or demonic) are seen as the source of one's difficulties, the sufferer not only asserts the guilt of the beings that are held responsible for harming

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[29] See my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies* (Brown Judaic Studies 132; Atlanta, 1987), x–xii and 85–147.

[30] I have reconstructed this composition on the basis of *LKA* 154 (+) 155 // *LKA* 157 i, 1–iv, 5′ // K 3394 + 9866. (See already my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 72–73, n. 117, and 120, n. 70; note that my join of *LKA* 154 (+) 155 has been confirmed).

[31] *LKA* 154 obv. 6–7 // *LKA* 157 i, 15–18: [*amēlu šū kišp*]*ī epšū* ⌜*šuma*⌝ [*ina akālī š*]*ākul ina šikārī šaq*[*i* ...] ... *kimilti ilīšu u* ^{d}*ištarīšu elīšu ibaššī*[*i*]. Immediately following the diagnosis, the statement of purpose of the ritual (*LKA* 154 obv. 7–10 // *LKA* 157 i, 19–23) then sets out the goals of the ceremony: the reconciliation of the personal gods, the sending back of the witchcraft upon its doer, and the saving of the victim by the elimination of witchcraft from his body: ... *ilšu u* ^{d}*ištaršu ittišu sull*[*umi kišpī e*]*pšūšu saḫārimma ana ēpišīšunu ṣa*[*b*]*āti ana amēli šuāti ana eṭērīšu u gamālīšu k*[*išp*]*ī šunūti ina zumrīšu nasāḫi*.

[32] S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA 2; Helsinki, 1988), 39.

him, but also emphasizes his own innocence as well as his own powerlessness (and dependence). For if he were not powerless, others could not harm him, and even if they could, he would be able to rectify the situation by himself. He becomes a victim; and, as such, the victim of witchcraft has both the need and the right to go to the god, for he is both innocent and powerless. His lack of power and of guilt allows him to initiate a legal suit and appeal to the gods (in their role as judge) for help. He thus turns to a powerful institution – the divine court – which, having judged the victim (= patient) blameless and in need of help, treats the witch as an oppressor and criminal who is to be punished. Law as right – that is, the victim's right to resort to law – here implies evaluation by the gods on the basis of objective rules of behaviour. This attitude is evident, for example, in *Maqlû* II 76–102, a text we cited earlier as an example of the influence of the witch upon the personal god. Here I simply quote lines 83–88 and 97–102:

ēpiš lumni attāma arḫiš takammu
lemnu u ayyā[bu] takaššad arḫiš
anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna ^{d}*ištaršu annannītu*
ina kišpī lupputākuma maḫarka azziz
ina pān ili u? amēli šuzzurākuma e-li-ka x / GIN-*ka ana maḫ-ri-ka*
eli ā[meriy]a marṣākuma šapalka akmis
(.....)
^{d}*Girra šarḫu ṣīru ša ilī*
kāšid lemni u ayyābi kušussunūtima anāku lā aḫḫabbil
anāku aradka lubluṭ lušlimma maḫarka luzziz
attāma ilī attāma bēlī
attāma dayyānī attāma rēṣu'a
attāma mutirru ša gimilliya

You alone speedily capture the evildoer,
You speedily overcome the wicked and the enemy,
I, So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whose god is So-and-so, whose goddess is So-and-so,
(Because) I have been made unclean by witchcraft, I stand before you,
(Because) I have been cursed in the presence of god and man, I come before you,
(Because) I am sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me, I bow down before you.
(.....)
O glorious Girra, eminent one of the gods,
You who overcome the wicked and the enemy, overcome them (now) so that I not be wronged,
May I, your servant, live and be well so that I may serve you (lit., stand before you):
You alone are my god, you alone are my master,
You alone are my judge, you alone are my saviour,
You alone are my avenger.

Sin: power and guilt. When the sufferer recognizes that his own deeds are responsible for his suffering, he acknowledges his own guilt and his own power. For sin implies

guilt, and guilt implies the power to do wrong and to affect, to anger another. Sin also implies the ability to eradicate the guilt and to attain forgiveness by one's own actions. Therefore, the sinner will ask – may even demand – of the god that he absolve him of guilt and remove the punishment. Here, the god is parent, and subjective considerations – the personal relationship between the man and his god – are the source of the petitioner's capacity to anger the god as well as of his right and ability to ask that the god be attentive and caring and forgive him.[33]

It is not surprising therefore that sin is rarely mentioned in the witchcraft corpus and that it and divine anger provoked by sin are alien to that body of literature.[34]

(B) The Secondary Nature of the Combination Witchcraft-Divine Anger

Introduction. In some of the descriptions of misfortune in which witchcraft appears alongside divine anger, the witchcraft entry or notation – far from being an obvious cause of divine anger – can be shown not to have been original to the text and to have been inserted, often in a clumsy fashion. I could cite many texts for this purpose but, instead, let me return to *BAM* 316 ii, 5′–25′, for the texts genetically related to it provide enough evidence for us to construct a detailed and reliable picture of how witchcraft was introduced into this literature and how the texts were revised. Moreover, this choice will allow us to focus on the more explicitly scribal parts of *āšipūtu* (i.e., descriptions, diagnoses, statements of purpose, etc.) that define the intellectual context and construction of healing rituals and to see how certain textual or literary forms of magical literature came into being.

We have already described *BAM* 316 ii, 5′–25′ and noticed the indeterminate and problematic place of witchcraft therein, namely that alongside anger of the gods

[33] Cf. Th. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven/London, 1976), 147–164, esp. 161.

[34] I should note that there are situations which fall between these two poles; in that middle position, I would place those occurrences which suggest that the witch may have occasionally managed to alienate the personal god from his protégé by means of her accusations. This accusation by the witch should not be confused with an admission of sin and guilt on the part of the sufferer. Contrary to cases where misfortune results from divine anger and punishment consequent on sin, here the accusation in its most successful form evokes shame, not guilt. The loss of the personal god is here tantamount to a loss of face; the witch's accusation affects how the outside world views her victim, but does not provoke a sense of guilt. For, also in these witchcraft situations, the individual accused by the witch does not acknowledge his own guilt or responsibility but rather asserts his innocence. Still, while not admitting that he did anything wrong, he may believe himself in some way responsible for his own failure and for public and divine disdain. Thus, while feeling no internal responsibility, he may feel weakened because he finds himself victimized and judged adversely by society. And, to the extent that public opinion matters and that his own self-esteem is dependent upon his ability to withstand adversity and to prevent certain kinds of misfortune, he is shamed by his present circumstances. Here, the cause of his suffering remains external, but the event is no longer viewed impersonally but begins to be regarded as a judgement on oneself; the individual now may inwardly acknowledge his own inferiority.

However, just as responsibility in the middle position is divided or split between the sufferer and the outside world, so, too, in this position, he also seems to take more initiative than that victim of witchcraft who places all responsibility outside of himself. Thus, in addition to asking for assistance and legal adjustment from the divine court, he also initiates an action to prove that the accuser (= the witch) is evil and wrong. Thus, even when the victim finds himself blamed and feels shame, thereby taking on himself some possibly misplaced responsibility, he still denies wrongdoing or guilt, perhaps more emphatically than ever, and attempts to externalize the source of misfortune and to regain his self-esteem or honour. The loss of honour requires rebalance by means of revenge. Perhaps, *Maqlû* I 1–36 provides a good example of this middle position.

witchcraft seemed to be no more than one additional evil and a misplaced one, at that. With this as our context, it is most informative to look closely at its forerunner *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 130′–iv, 144′ // BM 64174: 1–8 and its parallel *BAM* 315 iii, 1–16 // Bu 91–5–9, 214, and the latter's variant duplicate *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 39′–46′.

STT 95 + 295 // BM 64174. We turn first to the 'variant' manuscripts, BM 64174: 1–8 (A) // *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 130–iv, 144 (B). These manuscripts read:

B ———————————————————————————————————

A 1 DIŠ NA *gi-na-a šu-dur ur-ra* *u* GI$_6$ *ina-ziq* ZI.GA *sad-rat-su*
B 130′[35] DIŠ NA *gi-na-a šu-dur ur-⌜ra⌝ u* GI$_6$ *ina-ziq* ZI.GA *sad-ra*[*t-*] →

A 2 *iš-di-iḫ-šú* TAR-*is* *kar-ṣi-šú* KÚ.MEŠ KA.KA KI-*šú*
B 130′–1′ [-*d*]*i-iḫ-šú* TAR-x^{a} / EME.SIG.MEŠ-*šú* KÚ.MEŠ *d*[*a*]-*bi-⌜ib*$^{?a}$⌝ *it-ti-šú*
kit-tú NU KA.KA
k[*i*]*t*-x^{b} [ ].KA-*u*[*b*]?

A 3 ŠU.SI ḪUL-*tì* EGIR-*šú tar-ṣú* *ina* É.GAL-*šú* NU IGI-*šú*
B 132′–3′ ŠU.SI ḪUL-*tì* EGIR-*šu* LAL-[*a*]*t* / *ina* É.GAL-*šú la maḫ-ra-šú* →

A 4 MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú pár-da ina* MÁŠ.GI$_6$-*šú* ÚŠ.MEŠ IGI.MEŠ GAZ ŠÀ
B 133′–4′ MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú pá*[*r-*].⌜GI$_6$⌝-*šú* ÚŠ.MEŠ IGI$^{!}$.[MEŠ$^{!}$]^{a} / GAZ ŠÀ
GAR-*šú*
GAR-*šú* →

A 5 *šib-sat* DINGIR *u* U.DAR UGU-*šú* GÁL.MEŠ DINGIR-*šú u* U.DAR KI-*šú*
B 134′–5′ D[I]B DINGIR *u* ^{d}DAR UGU-*šú* GÁ[L]-⌜*a*⌝ DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}DAR-*š*[*ú*]\KI-*šú*
ze-nu-u
ze-nu-u

A 6 KI LÚ.ḪAL *u da-gi-li* DI.KUD-*šú* NU SI.ŠÁ *qá-bu-u* NU *še-mu-ú*
B 136′–7′ KI LÚ.DINGIR[36] *u* ENSI DI-*šú* NU ⌜SI⌝.SÁ x x^{a} /*la* ŠE.GA
GAR-*šú*
GAR-*šú* →

A 7 *ana* EŠ.BAR-*šú* TAR-*ma* DI.KUD-*šú šú-te-šú-ri*[37]....
B 137′ *ana* EŠ.BAR-*šú* TAR-*si-im-ma d*[*i-* -*t*]*e-šu-ri*
B ——————————————————————————— (B: end of column)

[35] Notes to B:\ indicates that the line is indented. **130′^{a}**: Perhaps, -*s*[*i*]. **131′^{a}**: The sign has a strange form; could it be: -*bi* (*da-bi-bi*)?; cf. Abusch, 'Dismissal', 97–98, n. 45. **131′^{b}**: Probably, -*t*[*ú* or -*t*[*e*. **133′^{a}**: Copy: GI$_6$; or, perhaps, read: IGI!.(IGI)-*ma*[*r*!]. **136′^{a}**: Probably, ⌜DUG$_4$.GA⌝. **139′^{a}**: More precisely, read either KA! <*tam*>-*t*[*i*] or K<A> *tam-t*[*i*]. **141′^{a}**: We expect *u* ŠE.GA GAR-*šú*, but the copy looks like (*u*) Š[E.G]A? [GA]R-*šú*. **142′^{a}**: x may be remnants of an erasure or perhaps even .S[ILIM!]-. **144′^{a}**: Copy: iš.

[36] LÚ.DINGIR = *šā'ili* = *ša*$_{11}$-*ili*. Note, however, that both LÚ.DINGIR and ENSI = *šā'ili*. One or the other is a mistake for LÚ.ḪAL. Since Bu 91–5–9, 214: 9′ reads LÚ.ḪAL (*u*) LÚ.ENSI (its duplicate, *BAM* 315 iii, 7, is broken at this point), but *BAM* 316 reads LÚ.ḪAL *u* LÚ.DINGIR.RA, I do not wish to decide between LÚ.DINGIR and ENSI.

[37] Here A 7–8 continues with a short ritual prescribing a list of plants comparable to those listed in B 139′–140′, followed by a dividing line. For the text of the ritual and for an analysis of the character of B, see below, Excursus II.

B 139′ [AG.A]G.BI Ú.*tar-muš* Ú.IGI.LIM Ú.IGI.MAN Ú.U[G]U-*k*[*u*]*l-la* Ú.LÚ.U$_{18}$.LU KA! *tam-t*[*i*]^{a}

B 140′ [GIŠ.ŠIN]IG GIŠ.BÚR Ú!.*er-kul-la* 7 Ú.ḪI.A *an-nu-te* SÍG.ÀGA ⌜NIGIN⌝ *ina* KUŠ DÙ!.⌜DÙ!-*pí*!⌝

B 141′ [IN]IM⌝.GAR-*šú* SI.SÁ MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú* SIG$_5$.MEŠ *qá*-⌜*bu*⌝-*ú* x x (x)^{a}-*šú*

B 142′ \DINGIR *u* U.DAR KI-šú SILIM. x^{a}-*mu*

B 143′ ⌜ÉN!$^{?}$⌝ a.la.aḫ sa šu.la.aḫ ba.ši.in.ti

B 144′ ÉN a.ra.zu!^{a} šu.te.ma.ab ŠID-*nu*

B ———————————————————————————————

If a man is constantly frightened and worries day and night; losses are suffered regularly by him and his profit is cut off; people speak defamation about him, his interlocutor does not speak affirmatively, a finger of derision is stretched out after him; in his palace he is not well received; his dreams are confused, in his dreams he keeps seeing dead people; heartbreak is laid upon him; the wrath of god and goddess is upon him, his god and goddess are angry with him; his case is not cleared up by diviner or dream interpreter; he is beset by speaking but not being heard (and responded to favorably).

In order that a verdict be rendered for him, that a successful judgement be given to him:

Its Ritual: ....

The utterances about him will be well disposed; his dreams will become propitious; the power to speak and be heard will be his; his god and goddess will be reconciled with him.

Incantations to be recited.

Even a cursory examination of the statement of purpose of this text (BM 64174: 7 // STT 95 + 295 iii, 137′) and a comparison with the statement in *BAM* 316 ii, 14–16 already suggest that BM 64174: 1–8 // *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 130–144 preserve more succinct, unified, and therefore earlier versions of the prescription than *BAM* 316, where between lines 5/6 of BM 64174 and 135/136 of *STT* 95 + 295 iii, we find lines 10′b-c–11′a-b + 12′b (« sorcery has been practised against him; he has been cursed before god and goddess; his omens are confused; (city) god, king, noble, and prince are annoyed with him; ... up to seven times ...»). Note, then, the complete absence in the shorter text of any mention of witchcraft in the description of symptoms, on the one hand, and the tightness and greater clarity of the relevant part of the statement about misfortune in A 5–6//B 134′b–137′a, on the other: that is, the divine anger against the patient is followed immediately by statements that diviners cannot arrive at a clear divination in his case and that he speaks but is not heard and responded to favourably.[38] This, in turn, is followed by the statement that the purpose of the ritual is to attain clear and favorable divination. It is not too much to conclude that the shorter and more coherent version is more original than the version found in *BAM* 316 and that this shorter version was

[38] 'Speaking but not being answered (lit., heard)', as I understand it, is a meaningful and direct consequence of divine anger as well as a direct cause, or perhaps just description, of the failure to attain a clear divinatory decision. Perhaps, divination was sought to clarify the case.

later expanded and revised by the subsequent addition of the witchcraft entry together with related statements about omens and the attitude of the city god and various human authorities. Thus, as regards the latter part of the description of misfortunes, we may conclude that *BAM* 316 ii, 10′b-c–11′a-b (*kišpī epšūšu itti ili u ištari šuzzur / [t]êrētūšu dalhā ilu šarru kabtu rubû šuzzuqūšu*) are a later insertion. As we already saw, the revision was carried out in a somewhat clumsy way with the result, for example, that the anger of the authorities (9′b-c–10′a, 10′c, 11′b) and the failure of divination (11′a, 12–13) are interspersed and interrupt each other, and thus this interrupted repetition together with the occurrence of witchcraft (10′b) in the midst of the confusion leaves us with an unclear text wherein misfortune is ascribed unambiguously neither to the more original anger of the gods of the earlier version nor as yet to the performance of witchcraft.

Witchcraft, thus, is a later or secondary addition to the text. And even if the addition of witchcraft here constituted no more than the addition of one further evil for the purpose either of piling up evils or explanations for misfortune alongside the anger of the god and/or of providing alternative explanations, such an addition, in itself, would be a significant development and would attest to the historical development with which we are concerned. In fact, the text of *BAM* 316 was probably revised in order to set out witchcraft as the original or ultimate cause of suffering, but (as we have seen) the revision was not wholly successful and its goal was attained but barely.

Parallel Texts. When we turn to the parallel texts *BAM* 315 // Bu 91–5–9, 214 and *SBTU* 2, 22, it becomes clear that the intention or, at least, the tendency of the revision was, in fact, to make witchcraft the ultimate cause. In these parallels, the text has been revised and witchcraft explicitly inserted as the primary aetiological diagnosis of misfortune and underlying cause of divine anger. Thus, *BAM* 316 represents an 'early' but failed attempt. These 'later' parallels also preserve the evidence of different stages of revision and provide a very clear picture of how magical texts might change and/or be revised.

(i) BAM 315 // Bu 91–5–9, 214. Let us look first at *BAM* 315 iii, 1–16 (A) // Bu 91–5–9, 214 (B)[39]:

B 1′[40] [x] x x [ ]
B 2′ [x] TE?.ME[Š[41]] →

[39] Because of the fragmentary nature of these two sources, I include here a transcription of a restored text for A 1–9 // B 2′–11′ to facilitate the reading of the score: *urra u mūša inazziq išdiḫšu parāsi/parsat karṣīšu ikkalū dābib ittišu kitte lā idabbub ubān lemutti arkišu tarṣat ina ekallišu* GUB-*zu /Ø lā maḫrāšu šunātūšu pardā ina šunātīšu mītūti ītanammar ḫīp libbi šakinšu šibsāt ili u* ^{d}*ištari elišu bašā ilu u* ^{d}*ištaru ittišu zenū itti bārî (u) šā'ili dīnšu lā iššer kišpī epšūšu itti ili u* ^{d}*ištari šuzzur ana ili u* ^{d}*ištari taslīssu leqê*.

[40] Notes to B: **4′**^{a}: However, the sign does not look like KI. Note that Geers copied bi; is *i*[*t-ti*]- possible? **5′**^{a}: *-b*[*u* (*idabbubū*) seems to be an error for *-ub* (*idabbub*). **10′**^{a}: Geers copied *su*. **10′**^{b}: There seems to be an erasure or a lightly written sign after ^{d}15. **11′**^{a}: Traces on the photograph agree with the reading ⌜ZÌ.ZÌ GIŠ.TÚG⌝. But note that while Geers did copy the last half of TÚG, he did not see the preceding three signs. **12′**^{a}: Traces on the photograph seem to agree with the reading *ni-*⌜*ziq-tú* NU TE-*šú*⌝. But note that Geers did not see *-ziq-tú* NU TE-. **13′**^{a}: The signs x x-*šú* should probably be read ⌜*di-ni*⌝-*šú*. **13′**^{b}: There is hardly any room for *ḫiš*. Line 13′ requires collation.

[41] I cannot place TE?.MEŠ of Bu 91–5–9, 214: 2′. Because line 3′ begins with *inazziq, urra u mūša* must be restored at the end of 2′, and thus line 2′ cannot be treated as part of a different prescription. It is possible that the text in Bu 91–5–9, 214 has a different beginning; cf. *kišpī ruḫû rusû upšāšû lemnūti lā iteḫḫûšu* (TE.MEŠ-*šú*) in *BAM* 315 iii, 15–16 and *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 46′.

A 1] GI$_6$ *ina-a*[*n-*]
B 2′– 3′ [ ] / [*-n*]*a-zi-*⌜*iq*⌝ →

A 2 [ ] *kar-ṣi-šú* [ ]
B 3′– 4′ ⌜*iš*⌝*-di-iḫ-šú* T[AR-] →

A 3 [K]A.KA ŠU.S[I]
B 4′– 5′ [ ]-⌜*bi*⌝*-ib* KI$^{?a}$*-šú* / [*-d*]*a-*⌜*ab*⌝*-bu-b*[*u*^{a}] →

A 4 ⌜EGIR-*šú*⌝ LAL-[ ] -⌜*šú*⌝ GUB-*zu*[42] *la* [ ]
B 5′– 6′ [E]GIR-<*šú*> LAL-*at* / [ ] ⌜É⌝.GAL-*šú* Ø *la mah-*⌜*ra*⌝-[*šú*] →

A 5 MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú* [ ].GI$_6$. MEŠ-*šú* ÚŠ.M[EŠ]
B 6′– 7′ [.G]I$_6$.MEŠ-*šú pár-da* / [MÁ]Š.GI$_6$ Ø -*šú* ÚŠ.MEŠ IGI.MEŠ →

A 6 GAZ ŠÀ-*bi* GAR-*šú* [ ] ^{d}U.DAR U[GU-]
B 7′– 8′ GAZ ŠÀ-*bi* GAR-*šú* / [ ] DINGIR *u* ^{d}⌜15⌝ ⌜UGU⌝-*šú* GÁL.MEŠ →

A 7 DINGIR *u* ^{d}U.DAR KI-*šú* *ze-nu-u* KI L[Ú.]
B 8′– 9′ DINGIR *u* ^{d}15 ⌜KI⌝-*šú* ⌜*ze*⌝*-nu-u* / [L]Ú.ḪAL LÚ.ENS[I] →

A 8 *de-en-šú* NU SI.ŠÁ *kiš-pi ep-*[ ]
B 9′–10′ DI-*šú* ⌜NU SI⌝.[ ] / [*e*]*p-šú-šú* ⌜KI⌝ DINGIR *u* ^{d}15 →

A 9 *šu-zu-ur* Ø DINGIR *u* ^{d}U.DAR ⌜*tas*⌝-[ ]
B 10′–11′ *šu-zu*^{a}-⌜*ur*⌝ *ana*$^{?}$ DINGIR *u* ^{d}15^{b} / [ ] TI-*e* →

A 10 Ú.DIL.BAT ⌜GIŠ⌝.ḪAB ZÌ.ZÌ GIŠ.TÚ[G K]UŠ DÙ.DÙ
B 11′–12′ Ú.⌜*ak-tam*⌝ GIŠ.Ú.GÍR.[Ḫ]AB ⌜ZÌ.ZÌ GIŠ.TÚG⌝^{a} / [*-p*]*i*$^{?}$
ina G[Ú-]
⌜*ina* GÚ⌝*-šú* ⌜GAR-*an-ma*⌝ →

A 11 *ur-ra* *u* GI$_6$ *ni-ziq-tú* NU TE-*šú* *iš-di-ḫa* [ ]
B 12′–13′ ⌜*ur-ra*⌝ *u* GI$_6$ *ni-*⌜*ziq-tú* NU TE-*šú*⌝^{a} / [ ] →

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[42] [*ina* É.GAL]-⌜*šú*⌝ GUB-*zu lā* [*maḫrāšu*] (lit., in his palace <where> he stands they do not receive him) in A combines two readings: *ina* É.GAL GUB-*zu lā maḫrāšu* found in *BAM* 316 and *ina* É.GAL-*šú lā maḫrāšu* found in *STT* 95 + 295 // BM 64174 and in B. If, as seems to be the case, GUB-*zu* rendered *izzazzu*, the addition of the pronominal suffix had the effect of changing a verb that was in dependent form because it followed a noun in construct (*ekal izzazzu*) into an unwarranted 'subjunctive' or into a noun or nominal form. (Compare *ina* É.GAL GIN.GIN-*ku* [*lā ma*]*ḫ-rā-šu*, for which see Abusch, 'Dismissal', 98–99; but note also *i-na* É.GAL GIN.⌜GIN⌝*-ak* NU IGI-*šú*, quoted there, p. 96.) How should we explain the reading in A? It is possible that it is a conflation of two variant readings. It is perhaps more likely that *ina ekallišu lā maḫrāšu* is the original reading and that the development was *ina ekallišu lā maḫrāšu* > *ina ekallišu* GUB-*zu lā maḫrāšu* > *ina ekalli* GUB-*zu lā maḫrāšu*, though we should not yet exclude the possibility that the addition of the suffix caused a later scribe to delete GUB-*zu*.

A 12 EN ⌜*di*⌝-*ni-šú a*[*r-ḫi*]*š* IGI-*mar* ŠU.SI SIG$_5$ EGIR-*šú* [ ]
B 13′–14′ [ ] x x-*šú*[a] *a*[*r*]?-x[b] ⌜IGI-*mar*?⌝ x x [ ] / [LA]L-⌜*aṣ*⌝ →

A 13 *ina* É.[GA]L-*šú im-m*[*an*?-*ga*]*r*?[43] MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú* ḪUL.MEŠ Á.MEŠ
B 14′–15′ *ina* É.⌜GAL⌝-[ ] / [ ] x [ ]→
I[ZKIM.]
[ ]

B Breaks

A 14 BAR.MEŠ *i-dam-mi-qa ina sa-lim* DINGIR *u* [d][U.DA]R *in-n*[*é-šir*]
A 15 KI LÚ.ḪAL *u* LÚ.ENS[I] ⌜DI⌝-*šú uš-te*-⌜*šir*⌝ *k*[*iš-pi*]
A 16 *ru-ḫe*-⌜*e*⌝ *r*[*u*]-⌜*su*⌝-[*ú* (x)[44]] ḪUL.⌜MEŠ⌝ [NU TE.MEŠ-*šú*]
A

If a man is constantly frightened and worries day and night; losses are suffered regularly by him and his profit is cut off; people speak defamation about him, his interlocutor does not speak affirmatively, a finger of derision is stretched out after him; in his palace (var. + <where> he stands) he is not well received; his dreams are confused, in his dreams he keeps seeing dead people; heartbreak is laid upon him; the wrath of god and goddess is upon him, god and goddess are angry with him; his case is not cleared up by diviner or dream interpreter; witchcraft has been practised against him; he has been cursed before god and goddess.

In order that god and goddess accept his prayer:

(Ritual) ....

Day and night, worry will not affect him, he will have profit, he will speedily experience victory over his adversary, a favourable finger will be stretched out after him, in his palace he will be welcomed, his evil dreams and the omens and signs that confront him will become propitious, he will enjoy reconciliation with god and goddess, a successful judgement will be given to him by diviner and dream interpreter, witchcraft, spells, magic, or evil machinations will not threaten him (again).

Here the witchcraft entry (*kišpī epšūšu*) has the same form as in *BAM* 316, but its relative position is different: whereas in *BAM* 316 the entry concerning the failure of divination is placed subsequent to the witchcraft entry and appears at the conclusion of the statement of the misfortune (together with the mention of the absence of response), in *BAM* 315 the afore-mentioned divination entry is placed (in iii, 7b–8a) preceding the witchcraft entry and immediately following the notation about the anger of the gods.[45] This change, together with the omission of *BAM* 316 ii, 11′, sets witchcraft near the end of the sequence. In that position, witchcraft links up unambiguously with the notation that the patient had been cursed before god and goddess[46] and is seen clearly as a

[43] For the restoration, see *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 43′.
[44] *upšāšû* is expected here, but according to the copy there is hardly room for this restoration.
[45] Note also that it appears in a slightly different form (without 'up to 7 times').
[46] So that it now appears that the patient is cursed by the witch (perhaps by means of witchcraft?). The

statement about the principal cause of the god's anger. Witchcraft is now the ultimate cause of the god's anger, while the latter becomes only the immediate cause of the misfortunes in *BAM* 315 iii, 1–6a and of the inability to receive a divine response in the form of divination or oracle. Our conclusion that this development has taken place and that witchcraft has become the ultimate cause of the misfortune is further supported by the occurrence and position of a witchcraft entry (*kišpī ruḫû rusû upšāšû lemnūti lā iṭeḫḫûšu*) in the statement of the outcome to be expected from the performance of the ritual. There (*BAM* 315 iii, 15–16) it appears in the final slot, a privileged position indicating its significance.[47]

(ii) SBTU 2, 22. Thus, by considering a group of related texts together, we have seen how witchcraft had been introduced into a composition which originally made no mention of witchcraft, and how in the 'late' version *BAM* 315 // Bu 91–5–9, 214, it had even been introduced as, or transformed into, the primary aetiology or cause of misfortune. Any lingering doubts about the place of witchcraft in our composition is eliminated by *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 39′a-b (= i, 16′ ff. [more precisely, probably i, 16′–19′, 21′b–23′a]), 39′c–46′, a variant of *BAM* 315 iii, 1–16 // Bu 91–5–9, 214.[48] *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 39′–46′ reads:

39′ DIŠ NA *gi-na-a šu-dur* ŠU.BI.AŠ.ÀM NA BI *kiš-pi ep-šu-uš*
40′ KI DINGIR *u* ^{d}15 *šu-du-lu* (sic!) DINGIR *u* ^{d}15 *tas-lit-su* TI-*e*
41′ Ú.*ak-tam* Ú.GÍR.ḪAB ZÌ.ZÌ GIŠ.TÚG *ina* KUŠ DÙ.DÙ-*pí ina* GÚ-*šú* GAR-*ma*
42′ *ur-ra u mu-šú ni-ziq-tu*$_4$ NU TE-*šú iš-di-ḫu* TUK(-)*e deš* EN$^{!}$ *di*$^{!}$[49]-*ni-šú*
43′ *ár-ḫiš* IGI-*mar* ŠU.SI SIG$_5$-*tì* EGIR-*šú* LAL-*aṣ ina* É.GAL-*šú im-man-gar*
44′ MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ ḪUL.MEŠ Á.MEŠ IZKIM.MEŠ SIG$_5$.MEŠ *ana sa-lim* DINGIR *u* ^{d}15

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topic is complex; elsewhere, I shall discuss the relationship of witchcraft and *māmīt* and the accusation/curse before god.

[47] It is even possible that this stage of revision started in the prediction and moved backwards to the diagnosis.

[48] As noted above, von Weiher, the editor of *SBTU* 2, already identified this unit as a duplicate of *BAM* 315 iii, 8–16 (*SBTU* 2, p. 109). Actually it 'duplicates' the whole unit *BAM* 315 iii, 1–16. As von Weiher already noticed, ŠU.BI.AŠ.ÀM, the second phrase in i, 39′ (henceforth: 39′b), is to be understood as 'dito (= wie oben Z. 16 ff.)' (*SBTU* 2, p. 115), but while it is true that on first glance 'ditto' in i, 39′b might seem to refer to the entire preceding descriptive unit i, 16′–25′a (or, more accurately, i, 16′b–25′a, since i, 39′a already repeats i, 16′a : *šumma amēlu ginâ šūdur*), we should probably construe it as referring only to i, 16′b–19′, 21′b–23′a partly because these lines constitute the text of its duplicate *BAM* 315 iii, 1 ff. (and duplicates).

This is consistent with the common sense observation that while 'ditto' may often mean that a text (or section thereof) is identical with the preceding, this is not always the case. Especially in magical and medical collections where, after an opening unit (consisting of an introductory section containing a description of symptoms, etc., and prescriptive ritual), each member of a long series of units may often be introduced by a 'ditto' mark to avoid repeating the description of symptoms, etc., often these introductory sections would have been similar but not actually identical, and 'ditto' would indicate no more than that subsequent units contained introductory sections similar in content to that of the first unit in the sequence.

[49] Copy: hu ši. Von Weiher read: ... *e-deš hu-ši-in-šú* (*SBTU* 2, p. 110) and translated 'die Erneuerung seiner Kraft ...,' (see p. 115, as well as the note to this line on p. 120). With the reading EN! *di*$^{!}$*-ni-šú* (*bēl dīnišu*), based in part on my reading EN ⌜*di*⌝*-ni-šú* in *BAM* 315 iii, 12 (which von Weiher, p. 120, mistakenly construed as *adi* (EN) *ši*$^{?}$*-ni-šú*, 'zweimal'), I believe that there is no longer justification for reading <e diš> as an infinitive of *edēšu*. But I am not certain how to construe it. At the moment, I can do no better than the following suggestion: We expect something like the 'defeat' or 'fall' of the *bēl dīni*. Perhaps *e* should be attached to TUK (but in that case, it would almost certainly have to be taken as an infinitive *rašê*, rather than the expected *irašši*), while *diš* represents a nominal form derived from *dâšu* (*diāšu*), 'to thresh', used metaphorically in the sense of trampling of enemies (as subject or object; see *CAD* D, 121). There is already a nominal form *dīšu* in the meaning 'smashed, trampled'.

45′ *in-né-šir* KI LÚ.ḪAL *u* LÚ.ENSI DI-*šú u* EŠ.BAR-*šú*[50] *uš-te-šer*
46′ *kiš-pi ru-ḫu-ú ru-su-ú up-šá-šu-ú* ḪUL.MEŠ NU TE.MEŠ-*šú* (End of Column)

[If a man is constantly frightened. ŠU.BI.AŠ.ÀM (= 'its action is the same', that is to say: 'Ditto'). That man: witchcraft has been practised against him; he has been cursed before god and goddess.

In order that god and goddess accept his prayer:

(Ritual) ....

Day and night, worry will not affect him, he will have profit, he will speedily experience victory over his adversary, a favourable finger will be stretched out after him, in his palace he will be welcomed, his evil dreams and omens and signs will become propitious, he will enjoy reconciliation with god and goddess, a successful judgement and verdict will be given to him by diviner and dream interpreter, witchcraft, spells, magic, or evil machinations will not threaten him (again).

The unit i, 39′–46′ begins (in i, 39′a-b) by referring to the statements made already in the immediately preceding unit i, 16′ ff.; it thus attests to a description of misfortune similar to, if not identical with, *BAM* 315 iii, 1 ff. (and duplicates), but with no mention of witchcraft. This is followed by *amēlu šū kišpī epšūš itti ili u ištarišu šu-du-lu* (sic), 'That man: witchcraft has been practised against him; he has been cursed before god and goddess'. This is the same witchcraft entry that we have seen before in *BAM* 315 iii // Bu 91–5–9, 214 as well as in *BAM* 316 ii.[51] But the introduction here of this entry by the words *amēlu* (NA) *šū* (BI), 'that man' makes it absolutely clear that witchcraft in this text was regarded as the aetiological diagnosis or primary cause of the situation and supports our earlier conclusion that witchcraft had probably already been regarded so also in *BAM* 315 iii // Bu 91–5–9, 214. Note again the occurrence of a witchcraft entry at the very end of the prediction. It is possible, moreover, that NA BI is used in *SBTU* 2, 22 not because the witchcraft entry here has a new significance or a different one from *BAM* 315 but because the scribe had previously used 'ditto' for the preceding section of text and thus felt constrained to introduce a (new) entry not found in the preceding unit of the tablet with a formal mark of significance.

Summary. By studying related sections of *BAM* 316, *STT* 95 + 295 // BM 64174, *BAM* 315 // Bu 91–5–9, 214, and *SBTU* 2, 22, we have now demonstrated how a composition that originally made no mention of witchcraft and regarded the anger of the personal gods as the primary cause of misfortune had been revised and adapted first to include witchcraft and then to present witchcraft as the primary diagnosis and cause.[52]

[50] Given the text of *BAM* 315 iii, 15 (*dīnšu ušteššer*), the usual association of *dīnu* with forms of *ešēru*, and the singular form of the verb here, *purussû* must be regarded as an addition based on *ana purussêšu parāsimma dīnšu šutēšuri* of *BAM* 316 ii, 14′ and BM 64174: 7 // *STT* 95 + 295 iii, 137′.

[51] Cf. also *SBTU* 2, 22 iv, 13–17, discussed below, Excursus I. (Note that J. Fincke, *NABU* 1998/1, no. 26 has now joined *SBTU* 2, 22 to *SBTU* 3, 85. As far as I can see, this join does not affect our discussion.)

[52] The various manuscript groups are meant to represent logical and typological stages. While it is likely that the several revisions of this composition (some of which we do not possess) were based upon, or at least influenced by, preceding ones, our construction does not require that the development move in a straight line from one textual stage to another. It is possible, though not very likely, that the various revisions were not textually dependent one upon the other but rather independent revisions of the original. In any case, the

In principle, I would treat *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 39′–46′ as the last stage of the development, for therein the change in the text made already in *BAM* 315 is rendered clear and definitive. By explicitly building upon a unit that had not included witchcraft and then adding the latter as the diagnosis, *SBTU* 2, 22 provides a compelling illustration of how older texts were adapted for use against witchcraft.[53]

* * *

We have now seen that at least some compositions that had originally treated misfortune as a consequence of the anger of the personal god were revised in one way or another so as to include the witch/witchcraft among the sources of evil and harm, and sometimes even to present her/it as primarily and ultimately responsible for the misfortune. It may be that there existed a number of aetiologies of equal weight and validity, of which witchcraft was one, and that in the revision witchcraft was selected and inserted into the text by the patient or exorcist for reasons of a purely individual nature. More likely, however, witchcraft gradually became an important explanation of misfortune and slowly usurped the place of other aetiologies. In any case, subsequent to the creation of a composition, witchcraft was introduced into the text and became the primary or ultimate cause of the patient's suffering. And, thus, regardless of the scribal mechanism and of the ideological circumstance – whether witchcraft was chosen when another diagnosis had failed and the earlier version was then combined with the new diagnosis[54] or whether witchcraft has become a primary, initial diagnosis – it is now clear that earlier non-witchcraft texts were changed to include and even to centre on witchcraft. The very fact that various texts were rewritten in this manner indicates change, a change which reflects an historical development: the growing concern with and belief in witchcraft.[55]

The new emphasis on witchcraft as well as the afore-mentioned revisions attest to the intrusion into the mainstream of religious thought, of the belief that the witch could cause misfortune and even divine alienation. Surely, these textual revisions indicate that the difficulties caused by the existence alongside each other of two different forms of causality are real ones and are not to be dismissed out of hand by the claim that such beliefs are not theologically contradictory or that if they are, such contradictory beliefs can exist alongside each other without causing any difficulties[56] (or can be explained

several revisions reveal a tendency and represent stages in a cultural development.

[53] See Excurses I-II for further discussion of *SBTU* 2, 22 and BM 64174, respectively.

[54] See below, Excursus II, where I examine this possibility in a discussion of BM 64174. But even if the addition of witchcraft (*kišpū*, etc.) in texts like *SBTU* 2, 22 or *BAM* 315 is a result either of the search for a further cause when a ritual that posited the anger of the god as the primary cause of misfortune had failed, or of deeper thought about the situation leading to the conclusion that witchcraft was also involved, the very choice of witchcraft is, in no small measure, due to and a reflection of a growing concern with witchcraft on the part of *āšipūtu*.

[55] In an earlier note (above, n. 23) I mentioned that these texts are usually not lists of independent symptoms or diagnoses. But even if they were, the secondary inclusion of witchcraft would still reflect its growing significance.

[56] Thus, while partially correct, the position reflected by a statement such as that of van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 71 ('The religion of Babylonia formally reckoned with the malignant influence of sorcerers, who could inflict diseases with devious and, to modern eyes, supernatural skill. Their human design did not automatically coincide with a divine decree, but the angered gods might allow them a freedom of action on purpose. Conversely, the mood of the deities could also be influenced by the witches'.) glosses over the contradiction and does not take account of the complexity of the situation.

away in some other manner[57]); for if such were the case, there would have been no need for revision such as is found in *BAM* 315 // Bu 91–5–9, 214, and *SBTU* 2, 22. But whether the enhanced importance accorded witchcraft in the therapeutic literature reflects a new inner development or emphasis in *āšipūtu* or an outside influence on *āšipūtu* of beliefs coming from elsewhere in the society, the increasing selection of witchcraft as the diagnosis of choice is due to the growing importance of the belief in and fear of witchcraft in the society at large and in the world of thought of the *āšipu*.[58]

And whatever the source of the development, witchcraft beliefs had an effect on *āšipūtu* and were themselves affected by it. Accordingly, let us now see if we can treat the revision in a more textured or nuanced way, for it is even possible that in the process new ideas may have taken form. For example, it seems likely that on theological or psychological grounds a distinction should be drawn between the notion of the god's removal from the person of the sufferer by an external force, on the one hand, and the god's anger and abandonment or punishment of the sufferer, on the other. The removal (and distancing) of the personal god by the witch is a notion that is original to a folk or popular witchcraft literature – a literature that perhaps draws on a more natural and vivid level of belief – and is fundamentally the primitive and infantile fear that another – here a woman – may take away a man's power and sense of being. The notion of the anger of the personal god, on the other hand, is of a higher (psychological) order and draws on a different type or level of personification. If this is correct, the insertion of the theme of witchcraft into texts that centred upon the anger of the god resulted in more than just the conjunction of two complementary ideas about or explanations of suffering (the power of witchcraft to harm a person by distancing his god and the god's anger at a person as a form or cause of punishment for a misdeed). Rather, the introduction of the notion of witchcraft as a power that can distance the god into texts that were part of standard *āšipūtu* and were originally not directed against witchcraft, but were centred upon the anger of the god, brought about a meeting and overlap of two different sets of beliefs. This encounter would have led to the creation of a new idea: the notion that the witch or witchcraft could cause the personal god to be angry.[59]

It is possible, moreover, that this new image of the witch provoking the personal god to anger may also have solved a theological problem. The witch's ability to cause misfortune and to remove the sufferer's personal god from his body may have posed a problem for Mesopotamian theology, because this construct would have contradicted the belief, current already in the early second millennium, that the personal god had the power to protect his ward against external threat and to punish him only when he had sinned. This construct would have placed the powers of sin and witchcraft as causes

[57] By such claims that the occurrence of these contradictory beliefs alongside each other is of no consequence because they belong to different groups of the population, to different historical periods, or to different levels of explanation.

[58] It should also be stated here that the selection of witchcraft as the diagnosis of choice is not just the consequence of a deepening exegesis or explication that simply renders explicit a belief or practice that existed all along in the thought of the writers or priests responsible for our texts.

[59] Since certainty is not possible, I should provide here also a different and perhaps opposite explanation: Given that the number of primary occurrences in hard core witchcraft literature of the theme of the witch removing the personal god is not great, it is not impossible that the conjunction of witchcraft and divine anger in developed *āšipūtu* is itself responsible for the creation not only of the idea that the witch or witchcraft could cause the personal god to be angry but also of the idea that the witch could remove the sufferer's personal god and personal goddess from his body and cause them to be distant.

of misfortune and of divine abandonment into conflict with each other, and ultimately, would even have set in opposition the powers of divine anger and of witchcraft as causes of suffering. It may be that in some texts, the placement of the ideas of witchcraft and divine anger in conjunction with each other was a way, or unintentionally created a way, of solving this problem. For the conjunction suggests that the god is not simply overpowered by the witch and forced to absent himself and abandon his ward, but rather that he is influenced by the witch to change his estimation of his ward. It is true that the god is provoked by the witch, but it is the god himself who chooses to be angry with his protégé. Thus, for certain theological purposes, it may be divine volition and anger, rather than the witch's power, that have caused the man to be abandoned by his god.

But overall, we witness the growing power of witchcraft and the diminution of the importance attributed to the personal god.

Summary and Preliminary Theological Conclusions

Different forms of textual evidence prove that various traditional texts were rewritten to include witchcraft.[60] These textual revisions attest to changes in thought and practice. They reflect, I believe, an increasing concern or belief in witchcraft and a change in Mesopotamian religious thought.

Now, in any case, new texts were composed for use against witchcraft, and old ones were rewritten to include it. But while the conjunction of witchcraft and anger of the god created by revision was meant mainly to deal with the increasing threat of witchcraft (and to resolve various tensions attendant upon this growing concern), it resulted, as we have seen, in the spread or perhaps even the creation of a new construction.[61] And we are witness in these texts to a new conjunction of witchcraft and the anger of the personal god, and the primacy of witchcraft over the personal god.

These new developments and constructions need to be fitted into the history of Mesopotamian religion and should help us introduce some further nuances into our understanding of that history. We have no intention of replacing the synthetic understanding of Mesopotamian religious thought and the reconstruction of its development exemplified by the quotations from Jacobsen and Bottéro given above. Rather, we wish simply to make an adjustment or addition to the reconstruction. Combining what we have ourselves noticed with the afore-mentioned synthesis and using its scaffolding as our basic framework, we would now suggest that there is a further stage subsequent to, or a mode of perception separate from, the two sequential stages described in the citations quoted above and would now set out the following stages or lines of development.

1) The victim is vulnerable to demonic attack because he is unprotected by a personal god who is either absent for one reason or another or has fled the field because of the

[60] Here we have seen how the descriptions, diagnoses, and statements of purpose that set the context for the therapy prescribed by a group of therapeutic texts were rewritten to include witchcraft as a source of misfortune and sometimes even as the primary one. The same development is discernible in the prayers and incantations, themselves; there are many examples – for a few, see my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 9–46 and 61–74.

[61] Some difficulties encountered in a number of biblical 'Laments of the Individual' may be due to similar developments; direction of the development aside, revision would explain the tension in some of these psalms between the acts (of witchcraft) performed by the sufferer's enemies and the anger of God.

demon's superior strength. Here, neither cosmic order nor the protection against external non-human forces afforded by a developed human society has been firmly established.

2) The victim is vulnerable to demonic attack because he has sinned and thereby angered his personal god. The latter either abandons his protégé (passive punishment), thereby leaving him exposed to attack, or calls forth the attack (active punishment). Here there is both cosmic and social order.

3) Even when the victim is innocent of any wrongdoing, the witch is able to distance the personal god or to cause the god to be angry and to abandon his protégé.

Social and Religious Contexts and Developments

But it is not enough to document change on a textual and theological level and even to draw up a developmental scheme for the several theological constructions. We must also try to explain and flesh out the aforementioned developments so as to understand their nature and their causes. Most of all, we must try to answer the following question: Why did witchcraft overshadow the personal god and become more powerful than he, and how did witchcraft replace sin as a cause of divine anger? Or to put the question somewhat differently: Given that witchcraft is a secondary development, why did the mainstream of belief that centres upon sin and the personal god accept the witchcraft component and not simply ignore it?

To understand changes in the place of witchcraft and its relationship to other systems of belief, one must consider the social, psychological, and intellectual needs and forces that cause the changes as well as the effects of the changes. In thinking about the development of witchcraft beliefs in Mesopotamia, I have tried to take account of these several aspects, but here I am able to comment upon them in no more than a partial manner. Moreover, in order to present an integrated argument, I shall intersperse my comments on the social and psychological; these will be followed by general remarks of a cultural nature and by one or two closing observations on the theological or intellectual system. I shall discuss these several areas in rather general terms, and my results will often be provisional and speculative. This general statement is intended as a working hypothesis; I hope that it is found to be useful.

Personal God

Since the significance of the personal god will be of increasing importance as we move into more abstract ways of looking at our problem, perhaps we should begin with a few general remarks about this god and what he represents, especially in the psycho-social spheres.

Stated succinctly, the personal god is the personification of the individual's powers of strength and effectiveness; he is also the personification of right and wrong action. He represents and rewards either effective/realistic actions or proper actions, or both. First of all, the personal god is a projection of the individual's powers of effectiveness and procreation. In this role, he is an aspect of ego. But in a clan context, he also represents group or clan norms as well as the responsibility to maintain them. Thus, the personal

god is also an aspect of superego or conscience. Let me now lay this out in somewhat greater detail.[62]

One's strength is one's *'ēl*.[63] The human being's own ability to act and to make things happen was seen as a separate wondrous power that one possessed. But from being part of oneself, the power was externalized and took on the form of a separate being, a god if you will. This god is a projection and personification of the powers of procreation and achievement.[64] The personal god seems to be an externalized ego and perhaps even amounts to a sense of self, for he is also the power for thought, the ability of the individual to plan and deliberate so that he might act effectively and achieve success. He is certainly an aspect of ego, if by ego we understand that which

> brings into being the conscious sense of self. The ego engages in secondary process thinking, or the remembering, planning, and weighing of circumstances that permit us to mediate between the fantasies of the id and the realities of the outer world.[65]

But the personal god is not simply the god of an isolated individual; rather, he is the god of the individual as a social being. He is both the divine personification of individual procreation and achievement and the god of the tribal or family group. The social and individual overlap: because the god of the clan is passed on from generation to generation and upon him is dependent the assurance of the future and because the individual identifies with the group, the clan god also serves as the personification of the luck and fortune, the well being, the effectiveness, accomplishment, and success of individual members of the group or, at least, of family heads within the group. But given his group function, it is not surprising that in addition to representing effectiveness and accomplishment, this god would also represent group norms as well as the responsibility to maintain them. Thus, undoubtedly, the personal god is also an aspect of superego or conscience and punishes the self. Recalling the overlap noted between Freud's concept of the superego (the internalized representation of parental values and authority) and Durkheim's concept of collective representations (society, the system of moral norms, that [no less than the superego] constrains by virtue of internalized moral authority),[66] I do not hesitate to suggest that the personal god represents parents and their values and preserves the norms of the family grouping or clan.

Thus, the personal god is the personification not only of the individual's powers of

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[62] On the personal god, see especially Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 155–162 as well as K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden, 1996), 66–93, and Abusch, 'Ghost and God: Some Observations on a Babylonian Understanding of Human Nature', in: *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience* (A.I. Baumgarten, et. al., eds.; Studies in the History of Religions 78; Leiden, 1998), 363–383. For the personal gods as a family god, see also, R.A. Di Vito, *Studies in Third Millennium Sumerian and Akkadian Personal Names* (StPsm 16; Rome, 1993), 7–11 (and references there to the works of Albertz, Charpin, and Stol) and 268–269.

[63] For the etymological connection of *'il* / *'ēl* with 'strength', see, e.g., BDB, s. *'lh* I and *'l* II (pp. 41–43) and *HALAT*, vol.1, p. 47b (3. Etym.); note, especially, the idiom *yš l'l ydy*. But cf. also *TDOT*, vol. 1, 244.

[64] Cf. Jacobsen, 'Mesopotamia', 203: '[T]he personal god appears as the personification of a man's luck and success. Success is interpreted as an outside power which infuses itself into a man's doings and makes them produce results'.

[65] S.A. Rathus and J.S. Nevid, *Abnormal Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, 1991 [Instructor's Edition]), 37.

[66] See T. Parsons, 'The Superego and the Theory of Social Systems', *Psychiatry* 15 (1952), 15–24 and M. Fortes, 'Custom and Conscience', *Religion, Morality and the Person: Essays on Tallensi Religion* (Cambridge, 1987), 186.

strength and effectiveness, but also of his responsibility in respect to right and wrong actions. He is thus an externalization of the ego and super-ego, a representation of the self in the form of externalized, divinized figures. Needless to say, different aspects of the god will be emphasized at different times and in different circumstances. Thus, depending on context, sometimes the personal god represents the ego, at other times the superego. As for misfortune: The loss of well-being and effectiveness is experienced as the absence of the personal god, and the culture – the texts, that is – may construe this absence as reflecting either the loss of personal power or the god's punitive action, or both.

Socio-psychological Aspects: Some General Considerations

We return now to witchcraft and its relationship to the anger of the god. To understand the growth of witchcraft in Mesopotamia, I have found it helpful to make use of a general idea enunciated by Norbert Elias and then applied by others such as Johan Goudsblom[67] and Stephen Mennell to various historical issues. According to Elias, there are three types of dangers with which people always have to cope. To quote Elias directly:

> Among the universal features of society is the *triad of basic controls*. The stage of development attained by a society can be ascertained:
>
> (1) by the extent of its control-chances over non-human complexes of events – that is, control over what are usually called 'natural events';
>
> (2) by the extent of its control-chances over interpersonal relationships – that is, over what are usually called 'social relationships';
>
> (3) by the extent to which each of its members has control over himself as an individual – for, however dependent he may always be on others, he has learned from infancy to control himself to a greater or lesser degree.[68]

Every society faces and has to deal with extra-human or natural, inter-human or social, and intra-human or psychological forces. The nature of each of these forces or dangers as well as their relation to each other will, of course, differ according to the environment, complexity, and history of the society. The dangers are different at different stages of development. Moreover, a society attains different degrees of control over these forces at different stages of its development, but there are trends in the degree of control over these forces and an interdependence in any society between trends in its control over all three.

For example, the successful treatment of natural dangers (external threats) by the development of more complex technology may bring with it changes in social relations such as greater competition and longer chains of interdependence within the community and between communities. In turn, these changes increase the dangers that people pose

[67] See, e.g., J. Goudsblom, 'Human History and Long-Term Social Processes', in: J. Goudsblom, *et al.*, *Human History and Social Process* (Exeter Studies in History 26; Exeter, 1989), 71.

[68] *What is Sociology* (transl. by S. Mennell and G. Morrissey; London, 1978), 156. See also N. Elias, 'Problems of Involvement and Detachment', *British Journal of Sociology* 7/3 (1956), 226–252, esp. 230–233.

for each other.

Some of these points are summed up by Mennell in the following two passages:

> Although in *very* long-term perspective all three [controls] may have tended to grow, he [scil. Elias] emphasises how difficult initial advances are, given that for example advances in control over natural dangers may bring with them changes in social relations (e.g. longer chains of interdependence) which then become *more* difficult to control, increasing the danger which people pose *for each other*, and making it more difficult to achieve more detached and less fantasy-laden forms of knowledge.[69]

> The growth of the web of social interdependence tends to outstrip people's understanding of it. The same process which diminishes dangers and feelings of insecurity in the face of natural forces tends also to increase the dangers and feelings of insecurity in face of 'social forces' – the forces stemming from people's dependence on each other for the satisfaction of their needs and for their security.[70]

Turning back to Mesopotamia, we would recall Jacobsen's and Bottéro's descriptions of the early periods and would now suggest that in the early period, the relation to the external, natural world was the main problem facing Mesopotamian society. In the Sumerian incantation literature, these external threats were personified in the form of demons.[71] Hence, their importance and power over humans and personal gods in this early literature. Eventually, with the evolution of the economy, of a complex irrigation system, and of the state (which also deals successfully with the new problem of outside political competition), the external natural problems facing Mesopotamian society are overcome or, at least, kept in check, but now the problems facing the society come increasingly from within the community itself (but probably mainly from outside the family), partly because of greater competition and interdependence; accordingly, the dangers are now seen as coming from within society itself. Demons – nature – are perhaps placed under control, but less so the other human beings in the society. This heightened concern with enmity on the part of other human beings takes the form of the belief in witchcraft and, in part, explains the newly found power of these beliefs.

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[69] S. Mennell, 'Short-Term Interests and Long-Term Processes: The Case of Civilisation and Decivilisation', in: Goudsblom *et al.*, *Human History and Social Process*, 100.

[70] S. Mennell, *Norbert Elias: Civilization and the Human Self-Image* (Oxford, 1989), 169–170. Immediately preceding this quote is a passage that Mennell himself renders explicitly germane for Mesopotamia:

> Paradoxically, says Elias, the gradual increase in human beings' capacity for taking a more detached view of natural forces and gaining more control over them – a process which has also accelerated over the long term – has tended to increase the difficulties they have in extending their control over social relationships and over their own feelings in thinking about them. The reason for this paradox is that as humans have gradually come to understand natural forces more, fear them less and use them more effectively for human ends, this has gone hand in hand with specific changes in human relationships. More and more people have tended to become more and more interdependent with each other in longer chains and denser webs. (If this sounds rather abstract, think of the example of the early 'hydraulic civilizations' of Mesopotamia and Egypt where, as archaeologists and historians have long been aware, the harnessing of the waters for irrigation and the control of hitherto disastrous floods necessarily went hand in hand with the emergence of much more elaborate political and economic organization.)

[71] I do not mean to imply that all demons in this literature represent external/natural threats.

Hence, the growth of witchcraft beliefs, and the emerging dominance of the witch over the personal god.

The heightened concern with witchcraft may have had its beginnings already at the end of the third or the beginning of the second millennium. Over time, this concern deepened and developed; I suspect that it became particularly acute during the early first millennium in the kinds of cosmopolitan urban centers formed in Mesopotamia under the impact of Assyrian imperialism.[72]

Thus, whereas earlier the powers that could control the personal god were non-human, demonic, now the power that can cause the alienation of the personal god is a human power, the witch. A common characteristic of these two stages (our first and third) is that one's well-being, and the presence or absence of one's personal god, is determined by the power of hostile, external forces – demons or witches. In these settings, the personal god is a reflection or projection of ego, of individual power and effectiveness; or, rather, the absence of the personal god attests to the absence of power and effectiveness. The inability of the personal god to protect his protégé is an expression and acknowledgment of individual weakness in the face of natural and social forces.

All this, of course, is only part of the story, for till now we have talked about the personal god only as he reacts to forces that are more powerful than he. But what of those situations where the personal god initiates punishments? Once the question is formulated in this way, it becomes clear that between the two social stages that we have imagined there should be another stage or perhaps, simply, another mode of perception. In effect, this middle stage would be an intrusion – perhaps just a structural one – for at this stage, the family or clan, rather than the town, provides the defining structure of community. The clan may exist in, or coexist alongside, the city; but now it, rather than the state, defines one's moral obligation and relationship with the divine. This chronology would agree, perhaps, with the tribalization of Mesopotamia by the Amorites during the early second millennium. (It is, of couse, possible that this development had its origins already with the Akkadians.)

At this stage, family power, responsibilities, and images rather than natural or urban ones define the moral universe. Abiding by one's family obligations to the personal god, that is to the family, is what determines one's value and situation. Thus, here *ilu* (the 'god'), representing the family, has the power and decides whether one has fulfilled one's obligations or has sinned and whether one is to be respected and rewarded or punished and shunned by god and family. Hence, the importance of sin and of the personal god as the arbiter of one's behaviour, social condition, and esteem.

In this middle stage, in contrast to the earlier and later stages, the disposition of the personal god and one's consequent well being were determined by one's own actions. Here, as noted earlier, the personal god is a reflection or projection of superego; it

[72] For examples of the social impact on Assyria of Assyrian imperialism, see, e.g., H.W.F. Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria* (London, 1984), 127–134, and D.C. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East. 3100–332 B.C.E.* (New Haven and London, 1997), 80–85. I am fully aware that the texts analyzed in the first part of this paper all derive from the first millennium. I would have preferred locating much more of the social reconstruction in the first millenium. I have not done so because I have felt obliged to take account of such facts as: 1. the (admittedly sparse) Old Babylonian witchcraft material; 2. the existence already in the third millenium of Sumerian incantations against demons; 3. the development of *āšipūtu* in the Old Babylonian period as shown, for example, by the work of A. Cavigneaux. For these reasons, I have extended my reconstrution into the earlier periods.

represents or protects family norms and values. Thus, suffering because of sin confirmed the power of the group and its social mores. But note that it also expressed the power of the individual, for his deeds were powerful enough to alienate and his presence significant enough to cause the god to forgive. It is thus possible that we are also witness here to a change in the importance of the individual. In the earlier stage, it is the town or city, rather than the individual, that is the unit of importance. Suffering said less about the individual's own deeds and more about the dependence and vulnerability of the individual member of society. Subsequently, we see the emergence of the individual as both the subject and object of his own actions. Yet, the importance of individual sin is a reflection less of growing individualism and more of the growing importance of the family unit. Even so, the individual bearer of sin is responsible for his own suffering and is a force to be reckoned with. For here, the individual is a child who has sinned and the personal god is a parent who grows angry and punishes.[73] The personal god is truly the superego, though the child remains powerful through his guilt and through his power or ability to gain forgiveness.

Subsequently, however, there is a shift on the part of the sufferer from a stance of guilt to one of innocence, but thereby also from power to weakness. Hence, witchcraft. Witchcraft explains misfortune; of course, it is not the only explanation for misfortune, but it has the advantage of shifting much of the responsibility for one's suffering away from oneself and onto other human beings. Perhaps, it is an increasing inability to bear the guilt – for the superego may grow unbearable – that contributes to this movement from sin to witchcraft as the cause of divine anger. But we also require a social explanation.

The ascription of power to a force outside oneself is a form of externalization. Responsibility is shifted from (inside) the individual and (inside) the family to impersonal and/or external, social forces. Therefore, while there may be numerous reasons for this altered mentality, this shift in thinking certainly also suggests a movement away from family or clan and an assimilation to city life. This way of seeing oneself and others surely fits the conditions of a new and more complex urban world in which heightened social interdependence is experienced as a source of danger by an individual placed in relationship with others with whom he does not have close or traditional ties. The choice of an external human cause as an explanation for failure and suffering is, surely, rendered even more plausible, then, if this development took place in an urban world where the extended family played less of a defining and supporting role and the individual was confronted by more extended, impersonal, and hostile social forces and felt weak, helpless, and anxious.

Such feelings may be experienced in any urban center, but they come to the fore especially, I think, in cosmopolitan cities that contain a variety of communities (including foreign or fringe groups) that vie with each other but are all dependent on a central government. The development we are tracing is exacerbated, then, by the fact that we are dealing here not only with the world of the older homogenous cohesive towns, but also with cosmopolitan urban centers like Kalah, cities where diverse (ethnic) groups have been brought together and where the individual feels himself alone and dependent,

[73] For this image, cf. Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 157–161. Cf. the statement on an Egyptian statue of the Third Intermediate period in J. Johnson, 'The Legal Status of Women in Ancient Egypt', in: *Mistress of the House Mistress of Heaven* (A.K. Capel and G.E. Markoe, eds.; New York, 1997), 182: 'What is the God of a person except his father and his mother?....' (Reference courtesy Dr. Barbara S. Lesko).

isolated and vulnerable. When the individual feels himself most alone and dependent, he tends to focus on his own individuality, but at the same time, he may also shift responsibility for his condition on to those others who may be no less alone and vulnerable than he. It is almost as if their very strangeness and isolation[74] make him feel more alone and vulnerable.[75]

Cultural Terms

Before making some concluding remarks about Mesopotamian religious thought, let me summarize some of my suggestions under the rubric of Mesopotamian cultural development. Our material would seem to reflect different social contexts (town/city and family) and/or evolutionary stages. Whatever else it represents, the external attack or threat of demons who can chase away the personal god reflects the world of the general Mesopotamian urban (Sumerian) community of the third millennium. The centrality and power of the personal god who punishes the individual because of infractions that he has committed is a Semitic feature; it reflects the life of the Semitic (Akkadian or Amorite) tribal/rural family or clan[76] and should probably be understood in the context of the tribal family culture in Old Babylonian times; as such, it is a conceptual intrusion into the Mesopotamian urban landscape. Finally, the last stage during which the witch became a major force able to control the personal god represents the resurgence of a late form of the Mesopotamian urban world (a form often, though not exclusively, associated with emerging empires[77]), and the assimilation/integration of the Semitic tribal world into the Mesopotamian urban world or, rather, the imposition of that world upon the tribal one.

Thus, the god belongs to the family, the witch to the town. The dominance of the family, the power of the personal god, and the importance of sin are, as it were, essentially rural/tribal intrusions into an urban (town and city) setting and cosmology. In the course of time and/or of assimilation to urban life, the centrality of the personal god and of the family diminished. External/social concerns and threats replace internal/family issues and perspectives. With the re-emergence of an urban framework, the city with its concerns and images again took centre stage. Instead of family power and concerns, such as *ilu* and *kimilti ili*, the focus was again on the moral and cosmic concerns of an urban world that was anxious less about natural forces or about family cohesion and more about social competition and hostility, concerns reflected in the new emphasis upon

[74] Or, rather, the act of looking at them and seeing oneself reflected in them.

[75] Note the identification of foreigners as witches (e.g., *Maqlû* III 78–81, IV 105–107, and IV 119–122).

[76] I do not deny that the personal god is attested in the third millennium for both Sumerian and Akkadian contexts. (This is demonstrated simply by Sumerian and Akkadian personal names, for which see Di Vito, *Sumerian and Akkadian Personal Names*.) But it is not insignificant that the personal god had greater appeal and impact among the Semitic speakers of Akkadian (see Di Vito, ibid., 269 and 272); in any case, while the personal god certainly existed in an urban context, it originated primarily in a non-urban family setting (ibid., 274–275), and the phenomenon derived its force in Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian literatures from a Semitic-family matrix and, I would add, from its tribal origins. This is consistent with "the special role for the personal god in the individual's suffering" (ibid., 267) in the Akkadian (but not the Sumerian) onomasticon (ibid., 266–269).

[77] In fact, some of the most developed images of the witch reflect imperial concerns and derive from images of a political/military enemy. I shall discuss this elsewhere.

such (newly resuscitated) forces as witchcraft and perhaps even *māmīt*. Such themes now replace or, more properly, overlay the family concerns represented by the moral and powerful personal god.[78]

At stake in the demonic/witch model is the maintenance of urban structure and individual life in a Mesopotamian urban context; at stake in the world where the personal god rules is the maintenance of the clan/family and its norms. The demon/witch represents a threat to the general community and its members; this threat derives its force and imagery from the external or social environment.[79] In the world of the clan, it is the family that is the object of the threat; this threat derives its force from the various needs fulfilled here by the family and the dangers of family breakdown. Of course, with the emergence of witchcraft neither demons nor family concerns nor images such as the personal god disappear; rather, they now come under the control or umbrella of the witch and witchcraft. And it is worth pointing here to the development of the belief that the witch has control over demons and can use them for her nefarious purposes (see, e.g., *Maqlû* II 52ff.); this new demonology illustrates the witch's growing strength and increasing control over supernatural powers and parallels the control that she has gained over the personal god, thus perhaps confirming the development that we have postulated. By emphasizing the increasing importance of witchcraft, I do not mean to suggest that witchcraft replaces all other supernatural causes of misfortune or that there are no countervailing tendencies.

Before concluding this section of our discussion, a word of clarification about 'black magic' and a further comment or two about witchcraft are in order so as not to leave the reader with a mistaken view of my position. I have consistently used the term witchcraft for both 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft',[80] both for the sake of convenience and in order to make do, when possible, with more general labels or categories so as not to prejudge the Mesopotamian materials unnecessarily. I should like to continue using the term witchcraft when referring to all forms of malevolent magic (as well as to those forms of helpful magic used by 'good witches' but later deemed pernicious and illicit) in Mesopotamia, but here I feel constrained – because otherwise the argument of this paper may be distorted and misinterpreted, and I may be misunderstood to say that the malevolent use of magic was limited to the city – to note that occasionally we may have to draw a distinction between 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft' and apply these terms to different forms of 'black magic'. Here is not the place to discuss in detail the various categories used and distinctions drawn in the study of magic by various social scientists. I simply note that occasionally I find it useful to adopt the anthropological distinction between 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft' according to which 'sorcery' refers to the aggressive use of magical techniques for pernicious private ends, whereas 'witchcraft' refers to behaviour of or acts by a human being believed to be endowed with a special

[78] My suggestion that the introduction of witchcraft as a cause of the anger of the god in standard texts is a reflex of a movement from family to a larger structure seems to be consonant with the observation by I.M. Lewis, 'A Structural Approach to Witchcraft and Spirit-Possession', in: *Witchcraft, Confessions and Accusations* (M. Douglas, ed.; ASA 9; London, 1970), 299-300, that, in the examples he studied, seizures by capricious peripheral spirits are primarily restricted to the domestic domain while witchcraft accusations operate in wider spheres of interaction.

[79] Thus, structurally and psychologically the first and third stages are similar.

[80] For this distinction, see immediately below.

mystical power and propensity for evil that result in harm to others.[81] In simple terms: ' "Witchcraft" is predominantly the pursuit of harmful ends by implicit/internal means. "Sorcery" combines harmful ends with explicit means'.[82]

Accordingly, 'sorcery' must have been prevalent in the countryside and in village communities of Mesopotamia,[83] and perhaps 'witchcraft' even had its roots in these same communities, and the concern with malevolent magic in our texts may sometimes even represent a conflict between the countryside and the town. But, overall, 'witchcraft' would seem to belong less to the villages of Mesopotamia and more to its urban world and to periods of great social dependence in these urban centres.[84] I would notice here the observations of G.P. Murdock that 'witchcraft' – associated with the 'evil eye' – may have had its origins in Mesopotamia,[85] that 'witchcraft' – in contrast to 'sorcery' – tends to be associated with societies of cultural and social complexity,[86] and that its distribution correlates with the use of systems of true writing.[87] Especially if these observations (particularly, the second and third) turn out to be correct, it would not be unreasonable to wonder whether Mesopotamian 'witchcraft' may not have emerged in relationship/reaction to learned writing centres and be part of the conflict between

witchcraft is to cause evil to man, similar to sorcery sickness is a goal of killing or punish.

[81] Of the many references possible, see, e.g., E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Sorcery and Native Opinion' and 'Witchcraft amongst the Azande' reprinted (in excerpted form) in: *Witchcraft and Sorcery* (M. Marwick, ed.; Middlesex, 1970), 21–26 and 27–37; A.D.J. Macfarlane, 'Definitions of Witchcraft', reprinted (in excerpted form) in: Marwick, ed., *Witchcraft and Sorcery*, 41–44; B. Saler, 'Nagual, Witch, and Sorcerer in a Quiché Village', reprinted in: *Magic, Witchcraft, and Curing* (J. Middleton, ed.; Garden City, 1967), 69–99; and G.P. Murdock, *Theories of Illness: A World Survey* (Pittsburgh, 1980), 20–22 and 57–71.

[82] Macfarlane, 'Definitions of Witchcraft', 44. It may be useful to quote here a general remark made by Murdock, *Theories of Illness*, 64–67:

> Superficially the theories of the causation of illness by sorcery and by witchcraft appear to be mere variants of a single cause – the malevolent use of magical techniques to injure another human being. (...)
>
> The evidence of these correlations makes abundantly clear the fundamental antithesis between sorcery and witchcraft theories. The basis of the distinction is implicit in the definitions of the two theories. Sorcery can be employed by anyone – male or female, noble or commoner – who commands the appropriate techniques. If a would-be sorcerer lacks knowledge of the right technique, he has the option of employing a specialist, a shaman, to perform the appropriate verbal spell or magical rite in his behalf. Sorcery techniques are, in short, a sort of ideological equivalent of technology, available for anyone who wants or needs them. (...)
>
> A witch, in contrast to a person who resorts to sorcery, is 'a member of a special class of human beings believed to be endowed with a special power and propensity for evil.' His or her power is an intrinsic attribute, a sort of class prerogative, not an acquired skill accessible to anyone. ... the major technique of witchcraft, the evil eye.
>
> When witchcraft is suspected, attention is likely to be directed to any category of powerful or privileged persons, including the well-born, the wealthy, and those with political authority. Since these are usually secure, it tends to be deflected or displaced to other noticeable but unpopular types of people – foreigners, hunchbacks, senile women, or individuals with piercing stares.

[83] Thus, I am not claiming, for example, that 'sorcery' or even 'witchcraft' does not occur in tribal contexts or in the rural environs of Mesopotamia. (For the moment, note the examples of 'sorcery' attested in the Mari texts; see J.-M. Durand, *AÉM* 1/1, no. 253 [p. 532] and D. Charpin, *AÉM* 1/2, no. 314 [p. 76].) But I would draw attention to the findings and analysis found in P.T.W. Baxter, 'Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder: Some Suggestions Why Witchcraft Accusations are Rare Among East African Pastoralists', *The Allocation of Responsibility* (M. Gluckman, ed.; Manchester, 1972), 163–191.

[84] This construction would agree with the suggestion that greater economic competition, especially in agriculture, as well as the interdependence of cultivators may explain the growth of witchcraft. See, e.g., Baxter, 'Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder', 172–173 and 176–177.

[85] Murdock, *Theories of Illness*, 57–59.

[86] *Ibid.*, 64–67.

[87] *Ibid.*, 59 and 64–65.

women and the bureaucratic centres.

In the urban world of our final stage, then, 'sorcery' but especially 'witchcraft' take hold and develop in importance. The tasks of combating both 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft' were taken up by *āšipūtu* as it expanded its purview in either the Old Babylonian or, perhaps as late as, the early Cassite period; in any case, our textual corpus represents an amalgam of the two.[88]

Religious Thought

This brings us back to religious thought, the point from which we started this rather long and uncertain journey. Witchcraft beliefs would seem to have originated in popular belief, but sometime during the second millennium, witchcraft was integrated into the system of *āšipūtu*. This incorporation constituted an integration of witchcraft beliefs into a belief system in which power belongs to and derives from the gods. Once incorporated, the witch had to be set into a meaningful relationship to the gods. Whatever she was before, the witch now became a human and cosmic criminal, for in *āšipūtu* the legitimacy of magic depended on its use or commission by the great gods, and thus the witch who drew upon different sources of power and validation[89] became, by definition, an opponent of the gods and an enemy of both the human and cosmic order. As noted earlier, a belief in witchcraft shifts responsibility for the individual's suffering onto other human beings; thus, an increasing belief in witchcraft and the acceptance of this belief into the mainstream of religious thought meant a loss of power for the individual. However, its integration into *āšipūtu* and into the world of the gods represented, among other things, an attempt at reasserting control. For in *āšipūtu*, the witch's growing power over humans and their personal gods is recognized but is, then, overcome by the great gods and their priestly emissaries, to whom individual members of the community can now turn for justice and assistance. This, too, constituted one more way of coping with an increasingly complex and hostile world.

Excursus I. Further Discussion of *SBTU* 2, 22

SBTU 2, 22 has played a significant role in our analysis. However, it can contribute even more than it already has to our understanding of the issues and texts examined in this paper. Its scribe has done us a great service by rendering the text of i, 39′–46′ in an abbreviated fashion and not repeating relevant materials given in the previous unit. Insofar as the earlier unit i, 16′–38′ is a composition that does not include witchcraft in the symptomology and diagnosis contained in its first section (i, 16′–25′), and the subsequent unit i, 39′–46′ refers back to the opening lines of the preceding unit and then adds witchcraft as the diagnosis for the situation, this tablet provides a clear illustration of at least one of the ways in which texts with no concern with witchcraft were adapted or developed and/or recorded for use against witchcraft. It shows that on the basis of an

[88] It is probably at the time that witchcraft becomes part of *āšipūtu* that the clan notion of the 'anger of the god' is first influenced by witchcraft beliefs.

[89] But, perhaps, cf. ^{d}*Kanišurra, bēlet kaššāpāti* (e.g., *Maqlû* V 60).

existing unit, a new unit or section thereof (here the symptomology and diagnosis) may be created for use against witchcraft (or an old unit may be given a witchcraft significance) by the addition of a witchcraft entry, and then recorded immediately following that first unit. The juxtaposition of the two adjoining units, as here in *SBTU* 2, 22, confirms the correctness of treating the witchcraft entry in a composition that is similar to one without a witchcraft entry as significant and sometimes as an indication of revision. The juxtaposition provides an explicit example of how these texts are recorded and how we should read them; certainly, it indicates that the ancients themselves imputed significance to the similarity and difference between the two units. Of greatest importance is the fact that *SBTU* 2, 22 probably represents a textual tradition different from those known to us from other first millennium libraries and collections and provides textual confirmation for some of our assumptions and suspicions about this literature, for it makes use of a different scribal technique and thereby renders explicit the way in which the scribes worked and this literature was composed. This tablet preserves the record of how a text like ours was created.

SBTU 2, 22 is thus a particularly instructive text, especially in terms of what it reveals about the relationship of the two units i, 16′–38′ and i, 39′–46′. Precisely for this reason, we must also record our observation that i, 16'-38', the first of the two units and the one that contains no reference to witchcraft in the sections devoted to the patient's symptomology and diagnosis, may possibly have already been subjected to some change in the direction of witchcraft, for while the symptomology and diagnosis give no indication of any interest in witchcraft, the ritual instructions seem to be another matter. i, 26′–34′ (? minus 33′b-34′a), the section that prescribes therapeutic instructions, starts by recording a list of stones, followed by a notation of their total number and by a description of the situation for which they are to be used ('If his god or goddess is angry with him, etc.'); in turn, this list is followed by an aetiological diagnosis to the effect that the situation to be treated was caused by *zēru* (ḪUL.GIG), a form of witchcraft, performed against the patient on the fourth of Abu, etc.[90]

However, a form-critical assessment may provide a more nuanced reading of the evidence. In a number of different units on this tablet, lists of stones are included as part of the ritual instructions. However, these lists of stones do not derive from textual precursors containing standard ritual instructions together with the names of those stones which were to be used during the ritual. Rather, they derive from a text-type that listed stones followed by their number and a statement of either the purpose for which or the situation in which these stones were to be used. (Occasionally, a short comment on the mode of use was appended or included.)[91] Overall, this form (which appears in several variations) indicates that the afore-mentioned text-type is primarily a listing of stones

[90] For the reader's convenience, the text of i, 26′–31′a reads as follows: DÙ.DÙ.BI .... (a list of 12 stones = i, 26′–28′) ... 12 NA$_4$.MEŠ DI[Š NA DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}X]V-*šú* KI-*šú kam-lu* / ⌜IGI⌝.DU$_8$.A-*šú né-kel-mu-*⌜*ú*⌝ [K]A.KA KI-*šú kit-tu*$_4$ NU KA.KA-*ub* / *ú-ṣa-mar-ma* NU K[UR-*ád* ...] x NA$_4$.MEŠ DIŠ ḪUL.GIG UD.4.KAM / *šá* ITU.NE DÙ-*su ana* ⌜BÚR-*ri*⌝ .... For a full transliteration and translation, see von Weiher, *SBTU* 2, pp. 109–110 and 114.

[91] For examples of this type of text, see, e.g., F. Köcher, 'Ein verkannter neubabylonischer Text aus Sippar', *AfO* 20 (1963), 156–158 and K. Yalvaç, 'Eine Liste von Amulettsteinen im Museum zu Istanbul', *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger* (AS 16; Chicago, 1965), 329–333. For an example of a unit intended to counter witchcraft, see *BAM* 370 iiia, 2′–5′ // *BAM* 373 iii, 10–14 // K 9790 (*AMT* 7/1) rev! iv!, 5′–9′// MMA 86.11.64 iv, 9′–13′ // BM 41281 i, 2′–4′ (I have not yet seen BM 41281; I know of it from Köcher, *BAM*, vol. 3, p. xxi, s. no. 370).

and defines a tablet in which several or more lists of this sort are recorded as a collection of lists (for purposes of inventory, reference, or the like). In any case, this text-type was originally not intended as a form of prescriptive instruction. However, in the course of time, composers of ritual instructions sometimes drew upon texts of this type when they wished to enumerate the stones that were to be used in a ritual.

There are several instances of this mode of composition in our tablet: see, e.g., iii, 32–37, iii, 38–46, iv, 13′–17′. Notice the unnecessary and imperfect repetition of information regarding the purpose of or reason for the therapy. The redundancy and discrepancy reveal the disparate sources of the material. An analysis of one example should suffice; I select iv, 13′–17′, because of its simplicity.[92] In this text, we find two separate but similar statements (14′ and 15′–16′a), each introduced by *šumma*, describing a patient or client who is said to have cursed his god and goddess. The first follows upon a list of seven stones (13′), the second introduces a purpose clause (16′b) and ritual instructions (16′c–17′). However, because the ritual instructions prescribe the use of stones (17′) but do not list them, we must suppose that the instructions refer back to and thus suppose the earlier listing of seven stones. The two diagnostic or descriptive statements are similar, but taken together one or the other is redundant, thereby confirming the fact that the materials that comprise this unit derive from two form-critically distinct but topically related textual sources. Thus, also here (as in iii, 32–37 as well as iii, 38–46), the scribe drew upon two form-critically distinct types in which portions of a single ritual or ritual type were preserved and combined them in order to create the prescription.

By this method of composition, composers carried over into ritual instructions information that belonged to a different text-type and sometimes to a different context; they thereby sometimes brought together material that should have been kept apart and was redundant, at best, and contradictory and confusing, at worst. Such a procedure was followed by our composer: when formulating the text of i, 16′–38′ he drew upon both standard ritual instructions as well as the aforementioned lists of stones and combined them into a new form. This assessment is confirmed by a fact that seems to have escaped notice: namely, that this segment of the unit is duplicated by such full stone-list units as

[92] The text of iv, 13′–17′ reads:

13′ NA_4.*aš-pu-ú* NA_4.ZA.GÌN NA_4.ŠUBA NA_4.MUŠ.GÍR NA_4.BABBAR.DIL NA_4.ZA.GÌN.NA NA_4.AŠ.GÌ.GÌ

14′ 7 NA_4.MEŠ DIŠ NA DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}XV-*šú i-ta-nar-ra-ar*

15′ DIŠ NA *ana* DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}XV-*šú sar-ra-a-tú ú ár-ra-a-tú* KA.KA-*ub kiš-pi* DÙ-*šú-šu*

16′ KI DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}XV-*šú šu-z*[*u-u*]*r* <*ana*?> DINGIR *u* ^{d}XV *tas-lit* LÚ TI-*e ak-tam*

17′ ZÌ.ZÌ GIŠ.TÚG *ina* KUŠ KI NA_4.MEŠ *ina* [G]U GAD È *ina* GÚ-*šú* GAR

STT 275 obv. i, 3′–13′[93] // *BAM* 370 iib, 18 - iiib, 10.[94,95]

Thus, it would seem likely that originally the ritual instructions *SBTU* 2, 22 i, 26′–34′ were not, or need not have been, concerned with witchcraft but did draw on an anti-witchcraft text for a list of stones and mechanically carried over some witchcraft material together with the list. Still, the possibility that the composer of i, 16′–38′ was already beginning to think of witchcraft as a cause should not be excluded. In any case, the inclusion of this alien material may also have prepared the ground for, or even placed the idea of witchcraft into the mind of, the textual adapter who proceeded to compose the witchcraft text i, 39′ ff on the basis of i, 16′–38′.

Excursus II. Further Discussion of BM 64174: Witchcraft as a diagnosis of choice when all else fails, and the creation of conflated texts

A close reading of BM 64174 suggests a further possibility of interpretation that, to the best of my knowledge, has never before been considered and raises the possibility that the textual situation is even more complex, if also more interesting, than originally stated. We have seen how witchcraft was secondarily introduced into a composition and became the primary or ultimate cause of the patient's suffering. As noted earlier, witchcraft gradually became an important explanation of misfortune and slowly usurped the place of other aetiologies. Here, we should also consider a further refinement of, or variation on, this development. For the afore-mentioned text, BM 64174, also suggests the possibility that occasionally variant texts like ours are the result of a process more complex than that of simple, straight-forward revision. For it is possible that the kinds of texts that we have been examining may occasionally also derive from a text-type in which it was stated that when an attribution of cause (here, anger of the god) had failed

[93] The text of *STT* 275 obv. i, 3′–13′ reads:

3′ [NA$_4$.ARḪUŠ NA$_4$.ḪI.LI.BA] ⌜NA$_4$⌝.[G]UG NA$_4$.GIŠ.NU$_X$.GAL
4′ [NA$_4$.BAB̆BAR.DIL NA$_4$.PA N]A$_4$.GI.RIM.ḪI.LI.BA *ia$_4$-ni-ba*
5′ [NA$_4$.KÙ.BABB]AR NA$_4$.KÙ.G[I] <<NA$_4$>>.AD.B[A]R$^{!}$ <NA$_4$>.URUDU.NITÁ

6′ [12 N]A$_4$.MEŠ DINGIR-*šú* ^{d}XV-*šú* KI-*šú kám-lu* IGI.DU$_8$.A-*šú*
7′ [*n*]*é-kel-mu-šú u* KA.KA KI-*šú kit-tú la* KA.KA-*ub*
8′ [(x)] ⌜*ú*⌝-*ṣa-mar-ma ul* KUR-*âd* LÚ BI *nu*-KÚR SILIM.MEŠ
9′ [Ḫ]UL.GIG UD.4.KÁM ⌜*šá*⌝ ITU. NE DÙ-*su ana* BÚR-*ri*
10′ [D]UR GADA È *ina* MURUB$_4$-*šú-nu* Ú.IGI.LIM
11′ ⌜Ú⌝.IGI.MAN Ú.*tar-muš* Ú.*el-kul-la*
12′ [Ú].U[G]U-*kul-la* GIŠ.KAN.U$_5$ GIŠ.ERIN
13′ [KA].A.AB.BA *tam-tì ina*$^{?!}$ GÚ-*šú* [G]AR-*ma* SILIM-*im* nu 15 nu GAR-*an*

[94] A further duplicate (or perhaps better: parallel) is A 231 (= Yalvaç, 'Liste von Amulettsteinen', 329 ff.) = *BAM* 375 ii, 31′–35′. R. Frankena, *BiOr* 25 (1968), 207, s. Nos. 271–278, already pointed out that ii, 33′–35′ parallels *STT* 275 i, 3′–6′. A comparison of the unit in A 231 with the full text of the unit *STT* 275 i, 3′ ff indicates that A 231 provides only a condensed version that recorded only the opening line on anger of the god and not the rest of the passage that dealt with witchcraft. The omission in A 231 is due to the nature of that tablet, and thus we have here a text that seems to deal with anger of the god but must rather be understood as an abbreviated record of a fuller version that contained witchcraft.

[95] Cf. *STT* 89: 76–79 and 91–95.

to provide an effective explanation and therapy for a misfortune, witchcraft should then be invoked and introduced as an alternative, ultimate explanation for the misfortune and for its intermediate or proximate causes (including anger of the god). The text-type (exemplified by *BAM* 316 ii, 5′–25′ and parallels) that we have been studying might then occasionally have been created by the combination or, rather, conflation of the different stages of interpretation.

To present this possibility in concrete terms, we must subject the relevant text, BM 64174, to closer scrutiny:

BM 64174[96]

1 DIŠ NA *gi-na-a šu-dur ur-ra u* GI$_6$ *ina-ziq* ZI.GA *sad-rat-su*
2 *iš-di-iḫ-šú* TAR-*is kar-ṣi-šú* KÚ.MEŠ KA.KA KI-*šú kit-tú* NU KA.KA
3 ŠU.SI ḪUL-*tì* EGIR-*šú tar-ṣú ina* É.GAL-*šú* NU IGI-*šú*
4 MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*šú pár-da ina* MÁŠ.GI$_6$-*šú* ÚŠ.MEŠ IGI.MEŠ GAZ ŠÀ GAR-*šú*
5 *šib-sat* DINGIR *u* U.DAR UGU-*šú* GÁL.MEŠ DINGIR-*šú u* U.DAR-<*šú*> KI-*šú ze-nu-u*
6 KI LÚ.ḪAL *u da-gi-li* DI.KUD-*šú* NU SI.SÁ *qá-bu-u* NU *še-mu-ú* GAR-*šú*
7 *ana* EŠ.BAR-*šú* TAR-*ma* DI.KUD-*šú šu-te-šú-ri* (Ritual) Ú.*tar-muš* ⌜Ú⌝.x[a] [ ]
8 Ú.IGI.MAN Ú!.*er-kul-la* Ú.LÚ.U$_{18}$.<LU> GIŠ.ŠINIG *ina* xx[a].....

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9 DIŠ NA *ba-liṭ-ma* A.RÁ-*šú* GIG-*at iz-zi-i*[*r-ti* KA UN.MEŠ *ma-'-da-a-ti* GAR-*šú*[a]]
10 *ana* NU TE-*e up-šá-še-e* EN KA-*šú ana* NU [DIM$_4$-*šú*]
11 ŠU.SI SIG$_5$-*tì* EGIR-*šú t*[*a-ra-ṣi*[a]]
12 ŠÀ[a] DINGIR *ze-ni-i* SILIM-*mi ki-ṣir* ŠÀ DINGIR-[*šú* DU$_4$/BÚR]
13 (Ritual) ⌜Ú⌝.*tar-muš* Ú.*er-kul-la* Ú.A.ZAL.[LÁ/-*lu*]
14 LA SILA.LIMMU$_2$ LA NUNUZ GÁ.NU$_{11}$.MUŠEN Ú.[.... *ina* GÚ-*šú* GAR-*ma* ŠE.GA[a]]

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15 DIŠ NA *qá-bu-ú u e-nu-ú* GAR-*šú* ŠU.SI ḪUL-*t*[*ì* EGIR-*šú tarṣat*]
16 DINGIR *u* U.DAR *šú-uz-zu-qú-šú* DINGIR *u* U.DAR KI LÚ [ ][a]

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[96] Notes to BM 64174: **7[a]**: Geller, 'New Duplicates', 22, reads *i*[*m-hur-lim*]; is I[GI.LIM] possible? **8[a]**: Geller, 'New Duplicates', 22, reads KA [x]; instead of KA, perhaps read KUŠ. Alternatively, ignore *ina* and read KA.[A.AB.BA]. **9[a]**: Geller, 'New Duplicates', 22, restores: *ez-ze-e*[*r-ti* KA UN.MEŠ]. Given the text of the duplicates, *BAM* 326 ii, 8′–9′ and K. 2562 (now = *BAM* 446), obv. 2, one should add *ma-'-da-a-ti* GAR-*šú*; as noted below, the addition of *šakinšu* occasions a difficulty, but I cannot ignore its clear attestation in *BAM* 326 ii, 8′–9′. **11[a]**: Geller, 'New Duplicates', 22, reads: *t*[*a-ar-ṣa-at*]; that reading is derived, I assume, from *BAM* 326 ii, 11′. But that line is either a description of a misfortune (ŠU.SI ḪUL-*ti* EGIR-*šú* x {=erasure?} LAL-*at*) erroneously written here instead of a statement of purpose, or should instead be read: ŠU.SI ḪUL-*ti* EGIR-*šú* ⌜NU⌝ LAL-*ṣi*!. In any case, our line should be restored *t*[*a-ra-ṣi*]. **12[a]**: The copy has a clear ŠÀ. Perhaps the text should be emended and read KI: *itti* on the basis of the duplicate *BAM* 326 ii, 12′, which reads: KI DINGIR *ze-ni-i šú-lum-me* KI-*šú* BÚR-*ri*. But note that this duplicate is also almost certainly corrupt and should probably be read either: KI DINGIR *ze-ni-i šú-lum-me ki-*<*ṣir* ŠÀ DINGIR>-*šú* BÚR-*ri* or (following BM 64174: 13) ŠÀ! DINGIR *ze-ni-i šú-lum-me* KI-*šú*/*ki-*<*ṣir* ŠÀ DINGIR>-*šú* BÚR-*ri*. In support of the emendation *ki-*<*ṣir* ŠÀ DINGIR>-*šú*, see also K. 2562 (*BAM* 446), obv. 4: [... DINGIR *z*]*e-ni-i ana šul-lu-mi ki-ṣir* ŠÀ DIN[GIR-*šú* ...]. **14[a]**: For the restoration, see *BAM* 326 ii, 16′. **16[a]**: Geller, 'New Duplicates', 22, reads: DINGIR *u* U.DAR KI LÚ [*ze-nu-u*]. But KI LÚ, instead of KI-*šú*, is suprising. Perhaps the text has suffered haplography: DINGIR *u* U.DAR KI-< *šú ze-nu-u* KI > LÚ.[HAL *u šā'ili dīnšu lā iššer*]. Either way, the absence of a statement of purpose in this unit is troublesome; perhaps, we should restore one (e.g., DINGIR *u* U.DAR KI LÚ [*sullumi*]) instead of, or in addition to, a symptom or cause. **17[a]**: After the third unit, there is an empty space, followed by the name of the exorcist who copied the tablet.

17 (Ritual) Ú.DIL *ḫu-ṣab* GIŠ.ḪAB Ú.KUR.KUR MUN.EME.SAL *liṭ-ru-ú ina* KUŠ [...][a]

If a man is constantly frightened and worries day and night; losses are suffered regularly by him and his profit is cut off; people speak defamation about him, his interlocutor does not speak affirmatively, a finger of derision is stretched out after him; in his palace he is not well received; his dreams are confused, in his dreams he keeps seeing dead people; heartbreak is laid upon him; the wrath of god and goddess is upon him, his god and goddess are angry with him; his case is not cleared up by diviner or dream interpreter; he is beset by speaking but not being heard (and responded to favorably).

In order that a verdict be rendered for him, that a successful judgement be given to him:

(Ritual)

If a man ... (see below) but then his behavior/oracle is grievous; a curse coming from the mouth of many people besets him.

In order that it[97] not approach him, that witchcraft performed by his adversary not affect him, that a favourable finger be stretched out after him, that the heart of his angry god be reconciled and the knot (of anger) in the inners of his god be released:

(Ritual)

If a man is beset by speaking (that is, promising) and retracting,[98] a finger of derision is stretched out after him; god and goddess are annoyed with him, god and goddess with the man [...];

(Ritual)

At first glance, it would seem that the tablet contains three independent units. But further examination suggests the possibility that the three units are related, each qualifying or building upon the preceding. In the first place, this interpretation of the text is suggested, perhaps even required, by the opening statement of the second unit (BM 64174: 9–14 // *BAM* 326 [= VAT 13740[99]] ii, 7′–16′[100]): *šumma amēlu baliṭma*. This statement indicates that the second unit is dependent on the first, since at the beginning of a medical unit, *šumma amēlu baliṭma* means 'if he gets well but then ...' rather than 'if he is alive but then ...' or 'if he is well but then ....'[101] This understanding is suggested by the fact that therapeutic texts normally describe the processes or symptoms that indicate abnormality or illness, but do not state the obvious, namely, that normal health or fortune had existed prior to illness or misfortune. These texts take for granted the fact that sick or dysfunctional people had once been well; therefore, they do not refer to the fact that the patient had once been normal unless there is something special or relevant about

[97] I take the curse to be the understood subject of *ana amēli lā ṭehê*, the first purpose clause. Or, perhaps, *izzirti pī nišē ma'dāti* was accidently dropped by haplography.

[98] See *CAD* E, 176.

[99] VAT 13740 was previously published (in transliteration and translation) by E. Ebeling, 'Beschwörungen gegen den Feind und den bösen Blick aus dem Zweistromlande', *ArOr* 17 (1949), 202–203.

[100] Note that BM 64174: 9–12 // *BAM* 326 ii, 7′–12′ (= description and statement of purpose) are duplicates of K. 2562 (*BAM* 446), obv. 1–4. (In the latter text, these lines are part of the longer unit obv. 1–14; this longer unit seems to be an expansion.)

[101] Accordingly, I do not accept E. Ebeling's translation of VAT 13740 (*BAM* 326) ii, 7′ in 'Beschwörungen gegen den Feind', 203: 7: 'Wenn ein Mensch gesund ist, aber sein (Lebens)wandel schlimm ist,...'.

such an observation. Accordingly, *šumma amēlu baliṭma* should be translated 'if he gets well but then...', and thus would represent a continuation of the preceding unit.

As noted earlier, the first unit in BM 64174 is an early version of the composition we have been examining, *BAM* 316 ii, 5′–25′ (and its parallels), and seems to treat divine anger as the cause both of the patient's symptoms and of his failure to obtain a successful oracle. The second unit, then, is intended to deal with the situation that would have arisen if the ritual of the first unit proved unproductive; that is, if subsequent to the acceptance and application of the diagnosis provided by the first unit ('divine anger') and the performance of its ritual or therapy, the outcome was not as anticipated and the results unsuccessful. More precisely, the patient seemed to have been cured, but then he became ill again and perhaps even displayed once again the same symptoms as before. Thus, the ritual was found to be ineffective, and the diagnosis proved to be either incorrect or simply inadequate. The second unit notes the failure of the first ritual; the diagnosis offered in the preceding unit having been found to be wanting, the writer decides that a deeper or further reason or cause for the symptoms and of the divine anger must be found. Then, without repeating the various symptoms and information, for they have already been listed in the preceding unit and are taken for granted, the writer concludes that witchcraft must be behind the situation, generally, and behind the anger of the gods, specifically:

> If he gets well but then his behaviour/oracle is grievous; a curse coming from the mouth of many people besets him. In order that it (= a curse) not approach him, that witchcraft performed by his adversary not affect him, that a favourable finger be stretched out after him, that the heart of his angry god be reconciled and the knot (of anger) in the inners of his god be released.[102]

As for the third unit, it picks up on *qabû lā šemû*, 'speaking but not being heard' of the first unit (the entry relevant to divination) and develops it. Note also the occurrence in the third unit of *ilu u ištaru šuzzuqūšu* (*ilu u ištaru itti amēli* [...]), 'God and goddess are annoyed with him, (god and goddess with the man [...])'; these words, too, may link up with the first unit, for it seems too much of a coincidence that this phrase should occur both here and also in our 'mixed' text *BAM* 316 ii, 11′: *ilu šarru kabtu rubû šuzzuqūšu*, 'God, king, noble, and prince are annoyed with him'.

Thus, BM 64174 suggests that the failure of a ritual which posited simply anger of god as the cause of misfortune led the *āšipu* to seek a further cause, and this cause was identified as, or found in, witchcraft.

If our assessment of the evidence is correct, we should then translate or, rather, set out BM 64174 in the following way:

> Unit 1: If ..., Then (cause + ritual) ....
> Unit 2: If the above happened, but subsequently ..., Then (further cause [stated explicitly and/or implicit in a statement of purpose] and ritual) ....
> Unit 3: If the above and ..., Then (further cause and ritual) ....

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[102] *šumma amēlu baliṭma alaktašu marṣat izzirti pī nišē ma'dāti šakinšu ana amēli lā ṭeḫê upšāšê bēl amātišu* (*dabābišu* is also possible) *ana lā* [*sanāqišu*] *ubān damiqti arkišu t*[*arāṣi*] *libbi ili zenî sullumi kiṣir libbi ili*[*šu paṭāri/pašāri*].

Moreover, we would now also apply these results to such other texts as *BAM* 234: 1–12a. This form of analysis provides an explanation of strange features of the diagnostic section of that text, thus allowing us to understand that text as well as to derive some outside confirmation for our approach: Lines 1–9a: If the man (Symptoms/Circummstances) ..., Lines 9b–10a: 'That man has the wrath of the god and/or the goddess on him; his god and his goddess are angry with him'. (Diagnosis: Anger of the god). (Lines 1–10a were translated above p. 85). The difficulty is occasioned by Lines 10b–12a: *šumma amēlu šū qāt māmīti ... maruṣ arni abi ... iṣṣabtūšuma* .... We would suggest that through line 10a, *BAM* 234 is equivalent to the first unit in BM 64174; the following section is then the equivalent of the second unit in BM 64174 and proposes what is to be done if the first diagnosis is insufficient: 'But/And if, subsequently, further illnesses ('hand of oath', etc.) befall him ..., Then (further cause) ....'

BM 64174, thus, represents a text that presents the several, separate diagnostic stages as discrete units. If this reading of BM 64174 is correct, it may also be presumed that some texts in which witchcraft and divine anger (or other causes) are set alongside each other in the diagnostic or purpose statements but do not fit together in a clear coherent manner represent instances where the first unit/stage has not been preserved separately but has been repeated together with the second. Thus, instead of the scheme of BM 64174:

I) If symptoms A, Then diagnosis and ritual A, (followed by)
II) But if subsequently symptoms B, Then diagnosis and ritual B,

we have:

If symptoms A (I) and symptoms B (II), Then ....

It may even be that some of the more difficult or perplexing texts where various causes are mixed together represent not simply a subsequent stage with inclusion of earlier symptoms but a 'conflation' created by a scribe who had failed to understand the mechanism we have discussed and had mixed the materials in a mechanical way so that the text no longer coheres.

In any case, if our interpretation of BM 64174 is correct, it provides an additional, if perhaps overly precise, *Sitz im Leben* for the choice of witchcraft as a diagnosis and for the creation of new texts based upon old ones. But, in the absence of more decisive evidence, caution remains advisable.

How the Babylonians Protected Themselves against Calamities Announced by Omens

Stefan M. Maul

The Babylonians believed that they could detect indications of positive or negative future events in both unusual as well as everyday occurrences in the behaviour of animals, the appearance of plants or men, the movements of the stars and the planets, the condition of the sun and the moon, and all manner of metereological phenomena. Thousands of such omens were set down in countless works which drew on observations, experiences, and traditions, which themselves were centuries, perhaps even millennia old. To each omen a meaning was assigned. Now we should not, as Bruno Meissner once did, brand this 'prophetic science' as 'horrible superstition'. For such collections of omens helped to save the individual's future as well as that of the community from the dominion of acts which were uncontrollable, incomprehensible, and thus incapable of being provided against, in brief from the forces of chaos, which the Babylonians feared more than anything else. Omens of all kinds allowed them to extend into the future the certainty of a reality, which for us only the present possesses. The psychological effects which the forecasting of the future had on those who believed must by no means be underestimated: an ill-defined apprehensiveness in the face of the menaces of an uncertain future wherein at its worst one is at the mercy of every chaotic power imaginable, gives way to a delimited fear of a known and hence understandable threat. Such fear can be controlled since it refers to concrete, familiar, perhaps even already experienced events.

Nevertheless, the Babylonians were never so fatalistic as to assume that one could not escape from a disaster portended by a successfully interpreted omen. A portent merely indicates one possibility: the calamity involved – illness, death, accident, or natural disaster – will only occur if one does not take any action against it. A society which sees the universe as the interlocking wheels and springs of an enormous clock that acts upon the future out of the past and beyond the present, and which develops a finely calibrated system of relationships between the future and seemingly insignificant events of the present, will of necessity find the means, once the future has been predicted, to bend the future to its own advantage. While such methods are not attested for Mesopotamia in writing before the first millennium BCE, we nevertheless have every reason to believe that they originated in much earlier times.

The Babylonians called rituals for staving off calamities predicted by omens nam-búr-bi, which translated literally means '(ritual for) releasing therefrom (i.e. from a catastrophe which an omen has predicted, but which has not yet taken place)'.

The clear, consecutive logic of the structure of these rituals reveals itself to us only after we have comprehended the Babylonians' conception of omens and of their effects on the world. Nevertheless, little work has been done along these lines in our field. An example: If a dog constantly howled and yelped in someone's house, this boded evil for the owner of the house and his family. The person affected, however, had more to fear

than impending doom, for the appearance of the hound in his home was – according to the Babylonian view of things – much more than an omen. The sign – in our example a howling dog – had been sent to the person involved by his personal gods because he had displeased them in some way or other and they wished to punish him. What has hitherto gone unrecognised is that it was the animal itself which threatened the person! Like a spore, the evil (*lumnu*), which according to the omen would later harm the person, already inhabited the dog and the dog then infected the person and his surroundings by means of the sinister energy that emanated from it. The danger of infection was considered to be so great that the evil (*lumnu*) penetrated into a person even if he had not touched the dog or animal or object, but had only seen it. In a ritual, in which a person attempts to prevent evil announced by snakes, he prays to the gods that they *lumna ina zumrīšunu likillū*,[1] i.e. that they 'keep back the evil in the body (of the snakes)'. The evil emanating from a portent – in our example the howling dog – operated on a person until its sinister power culminated in the calamity which had been predicted in the apodosis of the relevant omen interpretation. The Babylonians termed the growth and development of the danger from the time of infection by the omen until the outbreak of the actual catastrophe – a way of thinking which is, by the way, not unlike our modern concept of the incubation period of a disease – quite aptly the *qê lumni*, that is to say, 'the thread of evil'. It was the avowed purpose of the namburbi rituals to cut the 'thread of evil'.

If we accept this briefly sketched interpretation of the operation of an omen, then we can formulate the following aims which a 'release ritual' was supposed to achieve:

1) the person affected must placate the anger of the gods who had sent him the omen;
2) the person must effect the gods' revision of their decision to give him an evil fate;
3) the impurity which the person had acquired through the agency of the omen must be removed;
4) the impurity of the person's house and general surroundings must be removed;
5) the person must be returned to his normal, 'intact' life;
6) the person should be provided with permanent protection against the renewed threat of sinister omens.

These six aims correspond exactly to the six constitutive elements of a namburbi ritual, as I now propose to show.

The person wishing to achieve a correction of the fate which the gods have allotted him must appeal to the divine triad Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluhi. Šamaš, the Sun God, is accounted the 'Lord of the Above and Below', he 'Who Sees All', and, in consequence, 'Judge of Heaven and Earth'[2], since he travels by day over all the Earth and by night journeys through the regions beneath it. As the one who constantly and routinely circles the Earth, Šamaš is the most striking element of dynamic order. For this reason he is reckoned to be the Guardian and Watchman of Creation; he sees to it that the universe – in the same manner as the sun – continues to move in its proper course. This role of the Sun God as paragon and guardian is expressed in the epithet *muštēširu*, he 'Who Guides Aright', an epithet which often appears in the namburbi-prayers. Šamaš is supposed to

[1] Cf. S.M. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung* (Mainz am Rhein, 1994), 285.
[2] Passim in the prayers of the namburbi-rituals.

guide people back into their proper course and to revoke the evil judgment against them. Nevertheless, Ea and Asalluhi, the gods of conjuration and wisdom, must also come to a mortal's aid, as all magical practices for negating a sinister harbinger and for purifying mortals and their homes would surely be to little avail, were not Ea and Asalluhi to lend additional strength to these practices by means of their favour.

Nonetheless, before one could turn to Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluhi for help, one had to prepare oneself with the aid of various purificatory rituals, which sometimes lasted several days. Above all, neither the one being purified nor the conjuror carrying out the ritual was allowed to eat watercress, onions, leeks, or fish (presumably in order not to offend the gods through halitosis).

During the night before the ritual the conjuror prepared the consecrated water which he would need. To do this, he cast all manner of cleansing substances as well as precious stones and metals into a basin filled with water. He then left the basin 'under the stars all night' in order to increase the water's purificatory powers by means of the stars' rays. At dawn the conjuror erected small altars for Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluhi by a riverside 'in a place difficult of access'. Previous to this he had cleansed this place by sweeping it and by sprinkling it with consecrated water. Finally, in order to summon and to mollify the gods, he laid out for them an actual meal including bread, meat, dates, incense, water, and various sorts of beer.

Only after the conjuror had requested the gods to 'accept' this offering and had given them enough time to 'consume' their meal was the person whom a sinister omen had threatened allowed to come before the gods to implore them to change the evil fate which they had allotted him. That part of the ritual which now begins is the heart of all 'release rituals', their acme and turning-point. Even if the great gods Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluhi, whom the conjuror had summoned, were not the divinities who had sent the slowly developing punishment in the form of an omen, they had at the very least allowed the person to be burdened with that fate. Only when the person involved had convinced the gods, especially Šamaš, the god of law (*kittu*) and justice (*mīšaru*), that the impending, evil fate would befall him unjustly, could the sinister power of the harbinger – in our case, the howling dog – be broken. No purification of human beings or their homes would meet with success if the god of justice did not look upon the judgement against them as unjustified or too severe and did not, at the very least, have mercy upon them – even when they had indeed sinned – and grant them forgiveness.

All fears and threats that a person had experienced before the ritual were concretely represented in it by the harbinger, i.e. the howling canine which had come into his house. Either the person affected or the conjuror had to capture the dog before the ritual started or, failing that, to make a clay image of it. This is important from a psychological point of view as well as for the performance of the next part of the ritual: the person's previously diffuse fears regarding his ill-starred future were now visible in the harbinger itself or in its clay image and hence capable of being addressed. The fears had become a concrete object with which one could deal and which one could treat as an opponent while respecting the gods' decision to apportion a bad fate. One thus went before the highest judge Šamaš together with one's opponent, the harbinger or its image, which was formally considered to have the same rights as the person. In none of the preformulated prayers, with which a person in the namburbi rituals entreated Šamaš or Ea and Asalluhi, is doubt cast upon the correctness and validity of the divine judgement

which, by means of the evil omen, would bestow an unhappy future upon the affected person. Instead, the affected person attempted to effect a *revision* of the judgement. A new judgement was then supposed to give him a better fate. Šamaš was asked to effect a revision of the divine judgement. This next part of the ritual is nothing other than a trial in which the affected person as well as his opponent, i.e. the harbinger, appear before the highest divine judge. In this trial, the affected person attempted to renegotiate the gods' disadvantageous decision regarding his future, a decision which had to a certain degree legally empowered the harbinger to bring harm upon him. This decision was now to be reconsidered and corrected in favour of the person affected, even before he could receive any recognisable injury. The harbinger on the other hand was to be condemned and thereupon destroyed.

The ritual before Šamaš is a regular trial with all the elements of an earthly one, the only difference being that the Sun God plays the part of the judge, whereas the person and the harbinger are the two suitors. Ea and Asalluhi function as members of the judicial college. There is no appeal beyond the decision of this court; no one, not even another god, can challenge or alter Šamaš's judgement once rendered. Even the person's household gods, who may have sent the evil in the form of a harbinger in the first place, must defer to this judgement. We see this clearly stated in a prayer to Šamaš, which in a namburbi ritual is addressed against the evil which lizards have announced and transmitted:

> Šamaš, great Lord, ..., exalted judge whose sentence is irrevocable, whose 'Yea' no other god can alter, ... Lord, thou art truly great, thy word, thy sentence cannot be forgotten; praying to thee is comparable to nothing; thy sentence is exalted like (unto that of) Anu, thy father; amongst the gods, thy brethren, is thy word the most precious.[3]

As noted above, the person and the harbinger (perhaps in the form of a clay image) come – as in an earthly trial – as suitors before the judge who is to render judgement. The person must seize the harbinger, which threatens his future, with his hands and lift it up in accusation before the divine judge, who was present probably in the guise of an image and obviously in the form of the rising sun. We may safely assume that one faced eastwards when bringing one's case before Šamaš, even if this is not made explicit in any ritual known to the author. The gesture of lifting up the harbinger in the ritual corresponds to the accusation formulated against the harbinger in a prayer to the Sun God: (*ina/aššu*) *lumun* X *palhāku adrāku u šutādurāku*.[4] In many 'release rituals' the person affected, even while he is addressing a prayer, generally thrice repeated, for a revision of his fate to Šamaš, must hold up the image of the harbinger in front of the divine judge. In other rituals either he or the conjuror must bring the harbinger before Šamaš and set him down on the ground 'next to the ritual arrangement to the left'.

When the person, whom the gods had condemned, came before Šamaš, the divine judge, and stood or knelt beside the harbinger and asked for a correction of impending ill-fate, good care was understandably taken to see to it that the displeasure of the gods

[3] K 3365 and Duplicate, ll. 25′ ff. (cf. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 307).

[4] 'Because of the evil which proceeds from X, I am afraid, I fear, and am in anguish' (*passim* in namburbi-rituals in prayers to Šamaš, as well as to Šamaš in conjunction with Ea and Asalluhi).

was not again aroused. The person, of whom evil (*lumnu*) had already taken possession, carried guilt and malignant emanations. But under no circumstances may he again insult the gods by befouling the hallowed ground upon which they had taken their meal and upon which they were supposed to render judgement anew. For the trial (*dīnu*) the person had to approach the sanctified spot from behind the small altar of the god. He was not allowed to touch the previously purified earth, but was led by the conjuror before Šamaš onto a carpet of 'garden herbs' (*šammū kirî*) strewn behind the altar. For this carpet one generally used the leaves of the tamarisk tree (*bīnu*), the date palm (*gišimmaru*), and the 'soap-weed' (*maštakal*), to all of which a cleansing effect was ascribed. Now the carpet did not have the function of keeping one's impurity away from the gods, but served rather the purpose of channelling one's impurity into the ground after the merciful Sun God had rendered judgement. The image of the harbinger, however, was laid unprotected upon the ground before Šamaš. In some rituals it was even set down on pigs' dung so that it would with absolute certainty provoke the god to wrath. On occasion the supplicant supported his claim by means of a bribe: he placed a ransom (*ipṭiru*) in the form of gold and other presents at the feet of the divine judge. As a general rule, however, the person involved did not come alone before the god. Instead, the conjuror took him by the hand and, as an intermediary between man and god, went together with him before Šamaš. The prayer to Šamaš which now followed and which contained the plea to reopen the case (*ana dīnīya qūlamma*; *dīnī dīn*) and to release the person from his impending fate was first spoken by the conjuror in the first person and in the stead of the person involved. This person was then required to repeat after the conjuror. The introduction of this person through his intercessor and barrister, the conjuror, corresponds to the so-called scene of introduction on numerous seal impressions from both the Ur III period and Old Babylonian times. The introduction of the supplicant through an intermediary is certainly taken from court ceremony. It is an unspoken assumption in the 'release rituals' that Šamaš after the end of the prayer will 'smile amicably' on the supplicant and, as supreme judge, will accede to the correction of the fate of the person involved. In many rituals, the person affected again addressed prayers separately to Ea and Asalluhi, whose aid was necessary for the succes of the following purification ritual.

Once the favour of the gods had been secured through sacrifice and prayer, the conjuror could proceed with the elimination of the impurity which had arisen through the appearance of the omen. In many rituals the conjuror shattered a clay pot before the eyes of the affected person. This symbolic act must have made a deep impression on the person involved, since it had its 'Sitz im Leben' not only in the rituals but also in profane jurisprudence. In manumissions of slaves for example this act had the function of emphasising that the enslavement had been terminated, that is to say, had been smashed.[5] In the namburbi rituals the smashing of the pot emphasises that the impurity as well as the threat to the person had now come to an end. Now the person washed himself with the consecrated water which had been prepared during the preceding night. This water removed the impurity, which was thought of as a fine film of dirt, from the body. The dirty water was then poured out upon the figure of the harbinger, standing next to the person, so that the impurity, which had leapt from the howling dog (or another

[5] Cf. the comments of M. Malul, *Studies in Mesopotamian Legal Symbolism* (AOAT 221; Kevelaar/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1988), 51–69 and 74–76.

object) to the person, now came back to the harbinger itself. In a ritual against a calamity announced by a badger the person spoke the following words while pouring the water onto the figurine of the badger: 'May the calamity emanating from you seize fast upon you yourself!'.

In numerous symbolic actions which now follow, the person received demonstrations of the release from the threat made by the evil omen. For example, he was supposed to strip off the coat he had been wearing and to cut the hair on his head and cheeks. The hair and nails which had grown in the time since his infection by the evil omen represented his status as one against whom the gods had rendered judgement. For this reason the tips of his hair as well as his fingernails, which after a fashion carried the impurity within themselves, had to disappear. Sometimes the person was supposed to peel an onion or unwind a wound thread in order to demonstrate concretely the dissolution of his difficulties.

A further highlight of the ritual was the elimination of the harbinger, which had, as we have seen, come before Šamaš together with the person involved. Notwithstanding the fact that the impurity had been cast back upon the figurine, it still was not accounted as sentenced according to the spirit of the trial before Šamaš described above. Its guilt had first to be proved. In this aspect as well, the ritual follows legal principles from profane jurisprudence. In the same way as the person who stood accused of witchcraft in the absence of legally valid evidence was required by the famed second paragraph of King Hammurapi's Law Code 'to go to the river(-god) and to dive into the river(-god)', so was the harbinger or, rather, its clay image compelled to undergo a river ordeal. From this we may conclude that in the course of the appellate procedure before Šamaš, the harbinger was in some way accused by the affected person of witchcraft. According to the rule in Hammurapi's Law Code the guilt of the accused was proved if he were cast into the river and sank.

In the section of the ritual which now follows the conjuror went with his client to the riverbank. In order to secure the good-will of the river, one first gave him an offering. Beer, flour, and bread were cast into the water and a prayer was addressed to the river. In the ritual against the calamity announced by a howling dog we read: 'Thou, O river, ... draw that dog down into the *apsû*. Thou shalt not let it go, draw it down into thy *apsû*. Rip the calamity emanating from the dog out of my body!'.[6] Then the conjuror hurled the figure of the dog or harbinger into the river. Since the clay figurine would certainly sink beneath the waves, the guilt of the harbinger was proved and the source of the evil threatening the person banished. The person could now return home secure in the knowledge that his impending fate had legally and with the consent of the gods been taken from him. In not a few rituals the person, before he went home, was supposed to go into an inn and converse with those 'who speak there'. The sage advice to send the affected person into a tavern can only be interpreted as an attempt on the part of the conjuror to reintroduce the person to 'normal', 'intact' society and to encourage him to enjoy life again. Before the person could go into his house again, the impurity spread about there by the harbinger had to be eliminated in numerous purification rituals. On his way home the person had to take good care that he not take the same path by which he had in an unclean state come to the place of judgement, so that he not reinfect himself

[6] Cf. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 318–319.

with his own footprints. Often he had to wear an amulet for three or seven additional days, an amulet which promised him protection from further evil emanating from an harbinger.

Namburbi rituals were written for hundreds of different evil omens. The Assyrian king Assurbanipal had a complete edition of these texts made for his library. From the colophons of such tablets we know that this series contained at least 135 tablets. The series 'NAM.BÚR.BI.MEŠ' accordingly ranks amongst the longest series ever assembled on clay tablets. Granted, Assurbanipal's interest in this series was not of a literary nature. With this gargantuan series he probably wanted to have an effective weapon against every omen imaginable.

Thanks to the preserved royal corresponce from Nineveh we know that Assurbanipal and his father Esarhaddon employed several independent teams of conjurors, scribes, and astrologers who were supposed to observe the heavens and also to write down any unusual occurrences of whatever nature. They had to promptly report these to the king so that enough time remained to prepare and carry out a 'release ritual' before the calamity had a chance to crystallize. For just this purpose an entire staff of conjurors – organised almost like a ministry – stood ready, a staff that pored over collections of omens for the purposes of diagnosing a portent, that put rituals together, and that carried them out. Believing that he had already eliminated all possible future evil before it could even take shape surely bolstered the king's self-confidence, strengthened his resolution, and steeled his will to fight. In this sense 'release rituals' were by no means a hindrance born of superstition. Instead, they were a stabilising factor in the history of the Assyrian Empire.

The Magic of Time

Alasdair Livingstone

The subject of time and its role in magic is one which has not received much attention in the ancient Near Eastern scholarly literature and the present author will therefore be obliged to present and discuss issues of a basic nature and draw evidence from diverse sources. Assyriologists have for good reasons traditionally been shy about suggesting that they might be able to offer a history of literature or a history of religion. Yet, if placing texts or cultural developments in a chronological sequence and discerning, where possible, the genetic connections between them can be understood as history, the matter is not without hope. In this paper, a broadly chronological perspective will be adopted, and supplemented with a synchronic analysis whenever expedient. The most basic genetic connections across the centuries are obvious, but a fuller understanding will have to await a far more comprehensive study of the texts and, in far too many cases, even the publication of an *editio princeps*.

A discussion of Mesopotamian use and views of the magic of time must begin with a brief glance at the magician's view of prehistory. Incantations and exorcistic texts contain a sequence of three pairs of primeval ancestors, of which the first is 'ever-and-ever', representing eternal time.[1] The significance of this in the present context is that such mythological sections can play a role in legitimising the force of the actual magical procedure that follows. A good example of this is in the combined mythological and ritual text dubbed 'The Worm and the Toothache', where a clear link is established between the earliest creation, its later development – heaven creates earth, earth the rivers, the rivers the canals, the canals the morass, the morass the worm – leading relentlessly to the situation of the worm 'gnawing away the roots of the teeth in the jawbones' and to practical instructions addressed to a dentist.[2] This is an aspect of the use of earliest time in later magical ritual which has been discussed in some detail by Lambert[3] and by Lambert and Millard.[4] The idea is to create magic by harking back to a primeval time.

Use of temporal expressions in magic can be found already in the period of the pre-Sargonic texts from Fara in the middle of the third millennium BCE. An example is:

^{d}ningirima(NIN.A.ḪA.MUŠ.DU) ZUM ge$_6$ ḫa-mu-ta-ni-e$_3$[5]

In view of the character of Ningirima, the position of the name as the subject of the sentence, the precative verb, and the incantatory context, one may feel confident in translating:

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1 See *RLA*, s.v. Göttergenealogie.
2 A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation* (Chicago, 1972; first published in 1942), 72–73.
3 W.G. Lambert, 'Myth and Ritual as Conceived by the Babylonians', *JSS* 13 (1968), 104–112.
4 W.G. Lambert & A.R. Millard, *Atra-hasīs. The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969), 1–28.
5 M. Krebernik, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (Hildesheim, 1984), 86.

May Ningirima make the .. night/darkness go away from there!

Krebernik suggests that the difficult ZUM could simply be part of the verbal expression 'go out from there', in which case the dots could be removed from the above translation. The principle here in any case is that the night or darkness is being seen as evil and is being sent away. This has been compared with another passage from the same body of texts:

^{d}ningirima(ḪA.MUŠ.A.DU) UMBIN.ŠE na ḫa-ma-ta-ni-DU.DU[6]
May Ningirima make the spell go out from the enclosure!

In this case a magical enclosure may be meant. Other references are in less clear contexts but include, also in a magical context, the specification that something is to be carried out at u_4.sakar, the first visibility of the crescent moon.[7] As far as the magic of time is concerned, all that can be learned from these examples is that during the pre-Sargonic period there existed the idea of dispelling night or darkness, and of carrying out a magical operation at a time specified by reference to a phase of the moon.

For the Sargonid or Akkad period, J.J.M. Roberts in his study of the Akkadian pantheon wrote in a discussion of a deity ^{d}*ú-mu* that 'This deity is closely connected to the Šamaš circle, and this suggests that the god *ūmu(m)*, 'Day' is nothing else than the deified day'. However, in a learned note he concedes that 'This interpretation is not entirely free of difficulties'.[8] Publication since Roberts' study further complicates the issue rather than providing a simple solution, and the matter will not be pursued here. Generally, at least, it seems that units of time were not deified in ancient Mesopotamia, although they had a numinous quality and an individual character which, as will be seen below, was made use of in magical contexts.

As is well known, the period of the third dynasty of Ur offers a myriad of bureaucratic texts many of which detail distribution of animals for offerings at festivals associated with the monthly lunar cycle. A lucid account of the background to these texts is given by M.E. Cohen.[9] Choosing evidence in such a way as to prepare the way, even at this stage in the paper, for the final example to be presented, we may take up the a-tu_5-a lugal festival, the ritual bathing of the king.[10] In the time of Ur III this festival fell on the days of the several phases of the moon, including the aforementioned u_4-sakar. The meagre information of the bureaucratic texts can be supplemented with information from a royal inscription of Ibbi-Su'en recording the dedication to Nanna of a bronze bowl decorated with bisons, snakes and terrifying rain clouds; the delivery of decorated shoes or boots specified for a-tu_5-a lugal,[11] one of the rare early accounts of the procedure of the royal bathing ceremony; and allusions in royal hymns. The characteristic dates of the phases of the moon were also perhaps observed in divine hygiene. After citing for the 12th day the baking of the brewing ingredients and the bringing of the early offerings to Enlil's

[6] M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 77.
[7] Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 130 and 136.
[8] J.J.M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon. A Study of the Semitic Deities Attested in Mesopotamia before Ur III* (Baltimore, 1972), 55 and note 462.
[9] M.E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, Md., 1993), 23–222.
[10] W. Sallaberger, *Der kultische Kalender der Ur III-Zeit*, 2 vols. (Berlin/New York, 1993), 65 and 256.
[11] Sallaberger, *Der kultische Kalender*, 15–16.

temple (u_4 12 zal-la zì-mun$_4$ du$_8$-dam ù PAD.INANNA nidag é ^{d}en-líl-lá gíd-dam), one of the vary rare Ur III chore lists, from Nippur, has for the fifteenth day the following entry:

> u_4 15 zal-la
> dingir?-e a-tu$_5$-tu$_5$-dam

The fifteenth day has come to pass, the god is to be bathed.

From a slightly later timer and pertaining to the new year, and perhaps a *hieros gamos*, is the following Iddindagan passage with characteristic moon days:

> zi-kur-kur-ra èn-tar-re-de$_3$
> u_4-sag-zi-dè igi-KÁR.KÁR-dé
> u_4-ná-a me šu-du$_7$-du$_7$-dè
> zà-mu u_4-garza-ka
> nin-mu-ra ki-ná mu-na-an-gar[12]

> That she decree the life of all the lands
> and inspire the true first day,
> perfect the ordinances on the day of the disappearance of the moon,
> one puts in place on New Year's Day, on the day of the rites,
> for My Lady (Inanna) the bed.

Moving down somewhat later in time, one finds a connection between phases of the moon and cultic observances stated unambiguously in the epic of Atrahasis: *i-na ar-ḫi se-bu-ti ù ša-pa-at-ti te-li-il-tam lu-ša-aš-ki-in ri-im-ka*,[13] 'On the 1st, 7th and 15th, I (Enki) will establish a purifying ritual bath!' Perhaps relevant is an Old Babylonian letter which advises *ar-ha-am se-bu-ta-am u ša-pa-at-ta-am ki-ma ku-ul-la-ma-a-ta šu-ul-li-im*,[14] 'Observe the 1st, 7th and 15th as you have been taught!' Also relevant is an Old Babylonian text which lists the relevant dates and then mentions sulphur and soap-plant.[15]

The passages and rites mentioned so far do not go beyond the idea that certain periods of the month were suitable for carrying out rites or rituals, due to the phase of the moon. The suitability could in principle comprehend a range of superstitious concepts from that of enhanced benevolence as in the case of the full moon on the 15th day to extreme danger (for example, the disappearance of the crescent at the end of the month). A further development however presupposes a numinous quality possessed by the day, a supposition encapsulated in the following lines from *Šurpu*:

> ... *u$_4$-mu* ITI *u* MU.AN.NA *nu-bat-ti* UD.ÈŠ.ÈŠ UD.7.KÁM UD.15.KÁM UD.20.LÁ.1.KÁM UD.20.KÁM UD.25.KÁM UD.NÁ.ÀM UD *rim-ki* UD.ḪUL.GÁL UD.30.KÁM *a-ra-an-ka ma-mit-ka ḫi-ṭi-it-ka gíl-lat-ka ni-iš-ka mu-ru-uṣ-ka ta-ni-iḫ-ka kiš-pu ru-ḫu-u ru-su-u up-šá-šu-u* ḪUL.MEŠ *šá* LÚ.MEŠ *šá a-na ka-a-šá a-na* É-*ka a-na* NUMUN-*ka a-na*

[12] W.H.Ph. Römer, *Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit* (Leiden, 1965), 133 ll.171–5.
[13] Atrahasis I, 206–207.
[14] TCL I, 50: 23.
[15] UET VI/2, 193.

NUNUZ-*ka it-ta-nab-šu-ú it-ta-nap-ri-ku it-ta-na-an-ma-ru lu-u pa-aṭ-ra-nik-ka lu-u pa-áš-ra-nik-ka lu-u pa-as-sa-nik-ka*[16]

Day, month, year, *nubattu, eššešu*, 7th day, 15th day, 19th day, 20th day, 25th day, day of disappearance of the moon, bathing day, evil day, 30th day, may your sin, your oath, your error, your crime, your invocation, your disease, your weariness, sorcery, spittle, dirt, the evil machinations of people which might occur, get in the way, or appear repeatedly to you or your family, your offspring, your progeny, be released for you, be absolved for you, be wiped off for you!

Here the subjects of the verbs are the catch-all list of sins and sources of evil, and the catch-all list of days of the month and festivals are adverbial accusatives. The content is compendious but not particularly noteworthy, beyond the point that dates with traditional associations with festivals or religious observations were particularly suitable for abjuring evil and sin. This example is particularly clear, but other similar or related examples could be found throughout the Babylonian magical literature. And, apart from these isolated examples, Reiner was quick to recognise a genre of texts which she dubbed '*lipšur* litanies' and which bear a close relation with *Šurpu* in general and with the passage cited in particular.[17] In addition to more general ritual and incantational sections on the same line as *Šurpu* and similar magical texts, the litanies include systematic sections on the pattern 'May x absolve!' followed by an epithet of description qualifying the nature of x. For example, in a sequence of forty-seven geographical abjurations, the abjuration 'May Meluhha absolve, the home of carnelian!' is followed by 'May Magan absolve, the home of copper!'. In a sequence of fifteen abjurations based on watercourses 'May the Tutu canal absolve, the canal of Marduk!' is followed by 'May the Hegal-canal absolve, the canal of abundance!'. The interest in the present context arises from an improvement in the state of the text achieved most substantially in a publication of newly excavated tablets from Nimrud by D.J. Wiseman.[18] In addition to supplying a section in which individual deities are asked to abjure and are associated with their characteristic shrines or temples, this tablet includes abjurations by each of the twelve months, individually associated with characteristic deities, as well as thirty abjurations by the days of the month, referred to numerically and each associated with one, or in some cases two, characteristic deities, and described also in some cases by the monthly festival fixed on that day. For example 'May the 19th day abjure, the day of the wrath of Gula!' or 'May the 25th day abjure, the day of the procession of Ištar of Babylon!'. The section concludes with the sentence 'May the day, vigil, festival, the 15th, 19th, 20th day, the day of disappearance of the moon and the 30th day, day, month, and year abjure his sin for 'whomsoever it may be' (here in practice the name of the patient would be inserted)!'. Two important points can be made on the basis of this text. Firstly, it shows how an idea or concept included as part of the tradition could be drawn out by scribes producing new material and then expanded in a systematic way, on the strength of their own erudition. If there were examples of a festival being used to abjure in magic, then a systematic

[16] E. Reiner, *Šurpu. A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* (AfO Beiheft 11; Graz, 1958), 41, VIII, 42–7.

[17] E. Reiner, 'Lipšur Litanies', *JNES* 15 (1956), 129–149.

[18] D.J. Wiseman, 'A lipšur litany from Nimrud', *Iraq* 31 (1969), 175–183 with plates XXXVIII-XL.

elaboration of the idea could be achieved. The second point which can be adduced from this text is the manifest belief in the numinous quality of time. Calendrical units of time possess a quality in addition to length and this quality can be used as a component in magic.

A rather attractive further example can be brought forward which agrees with and illustrates these deductions. It is a series of blessings, each of which is attached to a day of the month and refers to festivals or other events beings particularly associated with that day.[19] Lines 9 and 10 can be taken as an example of the content and the type of associations being made. They may be translated: '9. Ditto. The 9th day is that of *Bēlet-balāṭi*. May she reckon your days for benevolence and your nights for profit! 10. Ditto. 'Pile up the tithes! May grain be copious in your silos and may prosperity be established!' Kazuko Watanabe wishes plausibly to restore D[I-*mu a-na* LUG]AL 'Greetings to the king!' in the first line of the text and understand the DITTO marks repeated for each day to refer to this. The background is as follows. The ninth day is indeed known from literary calendar texts as that of Gula, who as lady of life is *Bēlet-balāṭi*. The tithes are in a punning way suitable for the tenth day. No deity is mentioned for this line, but if one takes the numbers together one has 19, the day of the *ebbû* of Gula, her monthly festival day par excellence.

At this point it is necessary to touch on a genre of texts where time and calendar play a central role, namely the hemerologies and menologies. The present writer has an edition of these texts in an advanced stage of preparation and would refer for the present to an article in which he put forward a new classification, and where references to earlier literature may be found.[20] The hemerologies and menologies are texts which seek to establish the propitiousness or non-propitiousness of the days and months of the year. They refer to specific activities both of humans and animals and range in their field of vision from the household through the marketplace to the fields, and in their social interest from the common man to the king. These texts can be seen to have evolved out of Old Babylonian and earlier Sumerian ideas and beliefs, but in their present form they date from the Kassite period and later. Exemplars of the texts themselves are widespread down into the first millennium BCE and in the Sargonid period in Assyria there are over a hundred cases of hemerologies being quoted in the royal correspondence of scholars with the kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. These correspondence texts – letters and reports – are important in showing how the tradition was used by Assyrian scholars. Two essential aspects are involved. The first is the intrinsic quality of the time concerned. For example, the period of lunar darkness at the end of the month was unlucky, while the new moon, the full moon and important festivals were generally lucky. The second aspect is that there existed rituals which could be carried out specifically to ensure the propitiousness of a day which a private individual had reasons for wishing to protect: for example, the day of an interview with, authority. In this case time is not being used to abjure, but is itself the object of enchantment.

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[19] K. Watanabe, 'Segenswünsche für den assyrischen König', *ASJ* 11 (1991), 347–387.

[20] A. Livingstone, 'The Case of the Hemerologies: Official Cult, Learned Formulation and Popular Practice', in: *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Eiko Matsushima; Heidelberg, 1993), 97–113.

There are however more complex examples, including what may be a natural development as well as instances of purely academic scribal elaboration.

The first example which can be seen as a natural development in literature and magic, edited by Stol, shows how magical ideas could be combined to create an increased effect:

> ÉN *a-na-ku nu-bat-tu₄ a-ḫat* ᵈ*marduk* ᵈ*za-ap-pu e-ra-an-ni* ᵈ*ba-a-lum ú-li-da-an-ni* ᵈ*lú.ḫuš.a ana li-qu-ti-šú* (var. *kal-lu-ti-šú*) *il-qa-an-ni* ÍL-*ši* ŠU.SI.MEŠ-*ya ina bi-rit* ᵈ*za-ap-pi u* ᵈ*ba-a-lu₄ a-šá-kan ul-te-šeb i-na pa-ni-ya* ᵈ*iš-tar be-el-tu₄ a-pi-lat ku-mu-ú-a* ŠEŠ ᵈ*marduk um-mi šá-pat-tú* AD-*ú-a a-ra-aḫ it-ti-ya lip-šu-ru* DÙ-*ú ta-ma-a-ti ma-mit at-mu-ú la tu-qar-ra-bu re-mé-nu-ú* ᵈ*marduk*[21]
>
> I am the eve of a festival day, sister of Marduk. The pleiades conceived me, Balum gave birth to me, Luhušu took me into adoption (var. as bride). [I] lifted my fingers and I placed them between the pleiades and Balum. I make Ištar present before me, the lady who answers on my behalf. My brother is Marduk, my mother is the fifteenth day, my father is the first day of the month! Along with me may they abjure all oaths! May the curse I swore not come near me, merciful Marduk![22]

The speech is that of a Babylonian magician; his magical device is in the first instance to identify himself with the eve of a festival day; he builds on this by expressing the closeness of his relationship to other days of the month as well as to the god Marduk in genealogical terms. Speakers of incantations of the type of *Šurpu* and *Maqlû* identify parts of their anatomy with objects to achieve magical effects. An example from *Maqlû* VI 5[23] is *idā-ya* ᵈ*gam-lu₄ šá* ᵈ*sîn amurrî ubānātu-ú-a* GIŠ.*bīnu eṣemtu* ᵈ*ig*[*igi*], 'My arms are the divine boomerang of Amorrite Sin; my fingers are tamarisk, the bone of the Igigi!' Elements of magical appropriateness can be discerned – for example tamarisk used in making divine statues was in a very real sense the bone of the gods. The accuracy of these ideas is borne out by an ancient commentary to a magical work.[24] Here there are a sequence of lines all following KI.MIN and describing Marduk as Asalluhi. The relevant line is *šá nam-ri-ir lit-bu-šú ma-lu-ú pul-ḫa-a-ti*, 'one enmantled with a sheen, full of fearfulness'. The ancient commentator gave two interpretations of this line of which the second is relevant here: MU LÚ.M[AŠ].MAŠ *šá* TÚG.ÁB.SAG SA₅ GAR-*nu iq-t*[*a-bi*], 'He meant it because of the exorcist priest who is equipped with a red absag garment'.[25]

A second example occurs in the context of a list of festivals of major deities. Each festival is described as a *ūmu rabû*, 'great day'. In the section relevant here a sequence of names of days such as occur in hemerological literature is given, for example ud.maḫ,

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[21] After M. Stol, 'The Moon as seen by the Babylonians', in: *Natural Phenomena* (ed. D.J.W. Meijer; Amsterdam, 1992), 252.

[22] The present writer construes the final lines somewhat differently from Stol's rendering and understands the word *tamātu* as plural of *tamītu*, 'oath', whereas Stol took it as 'sea'. Stol's translation of the final lines is: 'May all the seas absolve with me! May you merciful Marduk, not let come near to me the bad oath that I swore!'

[23] G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû* (AfO Beiheft 2; Berlin, 1937).

[24] Lambert, 'An Address of Marduk to the Demons', *AfO* 17 (1956), 310ff.; idem, 'An Address of Marduk to the Demons. New Fragments', *AfO* 19 (1960), 114ff.

[25] Lambert, 'An Address of Marduk', 313. The reading ÁB.SAG has been gained by W.G. Lambert since his publications referred to in the previous note, and the present writer wishes to thank him for permission to make the reading available here.

ud.súr.ra, ud.ḫul.gál, ud.peš.a and so on. Each of these is followed by a specifying predicate in Sumerian and a translation into Babylonian in which the Sumerian of the day name yields a translation of incantational force. Thus, ud.ḫul.gál, 'evil day' – a day which in hemerological thought does not necessarily have an evil import – is reinterpreted exegetically as *ūmu lemnu šá ina ṣēri itakkipu*, 'evil storm which knocks over in the steppe country'. Here the language and imagery of magic is being drawn out of a terminology which belongs to the cultic calendar.

A third example to be briefly mentioned here is that of the philological and arithmetical analysis of the names and numbers of the characteristic days of the monthly calendar. In the series i.NAM.giš.hur.an.ki.a these are brought into association with each other by exegetical manipulation.[26] For example, in a manner not dissimilar to that of the previous text considered, the Sumerian expression ud.ná.àm, which has the idea of lying down, and means the day of disappearance of the moon at the end of the month, is made to yield the Babylonian translation *ūm tēdišti*, 'day of renewal'. In this particular example the methodology is particularly explicit: a metalexical reading of a paralexical list.

This contribution will be concluded by a brief reference to one of the most enigmatic magical texts, *inbu bēl arhi*, 'fruit, lord of the month', of which the writer has prepared an edition which is to be published in due course in monograph form. This text is known from exemplars from the Assurbanipal libraries and pertains to the Neo-Assyrian conception of kingship. This notwithstanding, it was already recognised by B. Landsberger in the early days of Assyriology that it had to be studied within a scholarly perspective that ranged as far back as the cultic calendar of Ur III.[27] There are individual tablets for each day of an ideal month and extra tablets for intercalary Nisan and Elul. Each tablet specifies rules of cultic hygiene, behaviour, dietary prohibitions day by day through the month. Combined with this is an extremely detailed day by day account of what type of offerings the king is to make to which particular deities throughout the day and/or night. This is then followed for each month by sections which ring the changes on omens of the *iqqur īpuš* type, but with the king as subject of the protasis. This of course amounts to a prescription of royal behaviour through the seasons of the year. Although specialised in its intent – to protect the king of Assyria – this work in a sense represents a distillation of two and a half thousand years of calendrically governed magic in Mesopotamia.

[26] A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Oxford, 1986).

[27] B. Landsberger, *Der kultische kalender der Babylonier und Assyrer* (LSS, 6/I and II; Leipzig, 1915).

Magic at the Cradle: A Reassessment

Karel van der Toorn

Five years ago, Walter Farber published a paper entitled 'Magic at the Cradle', in which he discussed what he described as 'Babylonian and Assyrian Lullabies'.[1] The present contribution on Mesopotamian magic is designed to reassess the significance of the two Old Babylonian baby incantations which Farber included in his corpus. They must be read in the light of a third, indirectly related text, viz. an incantation against Lamaštu's evil eye.[2]

A translation of the shortest of the two baby incantations may serve as an introduction to the problem of these texts.

> O baby, inhabitant of the house of darkness, out you came and saw the daylight.
> Why do you cry? Why do you wail? Why didn't you cry yonder?
> You have awakened the god of the house, the bull-man has been roused.
> Who was it that woke me up? Who was it that frightened me?
> The baby woke you up! The baby frightened you!
> As onto drinkers of wine, as onto the bar's *habitués*, may sleep fall onto him.[3]

At first glance, this is nothing more than a 'truly charming lullaby', as a modern commentator observes[4]: a crying baby who keeps the household awake is put to sleep by the joint effect of a soothing song and the consumption of a few drops of wine.[5] A closer inspection of the text, however, suggests that this is more than just a lullaby.

The rubric of the text just quoted defines it as an 'incantation to calm a baby'.[6] We are dealing, then, with an 'incantation' (*šiptum*, Sumerian én). One could argue, perhaps, that the term is used in a loose way, and that it should not be allowed to predetermine our understanding of the text. Later evidence is not in favour of this view. The Sumerian equivalent of the Akkadian rubric, viz. lú-tur-ḫún-ga, is found in the so-called Vademecum of the exorcist (*āšipu*).[7] It is also found as a rubric at the end of a number of similar texts known from first millennium copies, where it refers to a genre

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[1] W. Farber, 'Magic at the Cradle: Babylonian and Assyrian Lullabies', *Anthropos* 85 (1990), 139–148.

[2] For the two Old Babylonian baby incantations see W. Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf! Mesopotamische Baby-Beschwörungen und -Rituale* (Winona Lake, 1989), 34–39. The incantation against the eye of Lamaštu has also been published by W. Farber, 'Zur älteren akkadischen Beschwörungsliteratur', *ZA* 71 (1981), 60–68.

[3] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 34: [1] *ṣeḫrum wāšib bīt ek*[*letim*] [2] *lū tattaṣâm tātamar n*[*ūr* ^{d}*Šamšim*] [3] *ammīn tabakki ammīn tug*[*gag*] [4] *ullikīa ammīn lā tabak*[*ki*] [5] *ili bītim tedki kusarī*[*kk*]*u*[*m*] *iggiltêm* [6] *mannum idkīanni* [7] *mannum ugallitanni* [8] *ṣeḫrum idkīka ṣeḫrum ugallitka* [9] *kīma šātû karānim* [10] *kīma mār sābītim* [11] *limqutaššum šittum*. For translations of this text see, in addition to Farber, 'Beschwörungsliteratur', 63–64, Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 35; B. Foster, *Before the Muses*, vol. 1 (Bethesda, 1993), 137; A.R. George, 'Review of Farber 1989', *JNES* 52 (1993), 298–300, esp. 300.

[4] George, 'Review', 300. See also Farber's qualification of this song as being, originally, a 'lullaby' (Farber, 'Magic', 140).

[5] It may be assumed that the similes of lines 9–11 reflect popular recipes of how to put a baby to sleep.

[6] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 34, line 12: *šiptum ša ṣeḫrim nuḫḫim*.

[7] *KAR* 44, 15 and the duplicates BM 55148+68411+68658; Rm 717+BM 34188+99677+140684; BM 36678

that had to be mastered by the exorcist. To say that our incantation was originally just a folksong is mere speculation based on an impressionistic reading.[8] From the one Old Babylonian copy at our disposal, we must infer that the text as we know it belonged to the professional lore of the exorcist. Its recitation, apparently, involved the services of a ritual specialist.

Why was the noise of a crying baby such a serious problem that its parents had to resort to professional help? As far as the baby is concerned, their reason was probably very similar to the one modern parents have for consulting a specialist. Bouts of crying are normal for a baby, but incessant crying is not. The 'universal indulgence of babies by their elders', which one commentator refers to in connection with our text,[9] has its limits. These are certainly reached when a baby's crying is so excessive that the father sees no option left but to leave the house and take 'a road his child does not know', to use the words of a first millennium baby incantation.[10] A baby who troubles (*dalāḫu*) his father and 'reduces his mother to tears' is a source not of delight but of anxiety.[11]

The Babylonian sensibility to noise of all kinds is well documented in such mythological texts as *Atrahasis*. Domestic peace and quiet were highly valued, and disturbances naturally caused annoyance. In the texts under scrutiny this annoyance surpasses the level of mere discomfort: the sounds produced by the baby threaten the stability of the household and the family that constitutes it. The description of the harm done by the child focuses on the 'god of the house' (*ili bītim*) and the bull-man (*kusarikkum*). The baby has 'awakened' (*dekû*) the god of the house, and has 'frightened' (*gullutu*) the bull-man. In a similar vein, the second Old Babylonian baby incantation says that the 'noise' (*rigmum*) of the baby deprives both the 'god of the house' and the 'goddess of the house' of 'sleep' (*šittum*).[12] To say that 'the threat of the divinities of the household is surely playful'[13] is not to recognize the nature of the danger which the incantations are designed to combat. To modern ears the motif of sleepless house gods may sound like good fun perhaps, but to Babylonian ears it sounded serious enough.[14]

The Incantation Against Lamaštu's Evil Eye

To demonstrate that the baby's infelicitous effect upon the gods of the house is not just the result of an attempt at humour on the part of the author of our incantation, we need only study the other side of the tablet that contains our baby incantation. Here we find another incantation, defined by its rubric as 'an incantation against the evil eye'.[15] As nearly half of the tablet is missing, the beginning of the incantation has not

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Obv. (duplicates are published by M.J. Geller, *FS W.G. Lambert*, fc.). See also J. Bottéro, *Mythes et rites de Babylone* (Paris, 1985), 75.

[8] *Pace* Farber, 'Magic'.

[9] George, 'Review', 300.

[10] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 42, line 47.

[11] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 44: [55] *šerru ša idluḫu abâšu* [56] *ina īnī ummišu iškunu dīmātu*.

[12] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 36: [11] *ina rigmika ili bītim* [12] *ul iṣallal* [13] *ištar bītim* [14] *ul iḫḫaz šittum*. The text has now been published as OECT 11, 2.

[13] George, 'Review', 300.

[14] *Pace* Farber, 'Magic', 147, who writes that 'the reaction of the gods and the protective spirits surely, and not inappropriately, led to an occasional smile by the Old Babylonians too'.

[15] Farber, 'Beschwörungsliteratur', 63, [edge] *šiptum ša īnī*[*m*].

been preserved. Some parts can be elucidated with the help of the Old Babylonian *šipat īnim*, 'incantation against the evil eye', published by Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi in the *Festschrift* for Léon de Meyer.[16] For a proper understanding of the text it should be noted that the evil eye belongs to Lamaštu. In the view of the incantation, the demon is a bird-like creature that stretches its wings and flies around.[17]

(She) ... has secretly entered and flies around,
O, swooping-down *šuškallum* net, O, ensnaring *ḫuḫārum* net.[18]
She passed by the door of the babies, and caused havoc[19] among the babies.
She passed by the door of the women in childbed and strangled their babies.
She entered the storage room and broke the seal.
She dispersed the secluded fireplace and turned the locked[20] house into ruins.
She destroyed the *išertum*, and the god of the house has gone.
Hit her on the cheek, make her turn backward!
Fill her eyes with salt, fill her mouth with ashes!
May the god of the house return.[21]

There are obvious connections between this incantation and the 'incantation to calm a baby' on the reverse side of the tablet: both are concerned with new-born babies and with 'the god of the house'. The trouble described in this longer incantation seems more serious, however: the children do not just cry, but they suffocate; the god of the house is not merely kept from sleeping, but abandons the house. At core, however, the nature of the problem is similar: the god of the house is disturbed, either by the excessive crying of babies or by Lamaštu (or their combined effect), and threatens to go away or has in fact departed.

With the attack on the god, the evil eye attacks the heart of the house. The god has his dwelling place in the *išertum*, a spot that must be located at the centre of the house. The description of the route which Lamaštu has taken is instructive in this respect, since it leads from the outer parts of the house to its most private sector. In the Sippar incantation published by Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi, the demon first kills the cattle ('She has hit the

[16] A. Cavigneaux and F.N.H. Al-Rawi, 'Charmes de Sippar et de Nippur', in: *Cinquante-deux réflections sur le Proche-Orient ancien offertes en hommage à Léon de Meyer* (eds. H. Gasche et alii; Leuven, 1994), 73–89, esp. 85–87, IM 90648.

[17] See IM 90648: [7] *itruṣ kappīša* [8] *ušparrir idīša*, 'She stretched her wings, and spread her pinions'. For the interpretation cf. N. Wasserman, ' "Seeing eye to eye...". Concerning two incantations against Lamaštu's evil eye', *NABU* (1995), 70.

[18] The translation assumes that the *šuškallum* and the *ḫuḫārum* are powers addressed to combat Lamaštu. Their help is called upon in the lines 'Hit her on the cheek, make her turn backward! Fill her eyes with salt, fill her mouth with ashes!'

[19] Reading *i-na be-ri la-ʾi ṣe-[el]-ta-am iš-ku-un*, following Wasserman, 'Seeing eye to eye...'.

[20] Reading *ša-gi-ra-am* instead of Farber's *ša-gi-ma-am*, cf. Farber, 'Beschwörungsliteratur', 66. Following a suggestion by T. Abusch, I tentatively connect the word with the root SKR/ŠKR/ŠGR (*sekēru, sikkūru, šigāru*, etc.), 'to be closed, to be locked'.

[21] Farber, 'Beschwörungsliteratur', 61–63: [1′] *[x] x x ip-pa-la-áš it-ta-na-ap-[ra-áš]* [2′] *šaškallum sāḫiptum* [3′] *ḫuḫārum saḫeštum* [4′] *bāb la'ī ibā'ma* [5′] *ina bēri la'ī ṣē[l]tam iškun* [6′] *bāb wāli[d]ātim ibā'ma* [7′] *šerrīšina uḫanniq* [8′] *īrumma a[n]a [b]īt qē* [9′] *šipassam [i]šbir* [10′] *kinūnam puzzuram usappiḫ* [11′] *bītam ša-gi-ra-am tillišam iškun* [12′] *imḫaṣma išertam* [13′] *ittaṣi ili bītim* [14′] *maḫṣāma lēssa suḫḫirāši ana warkadātim* [15′] *īnīša mulli<ā> ṭābtam* [16′] *pīša mulliā di-gi-ma-a[m]* [17′] *il bītim lītū[ram]*. Cf. Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi, 'Charmes', 85 n. 19 for the reading of line 1′. For other translations see Foster, *Before the Muses*, vol. 1, 132.

ox and brok[en its yoke], she has hit the pig and broken [its ...]),[22] and then proceeds to the fireplace (*kinūnum*) and the *išertum*. In the incantation we are dealing with, Lamaštu makes her first stop at the door of the babies and the door of the women in childbed. These doors (a term that includes the immediate area to which the doors give entrance) were situated on the outskirts of the house. Their location was based on the belief that women in childbed were impure; a later text estimates their impurity to last thirty days. Impurity also attaches to new-born babies. For fear of contagion, both the mothers and their babies were kept separate from the other inhabitants of the house.[23] Pursuing her course from the women in confinement, the demon reaches the storage room which she enters by breaking the seal. From there she goes to the 'secluded fireplace', the social centre of the household only indirectly accessible to those not belonging to the family.

In the immediate vicinity of the fireplace lies the *išertum*. The term *išertum* is notoriously difficult, amongst other reasons because it is easily confused with its homonym meaning 'tithe' or 'dedicated part'.[24] There can be no doubt, however, that the term here refers to an architectural feature.[25] The proximity between the *kinūnum* (fireplace) and the *išertum* can be inferred from the indication that the latter was situated 'in front of' the former.[26] The *išertum* (Sumerian zà-gar-ra, zà-gu-la, zà-gal-la) might be defined as the ceremonial room of the house. The term is often rendered as 'sanctuary'. Equipped with a ceremonial table (*paššūr šakkî, paššūr aširtim*), it was used on such solemn occasions as a wedding[27] or the division of the inheritance.[28] Together with the table, the *išertum* belonged to the inheritance of the eldest son, as testamentary decisions from Old Babylonian Nippur show.[29] The location of the god of the house in the centre of the house must be taken into account when explaining the parallelism between the god of

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22 IM 90648: [5] *imhaṣ alpam* (GU_4) *išteb*[*ir nīršu*] [6] *imhaṣ šahâm* (ŠAH) *ihtepi hu-x*[...].

23 See K. van der Toorn, 'La pureté rituelle au Proche-Orient ancien', *RHR* 206 (1989), 348–351.

24 Note the following occurrences of *aširtum* in the meaning of 'tithe': E. Szlechter, *Tablettes juridiques de la Ire dynastie de Babylone* (Paris, 1958), 122–124, MAH 16147 [3] *ana* (...) [6] *aširtam* [7] *šuddunimma*; YOS 13, 384 [1] 10 G[ÍN KÙ-B]ABBAR NA_4 ^{d}UTU ^{d} *ša aširtašu lā šaqlu*; K. Van Lerberghe (in collaboration with M. Stol & G. Voet), *Old Babylonian Legal and Administrative Texts from Philadelphia* (OLA 21; Leuven, 1986), 68 [3] 1 GÍN *ša ana aširti* 10 GÍN KÙ-BABBAR; TCL 1, 101 [8] 5/6 GÍN KÙ-BABBAR *ša ana aširtim* [9] *ḫarṣu*. See also D.O. Edzard, *Altbabylonische Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden aus Tell ed-Dēr im Iraq Museum Baghdad* (München, 1970), 188 commentary to no. 191.

25 For discussions of the term see W. von Soden, 'Die Terminologie des Tempelbaus', in: *Le temple et le culte* (CRRAI 20; Leiden, 1975), 133–143, esp. 140; reprinted in: *Aus Sprache, Geschichte und Religion Babyloniens* (eds. L. Cagni & H.-P. Müller; Napels), 203–213; and J.-M. Durand, 'L'organisation de l'espace dans le palais de Mari: le témoignage des textes', in: *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 19–22 juin 1985* (ed. E. Lèvy; Leiden, 1987), 39–110, esp. 97–98. For the *išertum* as part of a building see T.G. Pinches, 'Some Texts of the Relph Collection with Notes on Babylonian Chronology and Genesis XIV', *PSBA* 39 (1917), 4–15, 55–72, 89–98, esp. 91. pl. X, no. 23:3′ (GAR-RA); E. Prang, 'Das Archiv des Imgûa', *ZA* 66 (1976), 1–44, esp. 16; M.-C. Ludwig, *Untersuchungen zu den Hymnen des Išme-Dagan von Isin* (Wiesbaden, 1990), 147.

26 IM 90648: [10] *ina pūt kinūnim ina išertim*.

27 See OB Gilg. 'Pennsylvania tablet' iv: [14] *bītiš emūtim iq*[*rū'inni*] [15] *šīmāt nišīma* [16] *ḫi'ār kallūtim* [17] *ana paššūr šakkî eṣēn* [18] *uklāt bīt emi ṣayāḫātim*, 'They invited me to the house of the father-in-law – the celebration of marriage is the lot of the people. I heaped food on the ceremonial table, delightful dishes for the house of the father-in-law.'

28 See J. Spaey, 'Emblems in Rituals in the Old Babylonian Period', in: *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Quaegebeur; OLA 55; Leuven, 1993), 411–420, esp. 420, CBS 1513: [37] *ištu ina kakkim* (^{giš}TUKUL) *ša* ^{d}*Adad ilišu*[*nu* ...] [38] *ina* É? *išertim ša bīt* (É) *abišu*[*nu* ...] [39] *awīlum awīlam ubbi*[*bu*], 'After one man cleared the other by means of the weapon of Adad, their god, in the *išertum* of the house of their father'.

29 Prang, 'Imgûa', 16, 28; idem, 'Das Archiv des Bitûa', *ZA* 67 (1977), 217–234, esp. 224.

the house and the bull-man (*kusarikkum*) in the baby incantation ('You have awakened the god of the house, the bull-man has been roused'). The first impression conveyed by the text is that the two terms refer to the same reality; that the *kusarikkum*, in other words, is identical with the 'god of the house'.[30] Both the analysis of the text and the non-textual data available on the *kusarikkum* show that this cannot be the case. Whereas the god is startled out of his sleep (*dekû*), the *kusarikkum* is 'roused' (*negeltû*) and, more importantly, 'frightened' (*gullutu*).[31] A first millennium variant of this incantation uses the verb *garāru*, 'to panic, to become scared', in connection with the *kusarikku*,[32] which makes sense because the *kusarikkum* is supposed not to sleep but to be on guard against possible intruders. The usual location of this mythological creature, whose functions had been reduced to those of a protective spirit by the Old Babylonian period,[33] was at the entrance of the house.[34] The parallelism between the 'god of the house' and the *kusarikkum* is not synonymous, then, but complementary: from entrance to centre, the house is in turmoil.

The ultimate problem, both in the baby incantation and in the incantation against the evil eye of Lamaštu, is neither the noise of the babies nor their strangulation, but the disastrous effects of these irregular events upon the god (and goddess) of the house. The departure of the god, assumed by the incantation against the evil eye, is the final episode in a series of untoward happenings. Closer analysis of this chain of events leads to a better appreciation of the significance of the god's departure. The eye of Lamaštu first brings strife (*ṣāltam*) among the babies. Then the demon strangles the babies. The children having died, Lamaštu surreptitiously enters the storage room; does she take away the family provisions? Her next act is the dispersion of the fireplace, which in Babylonian parlance amounts to the dispersion of the family. The 'fireplace' is the heart of the house and symbolizes the presence and continuity of the family; an 'extinguished fireplace' (*kinūnum belûm*) stands for an extinct family. By dispersing the fireplace, then, the demon ruins the family. The destruction of the *išertum* which leads the god of the house to depart closes the series of calamities.

The Identity of the God of the House

Who is this 'god of the house' so keen on his sleep that the noise of crying babies may induce him to leave? Speaking very generally, we may say that he is the divine patron

[30] This seems to be the implication of Farber's interpretation of lines 6–8 as 'a short dialogue between the god of the house and the speaker' (Farber, 'Magic', 141).

[31] It is not certain that the text is free of corruption: the term here translated as 'to rouse' is problematic; the editor of the text believes there is some word play involved between *negeltû* and *gullutu* (Farber, 'Beschwörungsliteratur', 69), but one could also argue that *i-gi-il*-TIM (transcribed in n. 3 as *iggiltêm*) is a corruption of a passive form of *galātu* ('to become frightened'). Farber later suggested that we are dealing with the phenomenon of popular etymology (Farber, 'Magic', 142).

[32] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 44, line 58 *kusarikku igruruma ...*, perhaps to be interpreted as a plural; cf. 84, line 358 ^{d}*Laḫmū igrurūma*, 'the hairy ones became frightened'.

[33] See F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts* (Groningen, 1992), 174–179.

[34] The only Old Babylonian *kusarikkum* plaque found *in situ* comes from Ur. It was affixed to the outer wall of the so-called Hendurŝaga chapel, see R. Opificius, *Das altbabylonische Terrakottarelief* (Berlin, 1961), 220, no. 402. For the chapel see M. Van de Mieroop, *Society and Enterprise in Old Babylonian Ur* (BBVO 12; Berlin, 1992), 140.

and personification of the house and its inhabitants. However, a detour along some other evidence allows us to give a more specific answer.

The first point to be made concerns the fact that the term 'god' can also be applied to the dead. Various Middle Babylonian inheritance texts from Emar mention a 'god' or 'gods' belonging to the main house and inherited by the eldest son. These gods are a designaton of the dead, as intimated by the fact that the son had to invoke (*nubbû*), honour (*palaḫu*) and tend (*kunnû*) them. The term usually occurs in the hendiadys 'the gods and the dead' (*ilī u mētē*), which must be understood as 'the deified dead'.[35]

Precisely because they are on the periphery of Mesopotamian civilization, the Emar tablets can open our eyes to an aspect of Babylonian religion that has hardly received the attention it deserves. Indications about the divine state of the dead are not entirely lacking in Old Babylonian sources. Such Old Babylonian divine names as Ikrub-El ('El-has-blessed'), Ikšudum ('He-has-arrived'), and Ikūnum are morphologically anthroponyms. After their death, the people who bore these names were venerated like gods, however, and their names were treated as divine names.[36] Another indication of the fact that the dead could be conceived of as gods in Old Babylonian times is a euphemism for dying found mostly in Old Babylonian records of adoption. The moment of death of the adoptive father or mother is sometimes referred to in these texts as the point at which his or her gods call on him or her to join them.[37] The word 'gods' is always in the plural. Since most Babylonians had only one god to whom they were especially devoted, there is reason to suspect that the 'gods' of these texts are not gods in the ordinary sense of the term. According to the euphemism, moreover, the gods 'address an invitation' (*qerû*); the verb is normally used for an invitation to a meal.[38] There is no evidence that the Babylonians believed that the dead would dine with the gods; the dead were 'gathered to their fathers', as the biblical idiom has it. It is these deceased 'fathers' who are referred to as gods in the phrase *ištu ilūšu iqterûšu*,'after his gods have called on him (to join them)'.

The belief in the divinity of the dead is already present in Sumerian texts. In wisdom counsels and hymns the 'mother' is regularly put in parallelism with the 'god'.[39] This does not mean that the family god was incarnate in the father and passed from his body to the bodies of his children, as has sometimes been claimed.[40] The terminology

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[35] See K. van der Toorn, 'Gods and Ancestors in Emar and Nuzi', *ZA* 84 (1994), 38–59.

[36] See M. Stol, 'Old Babylonian Personal Names', *SEL* 8 (1991), 191–212, esp. 203–205. In a personal communication, Stol has added the names Amat-Zarriqum (CT 6, 31b:4) and ^{d}A.ba-^{d}En.lil-gim (OECT 8, 20:11), Cf. also Išar-âliššu, Išar-kīdiššu, Išar-mātiššu and Išar-pada(n), in origin Old Akkadian personal names, but attested as divine names in Old Babylonian times and later (see Lambert in *RLA* 5, 173, 174).

[37] For a convenient survey of most of the relevant texts see *CAD* Q 242–243.

[38] The interpretation of *qerû* as 'to take away' (so *CAD* Q 243) is unfounded. There is not one text for which this meaning is assured. The idiom has been misunderstood by the *CAD*, because it failed to see that the 'gods' are in fact the ancestors.

[39] *SP* 1.145 'Accept your lot and make your mother happy, do it promptly and make your god happy'; 1.157 'A dishonest child – his mother should never have given birth to him, his god should never have fashioned him; 1.161 'Born from a mother, [fashioned] by a god'; *Instruction of Šuruppak*, lines 259–263 'The words of your mother and the words of your god you must not discuss. A mother is like the sun god Utu, she gives birth to humans; a father is like a god ...; a father is like a god, his word holds good' (for the translation see C. Wilcke, 'Philologische Bemerkungen zum Rat des Šurruppag und Versuch einer neuen Übersetzung', *ZA* 68 (1978), 196–232, esp. 211, 230–231). The latter text shows that it is really the human father who is called a 'god' in these texts.

[40] *Pace* T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven & London, 1976), 159.

should rather be seen as a reflection either of the supreme authority ascribed to the paterfamilias or of the deified state ascribed to the father after his death. The 'death of [one's] god', mentioned in a Sumerian hymn to Utu, edited most recently by Bendt Alster, is a retrospective reference to the death of one's father.[41] The reference to ghosts as the 'divine dead' in a Sumerian incantation against spectres (*šipat* ^{d}AD$_6$[LU$_2$×BAD] BA-UG$_7$) fits with this evidence.[42]

In view of the evidence which has just been collected, I should like to suggest the possibility that the *ili bītim* mentioned in the baby incantations and in the incantation against the eye of Lamaštu refers to the ancestor (or collectivity of ancestors) of the house, i.e., the family. There is both textual and archaeological support for this suggestion. A Sumerian hymn to the sun god, meant to be recited during a ceremony for the dead, speaks about the ancestor as eating, drinking and sleeping in his own house.

> Let the dead man eat in front of his house,
> let him drink water in his house,
> let him sleep in the shade of his house.[43]

The natural locus of the cult of the dead, according to this hymn, is the family house. This is the place, too, where the ancestors are said to sleep.

The concrete background of the idea of the ancestors sleeping in the family house is the practice of burying the dead within the house. 'Sleeping in the shade of one's house' is an 'allusion to the common practice of burying the dead in private houses', as the editor of the Sumerian hymn writes.[44] Other literary evidence for intramural burial is found in later sources. The myth of Erra and Išum has a passage in which the builder of a house is pictured as saying

> These are my living quarters:
> I have personally made them and will have my peace within them;
> and when fate has carried me off, I will sleep therein.[45]

A first millennium ritual to dispel a bad dream also implies that the ancestors are present in the bedroom. As soon as the sleeper is awoken from his nightmare, he is to touch the floor of the bedroom, to light the lamp, and to 'bless' (*karābu*) his 'god' and his 'goddess'.[46] Was the unpleasant dream provoked by feelings of guilt towards deceased parents? The ancients were quite familiar with the idea that neglected ghosts could send evil dreams (cf. Tibullus II vi 37 *ne tibi neglecti mittant mala somnia manes*).

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[41] The expression is found in the Utu hymn edited by M.E. Cohen, 'Another Utu-Hymn', *ZA* 67 (1977), 1–19, line 44 (nam-úš dingir-za-kam), and in the Utu hymn edited by B. Alster, 'Incantation to Utu', *ASJ* 13 (1991), 27–96, line 135 (nam-úš dingir-ra-na). Alster's suggestion that this refers to the personal god as the personification of the man's personal luck must be rejected. Elsewhere in the Utu hymn, the expression 'his god' refers to the ancestor(s) as well (e.g., line 75). The qualification of this death as 'the lot of mankind' (giš-šub nam-lú-ulu$_3$, line 135) offers additional support to the interpretation of 'his god' as a human being.

[42] Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi, 'Charmes', 74, line 15.

[43] Alster, 'Incantation to Utu', lines 151–152: lú-úš-e igi é-a-na ḫé-gu$_7$-e a é-a-na ḫé-nag-nag gizzu é-a-na-ka hé-né-ná. For igi in line 151 there is a variant giš (= ú ?). One would expect ninda, 'bread'.

[44] Alster, 'Incantation to Utu', 28 (correct 'buring' into 'burying').

[45] *Erra* IV 99–101: *ša bīta īpušu ganānīma iqabbi, annâ ētepušma apaššaha qerbuššu, ūm ubtīlanni šīmati asallal ina libbi.*

[46] A.L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Philadelphia, 1956), 343, tablet 79–7–8, 77 rev. 16′–17′.

Excavations at Ur and other places have shown that in the houses of the Old Babylonian upper class, the dead were at times interred underneath the floors.[47] These burials date from the time of the occupation of the houses; the dead and the living dwelt together. The customary room for the intramural burial is the second largest of the house.[48] It is situated, as a rule, in the recesses of the house where the sounds of the street did not penetrate. That the dead were to be placed in the quietest room of the house may be inferred, too, from the Sumerian term for the offering to the dead, viz. ki-sì-ga. The name is derived from the designation of the grave and means 'place of silence'.[49] Since the dead were not to be disturbed, it was not unnatural to bury them beneath the room that offered the highest degree of privacy; this room may be identified, I venture to suggest, with the *išertum*.[50]

Since sleep is the usual state of the dead (to the point where a tomb can be called an *ekal ṣalāli*, a 'palace of sleep'[51]), the particular sensibility to disturbance by noise would fit the interpretation of the god of the house as the ancestor. He is not just an anonymous protective spirit, but the forebear who lies buried underneath the house. The 'goddess of the house' in the second baby incantation[52] should be interpreted along similar lines.

The Significance of the Baby Incantations

The interpretation of the gods of the house as ancestors allows one to appreciate the progression of the disasters brought about by the evil eye of Lamaštu at another level. We have already noted the progression from periphery to centre. There is a comparable progression along the line of generations. After the death of the youngest generation (the strangulation of the babies), followed by the dispersion of the adults, the deceased ancestor is finally also made to leave. The spatial and the temporal axes converge: the intruder moves from periphery to centre, and from the offspring to the ancestor. The continuity between the baby and the ancestors is subtly brought out by calling the child an 'inhabitant of the house of darkness' (*wāšib bīt ekletim*). The principal 'house of darkness' which the Babylonians knew was the underworld, the dwelling-place of the dead.[53] In the baby incantations it is used as a metaphor for the mother's womb, but it alludes to the womb of Mother Earth as well.

The fact that the incantation is to be recited as a means of warding off the evil may be

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[47] The evidence until 1964 is surveyed by E. Strommenger, 'Grabformen in Babylon', *BagM* 3 (1964), 157–173. See also H. Gasche, *La Babylonie au 17e siècle avant notre ère: approche archéologique, problèmes et perspectives* (MHEM 1; Ghent, 1989), 60–61.

[48] So E.M. Luby, *Social Variation in Ancient Mesopotamia: An Architectural and Mortuary Analysis of Ur in the Early Second Millennium B.C.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, 1990), according to Van de Mieroop, *Society and Enterprise*, 37. Luby's dissertation was inaccessible to me.

[49] See W.G. Lambert, 'Review of Tsukimoto 1985', *Or* 56 (1987), 403–404.

[50] The parallel with the innermost sanctum of the god in his temple is interesting: the image of the god stood in the *kummu* (agrig), a term that can be rendered as 'bedroom', 'private quarters'. The cella was indeed a place where no light penetrated, and where noises were reduced to muffled sounds.

[51] OIP 2:151, no. 41:1.

[52] Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!*, 36 [13] *ištar bītim* [14] *ul iḫḫaz šittum*.

[53] See *Gilg* VII iv [33] *ṣabtanni ireddânni ana bīt* (é) *ekleti šubat il* (dingir) *Irkalla* [34] *ana bīti ša ēribūšu lā āṣû*, 'He seized me, drove me down to the house of darkness, dwelling of the gods of Irkalla, to the house which those who enter cannot leave'; *LKA* 62 r. 17 *<b>īt ekletu kakkabu ul uṣṣâ*, 'the house of darkness whence no star comes forth'. See *CAD I/J* 61 for other references.

taken as an indication that the catastrophe of which the text speaks is still only a threat. What is depicted is the future, should no appropriate action be taken. The only reversal of fortune for which the incantation against the eye of Lamaštu asks is the return of the god of the house.[54] Presented as the last in the series of events, the latter's absence was regarded as the definitive collapse of the family. To avoid that collapse the god must return to enjoy his ancestral sleep in the family's midst. The departure of the god, that is the ancestor, would mean a rupture with the past. The dead had to remain among the living, as benevolent spirits bestowing on their offspring blessing and protection. Their presence is deemed crucial for the continuity of the family. Hence the fear of their departure, which –ironically– could be caused by the very babies that were to perpetuate the family line (and who came from the 'house of darkness' where the ancestors had their abode).

The comparison of the baby incantations with the incantation against the evil eye shows that there lies, at the heart of the former, a preoccupation with the historical continuity of the family. The excessive crying of babies is taken as a potential threat to the harmony between the dead and the living. Should the ties between the ancestor and his offspring dissolve, the family is doomed to dispersion and annihilation. Old Babylonian family religion, in its aspect of the cult of the ancestors, produced and maintained in its participants a sense of historical identity: they belonged to a close-knit social group firmly anchored in the past. When this sense of identity is put in jeopardy, the very existence of the family becomes problematic. A family without a past, that is without a sense of its past, is not a family but a collection of individuals. The annulment of the past, mythologically presented as the departure of the divine ancestor, would eventually deprive the family of its future. Seen from this perspective, the Old Babylonian baby incantations are more than just charming lullabies. This 'magic at the cradle' was ultimately designed to preserve the family intact by maintaining peace between the generations, including the dead as well as the living.

[54] BM 122691: [17′] *il bi-ti-im li-tu-x-*[*x*]. It does not seem that the line can be emended so as to yield a sense comparable to IM 90648: [20] *īnum* (igi) *litûr ana bēli*[*ša*], 'Let the eye return to her master'.

Apotropaic Figures at Mesopotamian Temples in the Third and Second Millennia

Eva A. Braun-Holzinger

Without inscriptions or texts, that is without philological help, the effort of the archaeologist regarding problems of magic remains mostly speculative. This limitation applies not only to prehistoric times, but also to the third and second millennia, for even in these periods it is difficult to discern magical objects as such and to explain them. Only with great caution should information found in texts of the first millennium be applied to magical practices of the third and second millennia.

Rarely may philology and archaeology be combined as effectively as in the interpretation of Lamaštu, Pazuzu and some prophylactic clay figurines: texts with rituals against Lamaštu and amulets with inscriptions describe and identify the representations of the demon; texts with incantations to Pazuzu are found on figurines, heads, and amulets of the demon; figurines mentioned in rituals for protection of a building were actually found beneath floors, bearing inscriptions which matched those prescribed in the ritual texts. All three have been throroughly dealt with.[1] A short commentary on the rectangular amulets with a projection at the top pierced for suspension which are typical of the first millennium has been presented by E. Reiner.[2]

An exhaustive discussion of all objects with magical inscriptions has still to be written. An archaeologist may compile such a corpus, but without a full philological edition the iconographic research on this material would be futile.[3]

Various Magical Figures

In magic many different figures play an important role. They are:

(1) Representations of evil demons who are to be exorcised: they are manufactured and used during the ritual, and at the end of the ritual they must be disposed of. These representations are never found among archaeological remains, because the intended effect is attained only by their destruction. They were usually made of perishable material such as clay, tallow, wax or dust – some representations of the demon or the god were only drawn in schematic form, as some tablets with ritual texts actually show.[4]

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[1] W. Farber, *RLA* 6 (1980–83), 439–446. - id., 'Tamarisken, Fibeln, Skolopender', in: *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner* (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton; AOS 67; New Haven, 1987), 85–105. A monograph by Farber has been announced for some time. - F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits. The Ritual Texts* (Groningen, 1992). - N. Heessel, *Pazuzu* (Magisterarbeit Heidelberg, 1993).

[2] E. Reiner, *JNES* 19 (1960), 154f.

[3] For the difficulty of the publication of magical objects cf. W. Farber, 'Dämonen ohne Stammbaum', in: *Essays in Ancient Civilization Presented to Helen Kantor* (eds. A. Leonard B.B. Williams; SAOC 47; Chicago, 1989), 93–112.

[4] Reiner, in: FS Porada (1987) = *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval World. Papers Presented in Honor of Edith Porada* (eds. A. Farkas et al.; Mainz am Rhein, 1987), 30f.; *STT* 73, 57ff.

(2) Evil demons (Lamaštu, Pazuzu) may be manufactured in durable material; inscribed with incantations, they can be used as apotropaia. Small amulets are worn as personal ornaments, as pendants and decorations on fibulae; larger figurines were suspended in houses, while some may have been used by incantation priests during a ritual. Similar figurines without inscriptions certainly served the same purpose.

(3) Representations of protective gods or benevolent demons, which were manufactured and deposited during a ritual; only the aforementioned clay figurines that served the protection of the house have survived. Of the figurines made of wood which are also described in these texts, hardly any remains have been found (only some in Babylon[5]). Small divine attributes made of metal and stone found in brick boxes, which usually contained protective spirits, indicate the existence of figurines of perishable material, presumably wood.[6]

(4) Similar figurines made of bronze were also found beneath floors. Whereas their clay counterparts were mainly found in secular buildings, the metal figurines came from temples. We have no ritual texts referring to the protection of temples, so we do not know if bronze figures were manufactured in connection with rituals. These figurines – dogs and anthropomorphic demons – are part of the subject of this paper, but as I have already dealt with them elsewhere, I shall not discuss them here.[7]

(5) Terracottas – figurines and reliefs – had diverse functions. The Old Babylonian reliefs with their varied iconography have been explained in many different ways (including magical ones), but their use is still open to debate. They were hardly ever found *in situ*; they are attested in houses and in temples, never in graves. For terracottas of lions, bulls, Ḫumbabas, Lammas, heroes, bull-men and dragons, see below. Others could have been used in the domestic cult, especially those found in the chapels which usually were situated above the vaulted tombs of Old Babylonian houses. Representations of sitting gods or minor gods – possibly ancestors – could be explained as gods of the house.[8]

The great number of terracotta figurines found in the sanctuaries of Gula in the Kassite period may indicate a special use in the cult of this goddess. The figurines represent human beings and dogs, many of them with inscriptions. As yet only some of the dogs have been published; they all bear votive inscriptions,[9] one even a genuine ex-voto inscription:[10] A diseased person prays to Gula (*ik-ru-um-ma*), Gula grants his

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[5] D. Rittig, *Assyrisch-babylonische Kleinplastik magischer Bedeutung vom 13.-6. Jh. v. Chr.* (München, 1977), 47: 1. 2. 2. 1–4.

[6] Ib. 224. – Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 102f. 116. table showing the materials (and drawn examples). 128. 139 (building ritual). 141 (ritual for substitute king).

[7] E.A. Braun-Holzinger, *Figürliche Bronzen aus Mesopotamien* (München, 1984), 90. 93 (dogs; no. 325 man with dog); 86–88 (anthropomorphic figurines). - id. in: *Bronze-working Centres of Western Asia c. 1000–539 B.C.* (ed. J. Curtis; London, 1988), 126–128.

[8] C.L. Woolley/M. Mallowan, *UE, VII. The Old Babylonian Period* (London, 1976), pls. 79; 81 sitting goddess; pls. 82, 160–166; 83, 167–173 divine couples (no. 172 with naked woman); 89; N. Cholidis, *Möbel in Ton* (Münster, 1992), pl. 17. Warrior gods and goddesses are mostly represented on model chariots: M.-Th. Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie antique I* (BAH 85; Paris, 1968), pl. 49 (Kiš). – For ancestors as gods cf. K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel. Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden, 1996), 55–58.

[9] E. Sollberger, *JAOS* 88 (1968), 191ff. - V. Scheil, *Une saison de fouilles à Sippar* (Cairo, 1902), 90ff. fig. 13.

[10] (ed. H. Hrouda), *Isin-Išān Baḥrīyāt, I: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1973–74* (München, 1977), 90, E 8 (IB 18) pl. 9.

prayers (*ik-ri-bi-i-šu*), and he (in return) donates a dog to the goddess. The human figurines are shown in various attitudes, usually with one hand placed on the afflicted part of the body. The figurines from ʿAqr Qûf[11] and those from Nippur[12] are still unpublished. If they bear similar votive inscriptions as the dogs, they could be explained as substitutes for people cured by Gula. But it is possible that they were inscribed differently; hence a magical function in the course of the healing process cannot be excluded.

(6) Some figure types are never – or only exceptionally – made of stone, but mostly of metal, wood or ivory/bone; it is to be assumed that the material is relevant to the function (cf. foundation figurines). For example, during the third millennium, the naked woman was cast in copper or carved in ivory,[13] whereas in the second millennium this form is very common among the terracottas.[14] On terracotta reliefs she is often represented as lying on a bed; the figure on the bed may be replaced by a pubic triangle.[15] On Old Babylonian cylinder seals she is one of the types that appear not within scenes but as a single figure. The votive inscription on the silver triangle from Assur identifies the object as TÉŠ/*baštu*; like the pubic triangles on beds it may be a pars pro toto for the naked woman. Wiggermann's suggestion that the nude female is *baštu* in the sense of bloom or dignity that guarantees personal happines, is quite convincing.[16] The naked woman so common on Old Babylonian seals could well be explained in this way. Whether the small pudenda found in the Ištar temple of Assur[17] and the temple of Tell al Rimaḫ[18] are representations of *baštu* or objects used in rituals concerning the erotic sphere is open to debate.

(7) The use of seals as amulets is well documented; a thorough treatment of this highly complex subject is still wanting. E. Reiner's rather sweeping statement that cylinder seals are 'an undisputed type of amulet' because they sometimes bear inscriptions with the wish for a long and prosperous life has to be qualified.[19] The basic function of the seal inscription is the identification of the seal owner; invocation of gods and prayers only gain prominence in the Old Babylonian period. It is difficult to ascertain whether the subjects represented on the seals were apotropaic as long as many of the figure types are still not fully explained[20] (for the figures of the contest scenes, see below).

The material of the seal certainly had some magical significance. But not everyone had the means to choose an exceptional stone for his seal; one mostly had to use what was available at a certain time: trade and fashion were often responsible for the use of

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[11] M.A. Mustafa, *Sumer* 3 (1947), 19ff.

[12] Lecture given by R.M. Gibson at the RAI 38, Paris 1991.

[13] Metal: E.A. Braun-Holzinger, *Mesopotamische Weihgaben der frühdynastischen bis altbabylonischen Zeit* (Heidelberg, 1991), 19f. nos. 33. 38. 42. - Ivory and bone: Assur; W. Andrae, *WVDOG* 39 (1922), pl. 29; Mari; A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari* IV (Paris, 1968), pls. 7; 8; Tell Brak; D. Oates, *Iraq* 44 (1982), 198 pl. 11; E.C.L. During Caspers, *IrAnt* 24 (1989), 159f. pl. 1.

[14] F. Blocher, *Untersuchungen zum Motiv der nackten Frau in der altbabylonischen Zeit* (1987), 30ff.

[15] N. Cholidis, *Möbel in Ton* (Münster, 1992), 78, pls. 32. 33.

[16] Wiggermann, *JEOL* 29 (1987), 28f.

[17] Farber, *BID*, 157f.

[18] T. Howard-Carter, *Iraq* 45 (1983), 66, pl. 2c.

[19] Reiner, in: *FS Porada* (1987), 27f.

[20] Cf. Braun-Holzinger, 'Altbabylonische Götter und ihre Symbole', *BagM* 27 (1996), 247–261, for the numerous representations of protective gods and symbols of well-being on Old Babylonian seals.

the stone at a given period.[21]

(8) 'Amulets' or pendants in the shape of small figurines or symbols probably were used for their magical power; some may have been mere ornaments. The numerous amulets of prehistoric times are scarcely represented later than the Early Dynastic period. Their meaning usually remains obscure; some may be explained by similar representations in another context. The 'jewels' from the royal cemetery from Ur mostly show small animals: bulls, rams, frogs and birds,[22] the same animals as the so-called filling motifs on later seals, which should be interpreted as lucky charms.[23] The precious pendants, so often referred to in later texts, have not survived because rich graves of the late third and second millennia are still missing. One rich gold ensemble from the antiquities' market (Dilbat?) and some pendants from a deposit from Larsa give us an idea of the lost riches: the pendants are in the form of symbols of the gods and protective deities.[24]

(9) Figures on large basins and smaller vessels, on furniture, musical instruments, weapons and chariots, provided not merely decoration but protection as well.[25]

Representations of evil demons like Lamaštu and Pazuzu were confined to the personal sphere and to the use of the exorcist, whereas the beneficent demons shown by the clay figurines are equally known from mythical and cultic scenes of gods and their surroundings. They are protection against all evil, from demons (illness) and men (sorcery and enemies); they protect the individual, the building – private and official – and objects.

The apotropaia are shaped according to the evil to be averted and the object to be protected. Official buildings are guarded at their entrance by large representations of protective demons that are seen by everyone entering the gate; smaller figures may protect special parts of the building, others were even buried under the floor (cf. notes 1 and 7) or in the foundations.

Foundation Figurines

The magical function of the foundation figurines that taper to a nail is evident. They were buried in the foundations, well hidden within the masonry and so escaped recycling, the common fate of metal objects. Foundation nails were used from Early Dynastic times to the Old Babylonian period. The monograph on this subject by R. Ellis[26] is excellent and exhaustive; only a very short summing up is indicated in this context.

The figurines represent minor gods, rarely lions and bulls (fig.1),[27] and, beginning in the Neo-Sumerian period, the ruler as basket-carrier.

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[21] D. Collon, *First Impressions* (London, 1987), 100.

[22] C.L. Woolley, *UE, II. The Royal Cemetery* (London, 1934), pls. 140–143.

[23] Braun-Holzinger, 'Altbabylonische Götter', *BagM* 27 (1996), 259–261.

[24] Dilbat: *Der Alte Orient* (ed. W. Orthmann; Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 14; Berlin, 1975), pl. 253a: moon, sun, star, lightning; lamma. - Larsa: D. Arnaud et al., *Syria* 56 (1979), 34ff.; 63. - For the meaning of the pendant cf. D. Charpin, *MARI* 6 (1990), 159f.; J.-M. Durand, ib. 145ff.; 157f.

[25] Braun-Holzinger, *RLA* 7 (1987), 89f. § 2b. - id. (1991), 20ff.; 29f.; 33f.; 109.

[26] R.S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven, 1968).

[27] Bulls of Gudea and Šulgi: S.A. Rashid, *Gründungsfiguren im Iraq* (München, 1983), nos. 116–118. 132. - Lion from Urkiš: ib. nos. 78. 79.

The Early Dynastic nail-figurines were all found at Lagaš and Girsu. They are all anthropomorphic; from the time of Enanatum I, their simple pair of horns marks them as gods.[28] They bear building inscriptions, which are not different from inscriptions on other parts of the building. The inscription does not explain the figurine. The nail probably was the primary and functional part of the nail-figurine, since simple nails were found at Uruk, Mari and Adab;[29] these nails were combined with copper plaques with holes, or copper rings as were the nail figurines of Urnanše.[30]

Nails driven into buildings may signify the reservation of the property for a certain person (for the god, in the case of a temple?) or some form of security by fastening it to the earth. The driving of nails into the foundation certainly was a magical act[31] that probably was accompanied by other magical procedures.

The Neo-Sumerian foundation figurines were deposited in brick boxes built into the foundation. The boxes of Urnammu and Šulgi contained small bits of wood; in one deposit from Nippur there was an almost complete wooden figurine of a basket carrier, very similar to the metal one in the same deposit.[32] Wood rarely survived in Mesopotamia; it may be assumed that at least in the Neo-Sumerian period wooden pegs were usually deposited together with the metal figurines; this pairing of nails made of different materials indicates that wood and metal had a specific significance in these ritual deposits.[33]

The figurines were usually accompanied by stone tablets bearing the same inscriptions as the nails; their shape suggests that they were meant to be model bricks.[34] At Mari and at Uruk the nails were deposited together with small tablets of white (calcite) and dark (lapis) stone, all deposits were uninscribed. At Adab the inscribed copper plates with holes were found together with inscribed tablets of white stone and of dark copper (cf. note 29). The nail figurines of Gudea were mostly combined with inscribed tablets of dark material, which were laid on roughly finished tablets of white calcite.[35]

The Early Dynastic nails from Uruk were driven through an assembly of lapis beads; the Urnammu deposits from Uruk and from Nippur contained a small collection of 10–11 frit beads and 1–3 gold beads (some had chips of stone as well). Urnammu's son Šulgi did not use beads or stones in his deposits.[36] But at Mari the foundation deposits of the late third millennium combined beads of different materials with nails, inscribed

[28] Ib. nos. 49–58. 59–69. These figurines show the development from gods without horns (the earliest nail figurines from Tello) to those with horns (Enanatum I).

[29] Ib. 13f.

[30] Ib. nos. 41–45.

[31] R.S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 77ff.

[32] Rashid, *Gründungsfiguren*, 26f. 29: wooden fragments were found in both foundation boxes of Urnammu from Uruk, in two boxes of Šulgi at Nippur; the well preserved figurine from Nippur has not been published, but can be seen on a museum photograph. - Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 68f.

[33] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 90f. thinks it unlikely that the wooden figurines were the prototype (cf. Hallo, *HUCA* 33 (1962), 4 note 35), as they were only found in late deposits when the original function of the nails was forgotten; they were not driven into anything but were simply standing upright in their boxes.

[34] For a summary on stone tablets cf. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 76f. Mostly the tablets are plano-convex like the Early Dynastic bricks. Neither the bricks nor the stone tablets from Mari are plano-convex so that would confirm the hypothesis that the tablets were imitations of bricks.

[35] Rashid, *Gründungsfiguren*, 19. The Early Dynastic tablets from Tello usually were large plano-convex tablets of light calcite.

[36] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 68; Rashid, *Gründungsfiguren*, 25. 29.

metal tablets, and dark stone tablets.[37]

In depositing nails and tablets certain rules were observed; the combination of wood and metal for the figurines, of stone and metal – dark and light – for the tablets, of frit and gold for beads shows that different materials had different magical functions. The rituals performed during the laying of foundations are unknown; some archaelogical remains may point to offerings.[38] Until now, only Hittite texts give us some idea of the building rites; some of the materials used were similar to those in Mesopotamian deposits – nails, model bricks, bits of stone and metal, even figurines of lions and bulls.[39]

Figures at Entrances

Lions and bulls, monsters and minor deities were used as doorkeepers guarding the entrances of temples or decorating different parts of doors. They bear building inscriptions which for the most part give no information about their function.

Large doorkeepers on official buildings are mainly known from the first millennium, when they were firmly built into the walls. The numerous Assyrian colossi protecting the palaces are well known;[40] only some of the characteristics that pertain to their function will be dealt with here.

As the texts show even in the first millennium a great part of these doorkeepers were made of metal;[41] these materials have all been recycled, and thus no traces have been left. The function of these monuments is easily surmised, but it is unknown if their effectiveness was enhanced through rituals performed while they were being manufactured and erected.

In the Old Babylonian, perhaps even in the Neo-Sumerian period, the full range of the doorkeepers is also represented on small terracotta-reliefs. Some of the small reliefs are exceptionally large; one of them was found at the entrance of a small sanctuary. Probably these reliefs served the same purpose as their larger counterparts: they protected smaller buildings (fig. 2;15).

Lions and Bulls

Lions and bulls were used as doorkeepers since Early Dynastic times,[42] making it possible to study one class of monuments over the course of 2000 years.

Early Dynastic. No large lions or bulls in stone that could be identified as doorkeepers have been found. The building inscription on one of the copper bulls from Tell al 'Ubaid shows that the large number of copper fragments of bulls and lions from the Ninḫursag Temple were part of the original temple fittings; they had some function, probably

[37] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 58ff. 69f.

[38] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 130.

[39] V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*, (HdO 1,15; Leiden, 1994), 252–258.

[40] B. Engel, *Darstellungen von Dämonen und Tieren in assyrischen Palästen und Tempeln nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Mönchengladbach, 1987).

[41] Ib. table pp. 282–290; for lions, mostly made of metal cf. p. 57.

[42] The lion from Eridu should not be dated to the Early Sumerian period; cf. A. Spycket, *La statuaire du Proche-Orient ancien* (HdO VII,1; Leiden, 1981), 222, pl. 148; Braun-Holzinger, *RLA* 7 (1987), 89.

apotropaic, within this temple. Their original position within the building is unknown; they were all brought out of the temple during a major catastrophe and then disappeared underneath the debris: seven free-standing bulls (H. 62–66 cm),[43] at least 14 reliefs of recumbent calves (L. ca. 75 cm),[44] the so-called Anzu-relief,[45] eight lion heads (different sizes, some possibly half-figures to be mounted on door-jambs).[46] It might be assumed that the greater part of the decoration of Early Dynastic temples was made of metal and survived only on rare occasions, such as the catastrophe at Tell al 'Ubaid.

Smaller protomes of lions and bulls made of stone are well known in the Early Dynastic period; some of them bear building inscriptions. They formed the central part of the so-called votive plaques, which were built into the walls near the doors, so that the ropes of the doors could be fastened around the nails.[47]

Figurative decorations of Akkadian buildings are still unknown; whether the nails of the Akkadian votive plaques had protomes of bulls and lions is open to debate. Akkadian texts concerning the building of the Ekur of Nippur do not mention bulls or lions.

Early Neo-Sumerian period. Two fragmentary stone lions of medium size bear inscriptions of Gudea, who declares that these lions belong to the doors of temples (Gatumdug and Ningirsu). They were placed in front of the doors, not built in; one was sitting, the other lying down (fig. 3).[48]

To the same period belong some monuments of Puzur-Inšušinak decorated with lions: one is a flat stone, possibly a doorstep (fig. 4);[49] the other one is a huge boulder; its relief shows a god with a nail, a lion, and a Lamma-goddess. This boulder was bored through and may have been part of the door-construction.[50] Two lions from Susa with holes through their bodies may be dated to the late third or early second millennium.[51] They could have served as standard-bearers flanking an entrance. Two lions from the back of the throne of the sitting goddess from Susa hold staffs and may be interpreted as standard-bearers protecting the statue or the sanctury of the deity[52] (for standard-bearers see below).

Neither from the Neo-Sumerian nor from the Old Babylonian period are large lions or bulls of stone preserved. One fragmentary lion from Assur may tentatively be dated to this period (before Irišum).[53] Metal lions from the temple of the 'king of the land' (lugal *ma-tim*) at Mari are evidence that doorkeepers made of metal were in use in the Old Babylonian period.[54] The earliest inscriptions explaining the function of these animals

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[43] E.A. Braun-Holzinger, *Figürliche Bronzen*, nos. 70. 71 (H.R. Hall/L. Woolley, *UE, I. Al-'Ubaid* (London, 1927), pls. 4. 5. 27. 28); core made of wood.

[44] Ib. no. 68 (Hall/Woolley, *UE I*, pl. 29. 30), sheet copper on wood.

[45] Ib. no. 77 (Hall/Woolley, *UE I*, pls. 5, 6–10), the head should be that of an eagle, not of a lion.

[46] Ib. nos. 73–75 (Hall/Woolley, *UE I*, pls. 10–12).

[47] J. Boese, *Altmesopotamische Weihplatten* (Berlin, 1971), 215ff.; R. Zettler, *JCS* 39 (1987), 211ff.; Braun-Holzinger, *Weihgaben*, 319.

[48] Ib. 319 T 7 (temple of Gatumdug: Parrot, *Tello* (Paris, 1948), 195f. fig. 42,l); T 8 (temple of Ningirsu: Boehmer, *BagM* 16 (1985), 141ff.; id. *BagM* 18 (1987), 125ff.); possibly T 9.

[49] Braun-Holzinger, *Weihgaben*, 375f. Varia 7; P. Amiet, *L'art d'Agadé au Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1976), no. 61.

[50] Braun-Holzinger, *Weihgaben*, 345 referring to Sockel 2; André-Salvini/Salvini, *IrAnt* 24 (1989), 53ff.

[51] Amiet, *L'art d'Agadé*, nos. 56. 60; both h. 50 cm.

[52] Ib. no. 36.

[53] W. Andrae, *WVDOG* 23 (1913), 23 figs. 146. 147; l. 63 cm.

[54] D. Beyer et al., *MARI* 7 (1993), 79ff. – J.-M. Durand, *MARI* 5 (1987), 611ff. identifies ^{d}lugal *ma-tim* with Enlil, not with Dagan.

are the copies of two inscriptions with the names of lions erected by Šamši-Adad for the temple of Ištar e-me-ur$_4$-ur$_4$ at Mari:[55]

ka-ni-iq / za-e-er / ša-am-si-^{d}iškur / *i-na qa-bé-e* / ^{d}inanna
The one who strangles the enemy of Šamši-Adad by the command of Ištar.

ša-a-ti / da-mi na-a[k-ri] / ša-a[m-ši-^{d}iškur] / *i[na qa-bé]* / ^{d}[inanna]
The one who drinks the blood of the enemy of Šamši-Adad by the command of Ištar.

Large lions made of terracotta are first attested in the Old Babylonian period; some fragments were even found *in situ*; the terracotta sherds were not valuable enough to be carried off.

At Tell Harmal several pairs of lions were found flanking the doors of a temple.[56] At Hafājī two lions stood in niches at both sides of a door within the Sin-temple.[57] More examples are known from Hadadum, Isin, Tello (lions and bulls?), Tell Basmusian, and 'Usiya, as well as from the art market.[58] Some of the terracotta lions from Susa have been dated to the Old Elamite period.[59]

Old Babylonian terracotta reliefs with representations of lions probably were used for the protection of private houses.[60] Bulls are rarely found on these reliefs[61] (cf. notes 141–144 for bulls above the doors of temples on terracotta model chairs). Lions made of terracotta were still used in the Kassite period, at Nuzi, Susa, and Assur.[62]

Untaš-Napiriša erected bulls of glazed terracotta destined for several of the temples at Choga Zambil. A bull from the temple of the weather god and his spouse bears one of the usual building inscriptions mentioning Napiriša; the same inscription was repeated on the brick-base;[63] bulls from the ziqqurrat bear votive inscriptions without mention of building activities. Remains of some other guardian figures of glazed terracotta probably were part of lion-dragons (they have usually been restored as griffins, but the beak is never preserved; for lion-dragons as doorkeepers see below, note 155).[64]

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[55] D. Charpin, *MARI* 3 (1984), 45–47; corrected by Durand, *NABU* (1993), 95 no. 112.

[56] T. Baqir, *Sumer* 2 (1946), 23; (ed. O. Orthmann), *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 167; three pairs, h. ca. 60 cm.

[57] H.D. Hill et. al., *Old Babylonian Public Buildings in the Diyala Region* (OIP 98; Chicago, 1990), pls. 59b; 60.

[58] J.-L. Huot, in: *Cinquante-deux réflexions sur le Proche-Orient Ancien offertes en hommage à L. De Meyer* (eds. H. Gasche et al.; Leuven, 1994), 277–282. - Hadadum: C. Kepinski-Lecomte, *Hadadum I* (1992), 367 figs. 152. 153. - Isin: (ed. H. Hrouda) *Isin-Išān Bahrīyāt, III: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1983–84* (München, 1987), 52. 58f. pls. 19. 32. - Tello: H. de Genouillac (ed.), *Fouilles de Tello* II (Paris, 1936), 16. 36. 69 pls. 108, 1.2a. - Tell Basmusian: B. Abu al-Soof, *Sumer* 26 (1970), pl. 37, 4. 5. - 'Usiya: H. Fuji et al., *Al-Rāfidān* 5/6 (1984–85), 124 fig. 12, 4–5.

[59] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 285; h. 86 cm, one of several; Spycket, *La statuaire*, 289f. note 292–296, dated to the early second millennium; id., *IrAnt* 23 (1988), 149–156.

[60] Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs*, pls. 51, 535–537 (Tello); 57, 600–604 (Larsa); 66, 715 (Mari). - D.E. McCown and R.C. Haines, *Nippur I. Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter, and Soundings* (OIP 78; Chicago, 1967), pls. 142, 8–10; 143, 1 (mould). - Woolley/Mallowan, *UE VII*, pl. 91, 251. - Hill, *Public Buildings*, pl. 38.

[61] McCown/Haines, *Nippur I*, pl. 142, 7 (mould).

[62] R. Starr, *Nuzi* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), pls. 108–111. - Spycket, *La statuaire*, 351 note 269 fig. 228 (Susa). - E. Klengel-Brandt, *Die Terrakotten aus Assur im Vorderasiatischen Museum Berlin* (1978), 103 nos. 684. 685.

[63] M.-J. Steve, MDAI 41 (Paris, 1968), 98f. TZ 56 A and B pl. 20, 9, from the court; R. Ghirshman, MDAI 40 (Paris, 1967), 16, pl. 14, 3; 75 (G.Z.T. 1151).

[64] MDAI 41, 92ff. TZ 53 pl. 20, 1–7, probably three figures (inscription of the so-called griffin TZ 54; 55):

Lions were not only used at temples but also served to protect city gates, if we correctly understand a Sumerian proverb. There the lion is regarded as the brother of the free-roaming dangerous lion; he does not inspire fear and may even be ridiculed.[65]

In the second millennium, huge lions of stone are well represented in Syria and Asia Minor at temples[66] and city gates;[67] in Assyria they make their appearance only in the first millennium. Most of the colossal guardian figures are human-headed winged lions and bulls; natural animals are rare and seem to be restricted to temples. Within Assyria proper only one lion has survived: from the Ištar Temple of Nimrud, dedicated to Bēlet-mātim by Assurnaṣirpal.[68] In texts, references to lions at palaces and temples (Aššur and Ištar) are frequent; they were usually made of metal, some of them served as column bases.[69]

In North Syria at Arslan Taš lions and bulls were found within a temple, probably dedicated to Ištar. The bulls were inscribed with lengthy inscriptions by Tiglath-Pileser III; only one of the inscriptions is preserved, giving the names of both bulls:[70]

> UD-*mu* [*ez-z*]*u x* [....] *a+a-bi mu-šam-qit lem-nu-ti* MAN MU-*šú*
> His name: furious UD-*mu*, who .... the enemy, who subdues those unfavourably disposed toward the king.

> *ka-šid er-net-ti* MAN *mu*[....] *x x*[....] *x x mu x x*[....] *mu-še-rib* MÍ.SIG$_5$.MEŠ MU-*šú*
> His name: one that attains victories for the king, ..., who lets the good ones enter.[71]

The lions of the city gate at Til Barsip of the time of Salmanassar IV had similar names:[72]

> [UD]-*mu ez-zu ti-bu-<šú> la maḫ-ru mu-šam-qit la* [*ma-gi-ri mu-šam-ṣu*]-*ú mal lib-bi* MU-*šú*
> His name: furious UD-*mu*, whose attack one cannot withstand, the one who subdues [the enemy, who fulfills] the wishes.

> [*mu-n*]*a-kip a-nun-tú sa-pin* KUR [*nu-kúr-*]*tú* [*mu-še-ṣu-ú*] ḪUL.MEŠ *mu-še-rib* [S]IG$_5$.[ME]Š MU-*šú*
> His name: who crushes resistance, who levels out the enemy country, [who repels] evil, who lets the good ones enter.[73]

R. Ghirshman, MDAI 39 (Paris, 1966), 49f. G.T.Z. 276 pls. 33, 5; 34; (35 griffin); 69; h. 1, 36m.

[65] E.I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs* (1959), coll. 2. 101; pp. 249f. 483f. 536f.: gala-e ur-maḫ-e edin-na ù-mu-ni-in-te ḫé-en-du URU+GAR^{ki}-a ká-^{d}inanna-šè ur-šika-da-ke$_4$ ^{giš}ilar ì-ra-ra šeš-zu edin-na ta-àm mu-un-ak-e-šè; I have to thank Th.J.H. Krispijn for this information.

[66] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 408a (Alalaḫ); pl. 408b (Hazor) middle Syrian.

[67] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 336 (Boğazköy); pl. 337 (Alaca Höyük, original position unknown) Hittite empire.

[68] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 174.

[69] Engel, *Darstellungen*, 55ff. table I pp. 245–248 (lions); p. 76. - T.A. Madhloom, *The Chronology of the Neo-Assyrian Art* (1970), 100ff.

[70] F. Thureau-Dangin et al., *Arslan-Tash*. (BAH 16; Paris, 1931), 60ff. pls. 4; 5, 1; the inscription on the second bull is completely worn away; the lion from the temple (pl. 3) and the lions from the city gate are uninscribed.

[71] Engel, *Darstellungen*, 75f.

[72] Thureau-Dangin et al., *Til-Barsib*. (BAH 16; Paris, 1936), 141ff. pl. 37. - The lion from Tell Ağağa is uninscribed: A.H. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon* (London, 1853), 275f.

[73] Engel, *Darstellungen*, 57f.

Assurbanipal had two silver bulls made for the temple of Sin at Ḫarran; their function is described in the following terms:

> *mu-nak-ki-pu ga-ri-a*
> who strike down my foes
>
> *a-na it-ku-up za-ma-ni da-a-iš a+a-bi-i[a]*
> to pierce the adversary, to smash my enemies.[74]

Esarhaddon informs us on the function of the colossi at his palace:

> ^{d}ALAD.MEŠ *u* ^{d}LAMMA.MEŠ *šá* NA$_4$.MEŠ *ša ki-i pi-i šik-ni-šú-nu ir-ti lem-ni ú-tar-ru na-ṣi-ru kib-si mu-šal-li-mu tal-lak-ti* LUGAL *ba-ni-šú-nu*
> Šedu*s* and Lamassu*s* of stone, which by their nature repel the evil one, which guard the path and keep safe the route of the king who had them fashioned.[75]

Similar inscriptions were written on the clay figurines used in a ritual for the protection of a house.[76] The names of the guardian figures erected by the ruler express the wish for protection against his enemy; the inscriptions on the clay figurines refer to protection against evil.

The lion is the special animal of Ištar and as such was often represented in her temples.[77] But as a guardian the lion may also protect the temple of other deities (Gatumdug, Ningirsu, lugal *ma-tim*, Aššur); and the temple of Ištar can also be protected by bulls (Arslan Taš). Protective bulls and lions are interchangeable.

Protective Deities: Mountain and Water Gods, Lammas

In addition to lions and bulls and their mythical variants (human-headed winged lions and bulls), there are many other doorkeepers: anthropomorphic gods and demons and monsters. Most of them were in use only for a short period of time.

In the third millennium purely anthropomorphic gods were not used as doorkeepers. Only on Akkadian seals are minor gods seen opening the doors for the rising Sun-god.[78]

Mountain- and water-gods make their only appearance in the Kassite period on the façade of the Inanna temple of Karaindaš at Uruk.[79] The function of the sculptures of an Old Babylonian mountain-god[80] and a water-goddess[81] from Mari are difficult to

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[74] Ib. 76; 182.
[75] Ib. 29; Borger Ash § 27 Ep. 22 Fass. B, 41–45.
[76] D. Rittig, *Kleinplastik*, 187ff.
[77] Engel, *Darstellungen*, 66f.
[78] R.M. Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit* (UAVA 4; Berlin, 1965), pls. 33–35. On these seals there is sometimes a lion on top of the door-jamb (in particular figs. 409. 420).
[79] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 169; UVB I (1930), 34f.
[80] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 161; U. Mootgat-Correns, in: FS Porada (1986) = *Insight through Images. Studies in Honor of Edith Porada* (ed. M. Kelly-Buccellati; BiMes 21; Malibu, Calif., 1986), 183ff. (Her dating of the statue to the Neo-Sumerian period is not convincing.) - Inscription: Frayne RIME 4. 6. 11. 1.
[81] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 160b.

ascertain, as their exact place of origin is unknown. The inscription of the mountain-god is a votive incription to Šamaš; it probably belonged to the temple of that deity. One terracotta relief with the water-goddess from Ur is exceptionally large; it probably was used at the entrance of a small sanctuary (fig. 2) (cf. the bull-man from the Ḫendursag chapel, note 138). Mountain- and water-gods have been discussed by Ellis. They are not related to specific gods of the pantheon: they are simply rivers and mountains carrying plenty-and-abundance – Sumerian ḫegal.[82]

Similar in function is the so called Lamma-goddess, usually depicted in an attitude of intervention.[83] She was represented at the door of the temple at Tell al Rimaḫ. The sculptured stone with its intricate system of holes certainly belonged to the door structure.[84] The inscription states that this stone was part of the *kannu*.[85] Fragments of a terracota façade from Susa from the time of Šilhak-Inšušinak show bull-men alternating with Lammas and palmtrees (fig. 5). The inscription mentions the building of the temple of Inšušinak.[86] That the two Kassite reliefs from Uruk from the time of Nazimaruttaš really flanked a temple entrance is doubtful.[87] The Lamma is equally represented on Old Babylonian terracotta reliefs; they might have been fixed to the doors of private houses;[88] only small examples have been found.

Demons: Monsters and Anthropomorphic Figures

Ḫumbaba: The face of Ḫumbaba as a façade relief on a temple is only known from Tell al Rimaḫ (fig. 6). As the Lamma (cf. note 84), so too this stone relief was fitted with holes, and certainly formed part of the same door; a second example of Ḫumbaba almost exactly like the first one was found in the debris.[89]

The face of Ḫumbaba was popular on seals and small terracotta reliefs throughout the Old Babylonian period. The mask is awe-inspiring, the mouth agape showing the tongue, just like the heads of the apotropaic lions. Ḫumbaba seems to be destined to become a doorkeeper; he was the awful keeper of the cedar wood, whose head was mounted at the

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82 Ellis, BiMes. 7 (eds. L.D. Levine/T. Cuyler, 1977), 33. - In an abbreviated form *ḫegal* may be rendered simply by the aryballos, cf. Braun-Holzinger, *BagM* 27 (1996), 260. Mountain gods may be companions of the sun-god, demons with aryballoi companions of Ea.

83 Braun-Holzinger, *BagM* 27 (1996), 247–249. - Foxvog/Heimpel/Kilmer, in: *RLA* 6 (1980–83), 447f.: lamma may be a personification of 'good fortune or protection' similar to *šedu*/udug.

84 D. Oates, *Iraq* 29 (1967), 74ff. pl. 31a; T. Howard-Carter, *Iraq* 45 (1983), 64ff. note 6 pl. 2a.

85 Ib. new translation by Lieberman. - *kannu* in this context certainly does not mean a container but part of the door; E. Sollberger and J.-R. Kupper, *Inscriptions royales sumériennes et akkadiennes* (LAPO 3; Paris 1971), IV A 5b (clay-nail inscriptions by Lipitištar) have already proposed a similar translation; 50 clay nails with this inscription are hardly to be combined with a container, but could be explained as part of a wall supporting the door-construction. - cf. *KAR*, 298 rs 10: protective spirits have to be buried in a *kannu* within a door. - cf. A. Westenholz, *Old Sumerian and Old Akkadian Texts in Philadelphia, II* (Malibu, Calif., 1987), 42 text 18 comm.

86 P.O. Harper et al., *The Royal City of Susa* (New York, 1992), no. 88, giving a new reconstruction. - F. Grillot, *IrAnt* 18 (1983), 14; the brick-figures are mentioned in the inscription.

87 A. Becker, *Uruk, Kleinfunde I.* (AUWE 6; Mainz am Rhein, 1993), 59 no. 791 pls. 44–45; they were given to Inanna for the life of the ruler by one of his servants; guardian figures usually were given by the ruler himself.

88 Woolley/Mallowan, *UE VII*, pl. 80.

89 Oates, *Iraq* 27 (1965), 72 pl. 16a. - id. *Iraq* 29 (1967), 74ff. pl. 31b. - Howard-Carter, *Iraq* 45 (1983), 69ff. pls. 4a.b; 5a.

doors of the temple of Enlil at Nippur. Perhaps it is due to a lacuna that only the heads from Tell Rimaḫ survived. The other mythical doorkeeper, the scorpion-man, was also represented on the façade of the al Rimaḫ temple (see below, note 160).

The small terracottas with Ḫumbaba-masks had holes for suspension and were probably intended for use in private houses;[90] they are all small and could not have been used as real masks.

The Bull-Man and the Hero with Six Curls

Comments on the bull-man and the hero with six curls have to be more extensive. Both are classical doorkeepers of the third and second millennium. Both are first represented in combat scenes on seals and sealings of the older Early Dynastic period. Only a few of the various figures that appear on the early combat scenes are taken over into the repertoire of the late third millennium: of the natural animals only the lion and the bull, of the heroes only the bull-man and the six-curled hero.[91] Lion, bull, hero, and bull-man are the main representatives of the apotropaic figures on temples and other buildings, as shown by the archaeological and philological evidence.

Here we encounter a problem: are the bull-man and the hero from their first appearance in the combat scene to be identified with those demons which they represent in later periods, when their names can be ascertained with the help of inscriptions? Is the bull-man to be called *kusarikku* and the hero, *laḫmu*?[92] Or are the heroes of the Early Dynastic combat myth still nameless creatures who only later were identified with special demons?

Wiggermann argues as follows: The purely descriptive name *laḫmu*, 'hairy', was invented to describe a well known figure type; the *laḫmu* was created in art. On the other hand, the representation of the bull-man was invented to provide an image for the awe-inspiring wild bull/bison in its mythical, demonic version, and to set it apart from its natural counterpart.[93] Both the natural wild bull/bison and the mythical bison are called alim/*kusarikku* as shown by Wiggermann and deJong Ellis.[94] Wiggermann thinks that this development from image to demon or demon to image started by the end of the Early Sumerian period: 'Art needs monsters and monsters need art'.[95] I think that archaeology may help to give a more precise answer to this question.

Bull-Man and Hero in Combat Scenes

The Early Dynastic combat develops from the natural combat between wild and domes-

[90] Woolley/Mallowan, *UE VII*, pls. 85, 192; 86, 193.

[91] The hero with 'conical cap' and kilt is taken up again on early Akkadian seals, Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 12. 20. 27. 32. Naked combatants are rarely represented, cf. Boehmer, 42f. for Akkadian III. - For nude heroes of the Neo-Sumerian period cf. C. Fischer, *ZA* 82 (1992), 77f.

[92] Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 177 for *kusarikku*; 165 for *laḫmu*, referring to *JEOL* 27 (1981–82), 90ff.

[93] Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, XIIf. note 3; id., *RLA* 8 (1994), 225 § 2.1.

[94] Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 174f.; M. de Jong Ellis, in: FS Sjöberg = *DUMU-E$_2$-DUB-BA-A; Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* (eds. H. Behrens et al.; Philadelphia, 1989), 124–127.

[95] Wiggermann, *RLA* 8 (1994), 225.

ticated animals or between carnivores and herbivores; man may take part. Only later in the second Early Dynastic period do the animals adopt the unnatural pose of standing up on their hind legs; monsters and anthropomorphic beings with strange heads gradually change the scenes from a real into a mythical contest.[96] The repertoire of this mythical contest is extremely varied; mostly the figures, even the combination of the figures, are only short lived or restricted to special workshops.[97] Since the combination of figures allows of variations, the theme itself is not sufficient to identify the figures.

The heroes may be divided into two groups: dressed and naked. The 'Mischwesen' (formed by several beings) are naked too; they only appear within the contest scenes, never as single beings.[98] The heroes dressed in kilts and caps have the same appearance as the warriors who are depicted in scenes of real life; as real people they are always shown in profile, never *en face*.[99] From the third Early Dynastic period on, these warriors have almost disappeared from contest scenes; on Akkadian seals the hero with conical cap has a short rennaissance, together with a hero with headgear that looks like a helmet and some strange people with their long hair bound up in a loop covered by a haircloth; some may wear kilts made of fleece.[100]

The naked heroes mostly wear belts; they have various hairstyles. The hero with the double peaked headdress is always shown in profile.[101] Frankfort has already explained this coiffure as depicting a partly shaved head, with only two remaining locks; this image is more clearly visible on the figure of the bronze tripod from Hafājī.[102]

The hero with 'geometric head' (or mask) is always shown full face; he disappears at the end of the second Early Dynastic period.[103] A similar type in the pose of the 'master of animals' is carved on stone vessels and vessel stands of the older Early Dynastic period (not Early Sumerian!): his hair is parted in the middle and curled at the shoulders, and he wears the usual triple belt;[104] once he wears shoes with upturned toes, the special footwear of mountain people (fig. 7).[105]

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[96] N. Karg, *Untersuchungen zur älteren frühdynastischen Glyptik Babyloniens* (BagF. 8; Mainz am Rhein, 1984), 50; 53: in the horizontal combat only those heroes known from other natural scenes are represented, the mythological heroes do not take part in the horizontal combat.

[97] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 39ff.

[98] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 48ff.

[99] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 44ff. 'Held mit flacher Kappe im Schlitzrock' and 'Held ohne Kopfbedeckung im Schlitzrock'. Both types are restricted to the ED II period; for similar representations of warriors outside the contest-scenes cf. the inlays from Kiš and Mari, Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, 14 pls. 92b; 93a.

[100] Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 28. 32. 43; hero with shoes with upturned toes: figs. 96. 120. 142. 189. 195. 245. nos. 465. 516. 521? 536. 659. 721. 744. - Hero with headcloth: figs. 89. 96. 107. 109. 132. 142. 152. 189. 195. no. 633; the same hero in a contest with gods: figs. 295. 297. 326. 327. - Woolley, *UE II*, pl. 208 no. 228, skirt made of fleece? (= Boehmer no. 752).

[101] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 44f. (type d), mostly bearded; he is most frequent at Fara in the late ED II period; there are no more representations in the ED III period.

[102] H. Frankfort, *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region* (OIP 72; Chicago, 1955), 59. - Bronze tripods:. Braun-Holzinger, *Figürliche Bronzen*, nos. 50 from Hafājī (= H. Frankfort, *Sculpture of the Third Milennium B.C. from Tell Asmar and Khafājah* (OIP 44; Chicago, 1939), pls. 98–101 no. 181) and 58 from Tell Agule; nos. 51–53 from the Diyala Region (Frankfort, *Sculpture*, pl. 102) and 59 from Tell Agule show similar figures with short hair. - cf. a similar kneeling figurine of stone with a vessel on its head from Tell Asmar: Frankfort, *Sculpture*, pl. 27 no. 16.

[103] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 45f. (type e); this type will be replaced by the hero with six curls, en face.

[104] H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth, 1954; 3rd rev. ed. 1963), pl. 6, Tell Agrab; Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 72 from the art market. M.R. Behm-Blancke, 'Das Tierbild in der altmesopotamischen Rundplastik', BagF 1 (1979), 38 note 230, gives an ED I date for this vessel.

[105] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 73 (Tell Agrab), certainly to be dated to the ED, not to the Early Sumerian

By the end of the Early Dynastic period, the variety of heroes was given up in favour of the one type with six curls mostly shown full face; he is obviously developed from the master of animals on the stone vessels.[106] Perhaps the naked hero shown in profile with raised curls is just another version of the same type (fig. 8).[107] Later, on Akkadian seals, the hero en face with six curls and the hero in profile with hanging curls are just two versions of one demon, shown in similar positions and actions.[109]

The naked heroes with strange hairstyles are human beings; they are characterized as wild foreigners. Their nudeness sets them apart from the civilized Sumerian (city) dweller of the Early Dynastic period, who is always shown dressed – nude only when pouring a libation (but then without belt). Moreover, the partly shaven heads are certainly not those of Mesopotamians. On Akkadian stelae – stelae-fragments from the time of Sargon; stele from Nasriye; stele of Naramsin[109] (the Lullubaeans) – captured foreigners are rendered with such strange hairdoes. On the standard from Ur and some other inlays from the royal cemetery the tribute bearers are singled out by their special hairstyle, the raised curls (fig. 10).[110] Other tribute bearers or foreign hunters are shown as mountain people, wearing shoes with upturned toes and loosely bound hair[111] (cf. note 100). In contrast to some of the heroes of the combat scenes, the tribute bearers of real life are never shown naked but appear with unusual skirts and shoulder capes; these foreigners are naked only when they have been subdued or killed. Even the triple belt may be worn by foreigners with long locks and partly shaven heads on later representations.[112]

In the early contest scenes these 'barbarians' may possibly have represented natural human beings; but later on, as soon as they were shown full face, they developed into mythical beings. Various fantastic mixed creatures are fashionable only for a short period, mostly at Fara. (They are usually called monsters and set apart from demons, a distinction I do not fully agree with). They show a disposition for experimentation, the ingredients of the mixture – lions and herbivores – were used *ad libitum*. They developed from the intertwined band of upright animals. Karg explained this phenomenon by the 'Raumzwang' of the combat scene.[113] These monsters were created in art, they never developed into stable types; they certainly cannot be identified with clearly specified demons.

Of all these mixed beings, only one demon/monster survives: the bull-man. Like the other mixed beings he was invented in the second Early Dynastic period, a combination of the fighting man with the bull.[114] In this period the bison never takes part in the contest;[115] the animal part of the bull-man looks just like the ordinary bull in the contest.

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period.

[106] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 46; Boehmer, *RLA* 4 (1972–75), 294 (for his Early Sumerian examples nos. 5 and 6 cf. notes 104. 105 for a later date).

[107] Woolley, *UE II*, pls. 197; 201 no. 118; 207 no. 214.

[109] Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 28. 32. 42.

[109] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pls. 98. 100. 103. 104.

[110] Woolley, *UE II*, pls. 91 (standard); 94 (queen Puabi's wardrobe chest); 99a (shell-cylinder).

[111] Amiet, *L'art d'Agadé*, nos. 20–22; Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, 14 pl. 62 (statue-base of Urningirsu); Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, fig. 717. - For 'heroes' with helmets on Akkadian contest-scenes cf. R. Hauptmann, *MDOG* 123 (1991), 150f.

[112] Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs*, pl. 75, 772, musician.

[113] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 49.

[114] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 42ff.

[115] The natural bison enters the contest scenes only for a very short period (Akkadian III), when it replaces

Thus there is no need to call this bull-man a bison-man. He is shown *en face* and in profile, sometimes both together on one and the same seal. Both versions have heads which look exactly like the heads of contemporary human representations: two locks of hair falling down on both sides of a long beard (fig. 9).[116] Even later in the third Early Dynastic period the bull-man maintains this hairstyle whereas the mortal human is shown clean-shaven or with a short beard. Long hair combined with a long beard only continued as the archaic hairstyle worn by gods and demons.[117] On seals of the very end of the Early Dynastic period and the early Akkadian period the heads of heroes, bull-men, human-headed bulls and some gods look very much alike (fig. 11).[118] At first, the human part of the bull-man – upper body with head (with the exception of the horns and ears) – is definitely human; later his aspect becomes archaic and godlike; in the Neo-Sumerian period he is even fitted with the divine multiple horns.[119]

In the Early Dynastic period the bull-man is only shown within the contest.[120] On Akkadian seals he is mostly paired with the lion.[121] As a demon he may equally fight with gods and be defeated by gods with rays.[122]

The human-headed bull is always more of an animal than is the bull-man. In the contest he replaces the bull; outside the contest he is never shown upright.[123] As a wild mythical beast from the mountain region, he can replace the mountains flanking the rising Šamaš; so he gradually became part of the iconography of the Sun god.[124]

Bull-Man and Hero as Standard-Bearers

As doorkeepers with ringpoles, the hero and the bull-man are first attested on Akkadian seals. The earliest representation of the hero with standards/ringpoles on an inlay from Tello may even be dated to the end of the Early Dynastic period (fig. 14).[125] His attitude is similar to that of the master of animals with raised hands, in particular when he is holding up snakes.[126] Snakes and standards are combined on a pottery stand from the end of the Early Dynastic or the beginning of the Akkadian period.[127] The ringpoles are

the human-headed bison, cf. Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 43f.

[116] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 12f. note 109 pls. 5, 2–4. 8; 7, 5. 6; Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, nos. 799. 801.

[117] In ED III the bull-man in profile has long hair (Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 43), like some of the minor gods, cf. the foundation figurines (cf. note 28) and the nude hero in profile.

[118] Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, pl. 1.

[119] One of the earliest examples is the bull-men of the divine chariot on a stele fragment of Gudea, Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 111.

[120] Karg, *Untersuchungen*, 43 note 50.

[121] Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 9. 12 (Akkadian Ia); 20f. (Ib); 28 (Ic); 33 (II); 43 (III).

[122] Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 53. 57 figs. 75. 122. 287? 294. 300. 308. 339 no. 824; figs. 299 and 312 against a nude god, fig. 345 and 346 against a warrior god.

[123] The human-headed bull is often used as decorative element for vessels and similar objects: Braun-Holzinger, *Figürliche Bronzen*, 320f. T 13–16; H. Frankfort, *More Sculpture from the Diyala-Region* (OIP 60; Chicago, 1943), pls. 49-51 nos. 294. 297; Woolley, *UE II*, pls. 182. 183; Moorey, *Iraq* 32 (1970), 102, pl. 17.

[124] Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, fig. 397 from Susa; Hrouda (ed.), *Isin I*, pl. 20, 7 (IB 251).

[125] Parrot, *Tello*, fig. 27, l; Parrot, *Glyptique mésopotamienne* (1954), 63 (early Akkadian?). - M. Brandes, FAOS 3 (1979), 184ff. pls. 17. 18, with an accurate drawing and a precise description of the hairstyle: not curls, but a forelock? and a tuft of hair in the neck, perhaps wearing a cap.

[126] Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, nos. 535. 481?

[127] Moorey, *Iraq* 32 (1970), 102, pl. 16.

in origin a functional part of a building. Since Early Sumerian times they can be seen on architectural representations; as typical parts of the temple façades they were used as the abbreviated rendering of the whole building. The ringpole is the only one of the reed symbols which is still represented after the Early Sumerian period; whereas the other reed symbols were the logograms for some deities (Inanna and the moon-god), uri_3 preserved its primarily abstract meaning and survived as a symbol for general use.[128]

The hero with ringpole is mostly associated with Ea: *en face* with six curls, in profile with hair or locks hanging down (fig. 13).[129] The bull-man with ringpole quite often stands beside a contest scene;[130] sometimes he is associated with the Sun-god (fig. 12).[131] The relation of the bull-man and Sun-god is secondary (cf.note 124). Both hero and bull-man can serve various gods: the hero may hold a standard with sundisk (cf. note 143); the bull-man, a standard with a moon-emblem;[132] the hero with a lion, a moon-standard.[133] The ringpole may be held by other demons (cf. Mušḫuššu, note 157).

Figures of bull-men and heroes hardly ever survived. The only example of a hero as doorkeeper from the third millennium is the so called Bassetki-statue, made of copper. This large statue bears a building inscription; the building referred to was built by the people of Akkad for their king Naramsin, the god of the country.[134] This statue can only be restored as a naked hero holding a pole; the socket is still in place. His attitude may be compared to that of heroes with ringpoles kneeling beside shrines (cf. an Akkadian seal from Ur with Ea, the Sun-god, and the Moon-god (fig. 13).[135]

On Old Babylonian terracotta reliefs representations of the hero are frequent, mostly holding a vessel with water, but rarely with a standard.[136]

In the second millennium the bull-man was twice represented on a temple façade: once on an orthostat from Tell al Rimaḫ (middle Assyrian?),[137] and once as brick relief on the temple of Inšušinak at Susa (middle Elamite), cf. note 86 (fig. 5). A large terracotta relief (h. 61 cm) of a bull-man from Ur was found at the entrance of the small shrine of Ḫendursag, situated amid private houses (fig. 15).[138] Probably it served the same purpose as the larger representations. Small terracottas with bull-men were found at several places.[139]

Even the few examples from the third and second millennium show that both

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128 K. Szarzynska, *JEOL* 30 (1987–88), 3ff.

129 Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 89. 92 figs. 492. 499–502. 518. 520. 522. 523. 525? 492. 564? - Braun-Holzinger, *BagM* 27 (1996), 254f.

130 Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 21. 28 figs. 58. 79. 110. 113. 124.

131 Braun-Holzinger, *BagM* 27 (1996), 255f.; Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, 85 fig. 338, a pair of bull-men flanking the Sun god, the same subject, Collon, *First Impressions*, 765 from Nippur.

132 B. Buchanan, *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum. I Cylinder Seals* (Oxford, 1966), 511. - Braun-Holzinger, *BagM* 27 (1996), 254–256.

133 Woolley, Mallowan, *UE VII*, pl. 89, 221.

134 A.-H. Al-Fouadi, *Sumer* 32 (1976), 63ff.

135 Boehmer, *Entwicklung der Glyptik*, fig. 488 (Woolley, *UE II*, pl. 215 no. 34).

136 Woolley/Mallowan, *UE VII*, pl. 76, 113–115 (with water); Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs*, pl. 16, 168–172 (with water). 173 (with ringpole).

137 Howard-Carter, *Iraq* 45 (1983), 66f. pl. 3a. It is a very strange bull-man, dressed in a long skirt - but with a tail! The relief was found in debris together with Ḫumbaba II, cf. note 89.

138 Woolley/Mallowan, *UE VII*, pl. 64, 2.

139 Moorey, *Iraq* 37 (1975), 89 pl. 19b; McCown/Haines, *Nippur I*, pl. 136; Woolley/Mallowan, *UE VII*, pl. 89, 220 (chariot)

guardians were manufactured in various materials – metal, brick, and stone.[140] Since bull-men and heroes as doorkeepers hardly ever survived, our best proof for their common use as temple guardians are representations of shrines on Akkadian seals and Old Babylonian terracottas (model chairs). Most of their standards are ringpoles ending in a knob[141] or a lance/spade;[142] sometimes they are topped by a sundisk (fig. 16).[143]

In the Old Babylonian period doorkeepers and standards are not yet organized into a strict system. There are shrines which are flanked by two different standards,[144] the spade may be held by heroes or by dragons;[145] spades may flank the lion-mace, clearly the symbol of a warrior god.[146] It is quite evident that standards and standard bearers cannot be used for the identification of gods and temples.

The Identification of the Bull-Man and the Hero

The protective function of the bull-man and the hero of the third and second millennia is not different from those of the first millennium, when they can be identified with *kusarikku* and with *laḫmu* respectively. This brings us back to the initial question: Are the bull-man and the hero with curls of the Early Dynastic contest to be called *kusarikku* and *laḫmu*?

Both types developed within the mythical contest, not in real combat; in the Early Dynastic, not in the Early Sumerian period. The hero with six curls is the only one of the foreign looking anthropomorphic beings which was taken over in later contest scenes. It seems unlikely that this type of hero was singled out by a name when it was just one of many. The bull-man was created in imagery as one of various mixed creatures. Like the hero with curls he probably was not given a special demonic name as long as there were so many other similar monsters around.

By the end of the Early Dynastic period the iconography of gods gradually became more complex; they were shown with their special attributes in their special surroundings (shrine of Ea; doors and mountains for the rising sun). At the same time some of the heroes and demons of the combat were singled out as protective spirits with standards. As defeated mythical beings of the mountain region they were integrated into the divine imagery as guardian figures. Beside the older figure types of the bull-man and the hero, new mythical beings were invented for special use: in the Akkadian period the lion-dragon as mount of the weather-god and the Mušḫuššu as mount of Tišpak; in the Neo-Sumerian period the carp-goat for Ea.[147] It was a long process, which started

[140] In the first millennium *laḫmu* were mainly made of metal, cf. Engel, *Darstellungen*, 88.

[141] McCown/Haines, *Nippur I*, pl. 143, 9: hero with six curls with ringpole; above the door two recumbant bulls, birds, 3 moons; pl. 143, 12: hero, above the door 2 birds, moon, star, sun?

[142] McCown/Haines, *Nippur I*, pl. 143, 8: heroes with straight hair, above the door recumbant bull.

[143] E. Douglas van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria* (YOS Res. 16; New Haven, 1930), fig. 255: hero with curls; fig. 258? bull-man with disk-standards. - cf. altar from Assur: W. Andrae, *WVDOG* 58 (1935), 60ff. pl. 29, heroes with disk-standards. - Incense burner from Babylon, old Babylonian or Kassite?: O. Reuther, *WVDOG* 47 (1926), 17 pl. 7a.b: dragons with spades/lances, bull-men? with sun-disks.

[144] E. Douglas van Buren, *Clay Figurines*, 254: two heroes, one with ringpole with knob, one with spade/lance, above the door recumbant bull, birds, moon, star, sun.

[145] Babylon: incense burner (cf. note 143): dragon, for hero with lance.

[146] Douglas van Buren, *Clay Figurines*, fig.314, chariot.

[147] Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 184.

when the gods came into the picture. At the same time *laḫmu, kusarikku, ušumgal*, and *apsasāte* are referred to in texts as decoration on doors and bolts of temples.[148] That was probably the period when the monsters got their names: the bull-man as bull-like mythical being was called *kusarikku*, the name of the foreign bull, only sparsly known in Mesopotamia (for *kusarikku* I do not follow Wiggermann's explanation); the wild foreign hero of the mountain region with his strange curls was aptly called laḫmu, as so ingeniously proposed by Wiggermann.

Many mythical beings changed their shape – that is their figure-type – throughout the ages (Anzu[149]), while others could adopt various shapes at the same time (Lamma[150]). *Kusarikku* certainly could be represented by the bull-man which does not exclude other representations as well (human-headed bull? water buffalo?[151]). The descriptions of *laḫmū* are so varied that they almost defy identification with one single figure type. Whereas Wiggermann is certainly right to identify the hero with *laḫmu*, there might be many other *laḫmū* as well.[152]

Lion-Dragon/Snake-Scorpion-Dragon

Wiggermann thinks that the monsters formed by lion and eagle all belong to the mythical species of weather-beasts. Their shape varies greatly throughout the ages (anzu[153]).

The lion-dragon. Invented as a mount for the Weather god, he entered the contest scene rather late in the Neo-Sumerian period. As Wiggermann explains, often the combat myth was a secondary feature. Like the other members of the contest he could be used as standard-bearer and door-keeper, not only for the weather-god, but for other gods as well: for example, on seals for Meslamtaea[154] and on Old Babylonian terracotta reliefs from Kiš with standard[155] (cf. the lion-dragon/sphinx from Choga Zambil, note 64).

Mušḫuššu. From the Akkadian to the Neo-Babylonian period Mušḫuššu retains the same appearance, but he changes allegiance: he is associated with *Tišpak*, Ninazu, Ningišzidda, Marduk, Nabu, and perhaps with some others.[156] On the libation beaker of Gudea he is standing upright holding a ring-pole;[157] on a terracotta plaque from Nippur the top of the standard held by Mušḫuššu is missing.[158] Ušumgal, another mythical

[148] For the Akkadian period Boehmer proposes an identification of abzaza with the water buffalo, *ZA* 64 (1975), 1ff.: in the combat the buffalo is represented as a natural animal, but only for a very short period; it was a strange foreign animal and as such it easily turned into a mythical being. In the first millennium it was a natural but exotic animal, and a protective being at palace doors together with Lamassu; Engel, *Darstellungen*, 50ff. thought it to be a winged human-headed lion; this identification has been confirmed by Russell (1991), 99 note 17.

[149] Braun-Holzinger, *RLA* 7 (1987), 96.

[150] Braun-Holzinger, *BagM* 17 (1996), 248f.

[151] De Jong Ellis, in: *FS Sjöberg*, 124–127; she thinks it possible that *kusarikku* as natural animal was the bison as well as the water buffalo, as in the English language buffalo may be applied to both. For a German that argument is not very convincing - cf. Boehmer note 148!

[152] R.S. Ellis, *Iraq* 57 (1995), 159ff.

[153] Wiggermann, *RLA* 8 (1994), 225f.

[154] Braun-Holzinger, *RLA* 7 (1987), 98.

[155] Moorey, *Iraq* 37 (1975), 89, pl. 18c.

[156] Wiggermann, *RLA* 8 (1995), 457–460.

[157] Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, pl. 119.

[158] McCown/Haines, *Nippur I*, pl. 143, 2.

snake, served as door bolt at the Akkadian Ekur.[159]

Scorpion-dragon. On the incense burner from Babylon (cf. note 143) a dragon with the head of a snake, the tail of a scorpion, and lions' paws(?) holds a lance/spade (fig. 16). Sometimes it is difficult to ascribe these beings to a definite type.

Winged scorpion-man. An orthostat from Tell al Rimaḫ shows a being with human upper part of body, wings, a scorpion's tail, and talons of a bird.[160] The scorpion-man was the keeper of the cedar forest; as Green remarks, his use as guardian at the temple façade was very appropriate.[161]

Summary

Many of the apotropaic figures set up at the façades of Mesopotamian public buildings derive from the figure types of the Early Dynastic and Akkadian contest scenes. This contest is quite different from the Early Sumerian animal frieze, where natural animals are shown in rows: sometimes two of a species are entwined in a decorative fashion, so that the necks are elongated and may end in the head of a snake; these hybrid animals are never shown single, they do not exist as mythical animals, they only exist as decorative elements of the animal frieze (the exception is the lion-headed eagle, the only real monster of this period).

The Early Dynastic contest with its upright animals and monsters is quite different. Wild animals (bulls and lions), foreign animals (bison and water buffalo), their mythical version (human-headed bull, lion-eagle, bull-man) are fighting with men that are characterized as foreigners or wild men. It is a mythical struggle located in foreign mountain regions, where evil demons are paramount. On Akkadian seals the struggle between minor gods mostly dressed in loin-cloths or short skirts fighting against monsters is the expression of the same idea. This is not a fight of one specific god against another, this is a mythical combat in a very general sense.

Cultic scenes with gods and the animal contest were the most important subjects on seals of the third and second millennia. The contest scenes do not merely show the protection of the domesticated animals against wild beasts; this combat must have been of essential importance for the seal owners, mostly people engaged in the bureaucracy. The symbolic meaning of the struggle is that of chaos against civilization, of foreign aggression against the country - Babylonia. The monsters were defeated by heroes, later by gods; as defeated enemies they entered the service of the gods, as trophies they gained apotropaic power and gradually became beneficent demons. As guardian figures of various shape and size they protected temples, palaces, and private houses. On seals they performed this duty toward the seal owner, giving him a long and happy life.

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159 Westenholz, *Texts in Philadelphia*, no. 29. - cf. Wiggermann, *Protective Spirits*, 167.
160 Howard-Carter, *Iraq* 45 (1983), 71f. pl. 5b.
161 T. Green, *Iraq* 47 (1985), 77.

Figures:

No. 1: Foundation peg of Šulgi; Paris, Louvre MNB 1371. – Museum photo.
No. 2: Terracotta plaque from Ur. – Woolley/Mallowan, *UE* VII, pl. 64, 1.
No. 3: Lion of Gudea from Uruk. – *BagM*. 18, 127 fig. 1b.
No. 4: Lion slab from Susa. – Amiet, *L'art d'Agadé*, no. 61.
No. 5: Terracotta Façade from Susa. – Strommenger, *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien*, pl. 180.
No. 6: Ḫumbaba from Tell al Rimaḫ. – *Iraq* 29 (1967), 74 ss. pl. 31b.
No. 7: Vessel stand from Tell Agab. – Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 19.
No. 8: Seal from Ur. – Woolley, *UE* II, pl. 197, 57.
No. 9: Seal from Tell Agrab. – Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, pl. 73, 801.
No. 10: Ur Standard, Detail. – Woolley, *UE*, II pl. 91.
No. 11: Seal, The Hague. – Collon, *First Impressions*, no. 85.
No. 12: Seal from Nippur. – McCown/Haines, *Nippur* I, pl. 109, 1.
No. 13: Seal from Ur. – Woolley, *UE* II, pl. 215, 364.
No. 14 Inlay from Tello. – Parrot, *Tello*, fig. 27, 1.
No. 15: Terracotta plaque from Ur. – Woolley/Malowan, *UE* VII, pl. 64, 2.
No. 16: Incense burner from Babylon. – Reuther, *WVDOG* 47 (1926), pl. 7a.b.

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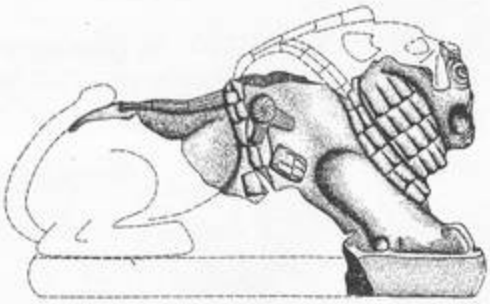

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The Poetics of Spells
Language and Structure in Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity
1: The Divorce Formula and its Ramifications[1]

Shaul Shaked

The texts of magic spells in Aramaic from the period of Late Antiquity[2] are not among the most obvious examples for high literature. They tend to be repetitive, they look formless, and they give the impression of carelessness. One could apply to them the words that have been used with regard to the Jewish magical-mystical Hekhalot literature,[3] which dates roughly from the same period and is quite closely related to the spell texts. In a fine survey of that literature we read the following:

> The Jewish Hekhalot-Merkabah texts can hardly be described as the world's greatest literature. They have, indeed, their flashes of inspiration, but in the end their verbosity, their tiresome repetitions and bizarre ideas leave the reader dulled and stupified rather than elevated or enlightened. The question of their literary merit must not, however, be confused with that of their historical worth. From a literary point of view these works may not rate high, but to the historian concerned with Rabbinic ideas about God and the world, or with the structure of the Jewish religious community in the Talmudic period, or with the origins of the mediaeval Kabbalah, they constitute an exceedingly valuable body of evidence which he cannot afford to ignore.[4]

There is an element of truth in this judgement about the literary merit of the texts in question, and yet one cannot help feeling that it ignores the literary structure and the aesthetic conventions that underlie these writings. No one would claim that literary considerations were the paramount preoccupation of the people who composed these texts. But they do have the constituents of literary style in them, and they can be treated with the tools that we use for literary analysis. What's more, it is impossible to appreciate their religious significance without paying attention to their linguistic and poetic structure.

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[1] This paper, the first of an intended series, was written when I was a fellow at NIAS during the year 1994/5. I wish to thank my friends and colleagues at the group on Magic and Religion in the Ancient Near East for their helpful comments and suggestions, as well as the administration of the Institute for providing excellent conditions for work. In the edition of the new texts I benefited from discussions with my colleagues Professors Joseph Naveh and Mark Geller. I also made use of a printout of the published Aramaic bowl texts prepared by Professor Michael Sokoloff for his forthcoming dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and of his concordance of these texts.

[2] On these texts in general see Shaked, 'Jews, Christians and Pagans in the Aramaic incantation bowls', in: *Religions and cultures* (ed. M. Pesce; Bologna) (forthcoming).

[3] On the Hekhalot literature see I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah mysticism* (AGJU 14; Leiden and Köln, 1980). Some remarks on the connection between *Hekhalot* and spell texts can be found in S. Shaked, '"Peace be upon you, exalted angels": on Hekhalot, liturgy and incantation bowls', *JSQ* 2 (1995), 197–219.

[4] P.S. Alexander, 'The historical setting of the Hebrew book of Enoch', *JJS* 28 (1977), 156–180, esp. 156.

The magic spells are most often frankly utilitarian: they are texts devised to achieve a certain impact. And yet the impact on the higher beings, be they spirits, angels or demons, is apparently felt to be stronger if the style and the literary form of the spell are carefully defined in certain specific ways. I shall try here and in related contributions to discuss some aspects of the linguistic style and literary make-up of the spells, without being able to claim a complete or exhaustive treatment of this rather complex subject.[5]

Paradoxically perhaps, one of the aspects that makes the treatment of this subject somewhat delicate is the fact that words are of crucial importance for the sorcerer. They are not only the tools with which he works, but constitute, quite literally, the power that he is trying to activate. A proper use of the words is therefore essential to the trade of the sorcerer, but the rules governing their efficacy are not necessarily the same as those that apply in other spheres of life.

In some ways, though, the rules are the very same. The spells are like legal documents, for example, in that they have the tendency to use formulaic language, and that the language that they use creates, by its mere utterance, a new legal situation. To use the terminology of J.L. Austin,[6] these are performative statements, like the phrase said in a wedding ceremony. The utterance of a phrase such as 'By this ring I thee wed', or, in the Jewish style of the marriage formula, *hare at mequddešet li* 'You are hereby consecrated to me', is enough (when a certain set of preliminary conditions is met) to change the civil status of the two partners who consent to it. When, upon handing over to another person an object that belongs to me, I say: 'this is yours', it becomes his. Nevertheless, as we shall try to show, the legal framework in these spells is a make-believe, it is based on a literary (as well as on a magical) convention, and needs to be supplemented by a whole range of other devices to make it effective.

There is, I believe, little to be gained from trying to apply Austin's terminology to the magic act more rigidly than this, at least in so far as the Aramaic spells of Late Antiquity are concerned. The act of magic here entails literally 'doing things with words', for words do have a power of their own in the world of magic; and yet, they recognize the existence of powers outside the immediate control of the magician, and the words are addressed to them. This implies that the effect of the words is not automatic, and that it depends at least in part on the will or inclination of those external powers. It will not do to label all magical utterances 'performative',[7] without further specification. Often magical utterances are not regarded as effective by the mere fact that they are uttered: they are addressed to certain powers, benevolent or malevolent, whose action is

[5] Compare the observations of J.G. Gager, *Curse tablets and binding spells from the Ancient World* (New York and Oxford, 1992), 7f. on what a Greek or Roman spell contains. The various types of address in Greek spells are summarized and classified by C.A. Faraone, 'The agonistic context of early Greek binding spells', in: *Magika hiera. Ancient Greek magic and religion* (eds. C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink; New York and Oxford, 1991), quoted by Gager, *Curse tablets*, 13. Gager refers also to E. Kagarow, *Griechische Fluchtafeln* (Leopoli, 1929) as containing a detailed discussion of these forms.

[6] J.L. Austin, *How to do things with words* (Oxford, 1962). An attempt at an application of the terminology introduced by Austin for the study of African rituals is found in B. Ray, '"Performative utterances" in African rituals', *HR* 13 (1973/4), 16–35. An examination of the relevance of this terminology for the study of Jewish magic in Late Antiquity is in Y. Harary, "איך לפעול במלים – הלכה פילוסופית ומעשים מאגיים", מחקרי ירושלים בפולקלור ['How to act with words: philosophical theory and magic acts'] (*Jerusalem Studies in Folklore*; forthcoming).

[7] As done by S.J. Tambiah, 'Form and meaning of magical acts: a point of view', in: *Modes of thought. Essays on thinking in western and non-western societies* (eds. R. Horton and R. Finnegan; London, 1973), 199–229, esp. 199.

not mechanically the outcome of the magician's words. In order to achieve his aim the magician has to use a combination of appeasement and cajoling. The term 'persuasive' statement[8] comes close to expressing this situation. We are however dealing not with statements but with imaginative constructs whose aim lies partly in themselves.

The actors seem to be at least partly aware of the distinction between establishing an objective new situation, which, as we shall see, they do not always take for granted, and expressing a desire and a wish that may or may not be realized, but whose value may lie in the very relationship that it seeks to achieve between man and the higher powers. The ritual involved in magic, both that expressed by words and that which involves action, is not merely utilitarian, but implies contact with powers that are beyond commonplace human experience. In other words, it is part of what we may be entitled to characterize as a religious attitude.

Within the field of spells, the divorce formula, one of the most common formulae for banning demons in the bowl spells, is a prominent example for the use of performative utterances in a magic context.[9] The structure and language of the divorce formula are taken over from the domain of legal procedure. The demons have attached themselves to a person or a household and the divorce formula is a way of getting rid of them. The demonic attachment is compared metaphorically and half-seriously to the permanence of marital relations (perhaps with a hint in the direction of a possible sexual association with the demons). Given these premises, the most effective way to end this relationship is to establish a legal separation. All it takes – or so it seems – is to say the appropriate formula, and the demon is no longer legally a member of the household. This should imply, by the human analogy, that the person who uses the formula is the male side of the partnership, while the demon represents the female side. This rule is however not always adhered to.[10]

The fact that demons are capable of being divorced implies that their presence in the household is recognized in some way as a legitimate, if undesirable, attachment. In order to be able to drive them away under the guise of proper legal proceedings, they are implicitly given a status that does not normally apply to them: the demon is seemingly accorded a respectable human status, that of a consort. The divorce formula would achieve two conflicting aims at one go: it would legitimize the demon by retroactively recognizing its married status, and at the same time would outlaw it by annulling that status. This is the essence of the divorce trick.[11]

The divorce formula underlines the ambiguity of the demonic presence in human society. The demons are beyond human reach and ken, and yet they form a kind of invisible part of society. Invisible, that is, up to a certain extent, for we learn from numerous expressions in the bowl texts that they appear to people in various forms

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[8] Introduced by Tambiah, *Form and meaning*, 212.

[9] It occurs in several bowls in Jewish Aramaic, Syriac and Mandaic, as will be enumerated below. The large number of texts based on this formula indicates the great popularity of this theme.

[10] In some texts (J.A. Montgomery, *Aramaic incantation texts from Nippur* (PBS 3; Philadelphia, 1913), Nos. 8, 9, 11b, 26, 32, 33) the clients are a husband and wife. In others (Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, Nos. 11, 17; Baghdad, Iraq Museum 5497 [=Gordon *ArOr* 6 (1934), 319–344, No. G]; Appendix E/2), the spell is for a woman.

[11] A similar procedure is already attested in ancient Mesopotamian texts. See the discussion in M. Stol, *Epilepsy in Babylonia* (CM 2; Groningen, 1993), 99–101.

and shapes.[12] These appearances are a source of constant complaint, and attempts are often made to stop them.[13] The ambiguous similarity of demons to humans comes up in particular in discussions of such bodily functions as eating, drinking and sexual intercourse, as applied to the demons.[14]

In order for the divorce document to be effective in changing the legal status of the parties, the Jewish law of divorce requires that the rejected party (in all cases the woman) cooperate in the legal act by physically accepting the writ of divorce. This comes up in some of the divorce spells that will be quoted. As in normal human relationships, the legal separation does not always put an end to the affective attachments, positive or negative, and the rejected partner is assumed to be capable of using tricks and manipulations in order to try and restore the status quo. Analogically, the act of divorcing the demons, although it is a powerful means of driving them away, does not always put a final end to the menace. To make the separation more permanent, the sorcerer resorts to a combination of methods, and the legal procedure is reinforced by other magic means.

Although the divorce is enacted to all appearances with perfect decorum, there is a strong fictitious element in it. This starts with the underlying fact that the demon cannot really be assumed to be married to the master of the house. The demon is invisible, its presence a matter of suspicion and speculation. The assumption that it is around is deduced from the existence of some trouble in the house such as disease or some other calamity. Add to this the fact that it is in practice difficult, if not impossible, to serve a deed of divorce on a demon. This is fraught with further complications, for most legal authorities would probably deny the applicability of the divorce law with regard to demons. The deed of divorce for the demons is thus, even in the eyes of the society with which we are dealing, largely a fiction, a theatrical act, a metaphor, and yet it is not a mere sham. We may take it that it was taken seriously by its practitioners and was considered by them to be highly effective.

In the following discussion a typical magical divorce formula will be presented and analyzed:[15]

A[16] **[a]** [1] I cast a lot and draw (?), and make [2] a (magical) act, and that is that:[17]

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[12] A good example is in Text A/1:4–5, quoted below.

[13] It is interesting to note that despite the almost uninterrupted continuity between the spells of Late Antiquity and those of the Geniza period, there is a clear change in the perception of demons in the later magic. While the appearance of demons is a major issue in the magic of Late Antiquity, it does not feature frequently in the Medieval texts.

[14] I discussed these notions and their echoes in the spells in: 'Jews, Christians and Pagans'; and בין יהדות לאסלאם. כמה עניינים בתחום הדת העממית *Peʿamim* 60 (1994), 4–19.

[15] For the Aramaic texts, with some philological comments, see the Appendix.

[16] This is a translation of the text Appendix A/1. First published in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 9, the version given here takes into account the observations of Epstein (J.N. Epstein, 'Gloses babylo-araméennes', *REJ* 73 (1921), 27–58, esp. 37ff.; cf. a revised Hebrew version in J.N. Epstein, מחקרים בספרות התלמוד ובלשונות שמיות, א, תרגום צפורה אפשטיין, בעריכת עזרא ציון מלמד, ירושלים: מאגנס, תשמ"ד (1984), 337ff.). In some cases I have incorporated my own readings from the facsimile in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*. Parallel texts with this formula are found in Schøyen Collection MS 1927/5; 1927/39; 1929/16; Moussaieff Collection, Bowl 11 (for which see Appendix A/2). A Syriac version of this formula is in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, Nos. 32, 33.

[17] This obscure formula occurs again in the Syriac bowls Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, Nos. 32 and 33. Contrary to Montgomery (*Incantation texts*, 162) it makes better sense to assume that the Syriac is a transcription from a Jewish Aramaic model (or from an oral formula first uttered in Jewish-Aramaic); this was

[b] In the court session[18] of Rabbi Joshua [3] bar Peraḥya I wrote deeds of divorce to all the liliths that appear in this <house>[19] [4] of Bāb-anōš[20] son of Qayyomtā and *Pidar-dōst[21] daughter of Šīrēn,[22] his wife, in night dreams and in day [5] slumbers, namely, a deed of [divorce] and release.

[c] By the name of (one) character out of a character, (one set of) characters out of (a set of) characters, [6] (one) name out of names, (one) hollow (?) out of [...],[23] through which heaven and earth are subdued, mountains are uprooted, the heights melt away,[24] [7] and the demons, sorcerers, dēvs, no-good-ones and liliths perish from the world.

[d] Therefore I have ascended the heights against them, and have brought against you [8] a destroyer to destroy them[25] and to remove you from the houses, dwellings, thresholds and all ... the place of the sleeping quarters of Bāb-anōš son of Qayyomtā and [9] Pidar-dōst daughter of Šīrēn, his wife,

[e] so that you may not be visible to them again either by night dreams or in day slumber.

[f] For I have dismissed and released you by a deed of divorce and a document of release [10] and a letter of dismissal, according to the custom of the daughters of Israel ...

[g] [*Exterior*:] [11] I am doing this (magic act) for your name, YHWH Elohim Ṣabaot. Gabriel, Michael and Raphael signed this seal and this threshold. Amen, Amen, Selah.

The structure of this text calls for some comments. The introductory phrase **(a)** establishes the fact that the magician is undertaking to perform a mighty operation, which

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conclusively shown by Epstein, *REJ* 73, 37ff.; J.N. Epstein, 'Gloses babylo-araméennes', *REJ* 74 (1922), 46. The fact that the Jewish legal system of divorce is involved, and that the Talmudic sage Joshua bar Peraḥya is relied upon as an authority, are two strong arguments for Jewish-Aramaic being the source of the Syriac. On the interconfessional connections of the bowls see Epstein, *REJ* 74, 41ff.

[18] Literally, 'in the sitting, in the session' (cf. Epstein, *REJ* 73, 37f.). I believe that the term developed the specialized sense of 'a court session, a court procedure', as in the frequent expression **bmwtb tlt'** 'in the session of three (judges)'.

[19] Alternatively, **bhdyn dbbnwš** can be assumed to be a corruption of **lhdyn bbnwš** ('... that appear to this Babanoš...'), although the name occurs here for the first time.

[20] The meaning of the Persian name is 'sweet to his father'.

[21] 'Beloved by her father'.

[22] 'Sweet'.

[23] The Hebrew word **nqb** is unusual in such a context. It normally means 'hole, perforation, incision, canal, orifice'. The whole sequence **'wt mtwk 'wt ... wnqb mtwk [...]** is in Hebrew, and sounds like a quotation of a fixed formulaic phrase. In the Syriac versions (Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, Nos. 32, 33) the text is garbled, but Epstein, *REJ* 74, 47) managed to reconstruct it: **glywn' mn gw glywn'**. He explains it as meaning the blank space between or around letters. This usage of the Syriac is based on Jewish-Aramaic (in Syriac *gelyōnā* normally means 'a writing-tablet'). Corroboration for this is found in the newly studied texts. Appendix A/2:5f. reads: **bšwm 'wt mytwk 'wt w'wtywt mtwk 'wtywt wšwm mytwk hšmwt wnqwb mytwk hgylwy**, and a similar text can be reconstructed in Schøyen Collection, MS 1927/39:4; 1929/16:5f. One may wonder if a pun is not involved. While **nqb / nqwb** and **gylwy / glywn'** seem to have the technical meaning mentioned above, the combination could have also had the sense of 'that which is designated (or invoked, **nqwb**), out of that which is manifest (**gylwy**)'.

[24] Epstein, *REJ* 73, 38 adduces strong arguments for reading **'ytmsr'h**, but the drawing in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, makes it likely that the antepenultimate letter is a *yod*. Schøyen Collection, MS 1927/5, seems to confirm Epstein's intuition, but Appendix A/2:7 reads *'yytmsy'h*. The ambiguity of reading is thus apparently old.

[25] Read 'you', as in A/2.

involves perhaps fate (the casting of lots) as well as a magical act. Although what follows pretends to be an act of divorce, a commonplace legal operation, the preparation for it is far from trivial.

The main body of the text begins **(b)** with a matter-of-fact recounting of a legal procedure, done in the court of law of Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya, who instituted, as we know from several other spell texts (Types B, C below), the custom of sending a deed of divorce to demons following the procedure of divorcing a woman from across the sea, at a distance. In Types D and E, to be quoted below, the source of authority for the deed of divorce is not Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya but the custom prevalent among the demons themselves.

Having established the legal situation, the spell goes on **(c)** to buttress its power by enumerating the mighty resources that guarantee its success. The spell not only claims to have power at its disposal, but it makes the power felt through a sequence of poetic phrases which are built with chiastic parallelism. The precision of legal language thus gives way to the power of soaring poetry. To bring out some of the force of the original, a modified, in some ways more literal, translation will be used:

> **[c]** By the name of
> a character out of a character,
> (a group of) characters out of (a group of) characters,
> a name out of names,
> a hollow out of [a blank area].

These constructions, with the use of 'out of', seem to stress the selected, particular kind of power used here, power that is capable of making far-reaching changes in the world. The single character, group of characters, name or blank space selected has power akin to that of God:

> through which are subdued[26] heaven and earth
> mountains are uprooted,
> heights melt away through them,
> demons, sorcerers, *dēvs*, no-good-ones and liliths perish from the world through them.

There follows **(d)** an account of a shamanistic ascension:

> Well, I ascended over them to the heights
> I brought against you an injurer,
> to injure them,
> and drive you out of their houses, dwellings, thresholds ...

If indeed 'you' is deliberately interchanged with 'them', a play on words may have been intended. 'They' could stand for the abstract notion of 'demons, sorcerers' etc., as well as for the two clients; while 'you' (pl.) could be used for focusing on the specific demons, sorcerers etc., who are the target of the present spell. If this is the case, one should assume an error in line 8. Such niceties, however, may be too much to apply to

[26] Or, in the parallel version A/2, 'are split'.

texts bristling with scribal errors caused by careless transmission.

The text concludes (**e-f**) by picking up the theme of the initial paragraph. Now that the two main themes of the spell have been pronounced, the final paragraph summarizes the consequences of the action undertaken:

> **[e]** and you should not again appear to them
> not in night dreams
> and not in day slumbers.
> **[f]** For I dismiss and release you
> by a deed of divorce,
> a document of release,
> and a letter of dismissal,
> according to the law of the women of Israel.

The final touch in the legal language is that the deed of divorce given to the demons follows the rules of Jewish law, here expressed not by the standard phrase 'according to the law of Moses and Israel', but by a phrase that seems to echo a usage occurring in the standard Jewish marriage document. An interesting variant is found in Schøyen Collection, MS 1927/39:8: 'According to the law of the demons and *dēvs* and according to the law of the daughters of Israel', a formula that seems to harmonize the difference between Types A, B, C and Types D, E.

The deed contains in its last section (**g**) an endorsement, imitating the requirement that a deed be signed by two witnesses. Here God and three archangels are mentioned as signatories to the document, although they are not explicitly named as witnesses.

The language of this deed of divorce is borrowed from the standard Jewish divorce document, including the allusion to the 'release' of the woman from the bonds of her marriage, allowing her to marry any other man. A deed of divorce is akin, in this sense, to a deed of release of a slave. It may sound incongruous that the demons are being freed (rather than banned or imprisoned) by this legal action, but the model formula imposes this language on the spell. It may be of interest to give the main contents of a Jewish *geṭ*, a deed of divorce, as established in the Medieval period (but representing a direct development from a Talmudic prototype). It begins with a careful specification of date, after which comes the following:

> I [*here comes the full name and patronymic of the husband*], who am today in [*place name*], wish, of my own accord and without constraint, to abandon, release and dismiss you [*there follow details of the woman's name and patronymic*]. As I now release, abandon and dismiss you, you have authority and power over yourself to go and marry any man that you wish, and no one can protest against that from this day and for ever. You are permissible to any one. This is for you from me a deed of dismissal, a letter of abandonment and a document of release, according to the law of Moses and Israel.[27]

The essence of the divorce formula is its release of the woman to go and marry any other man.

[27] This is the style employed in the manual of Jewish law, *Šulḥan 'aruḳ*. It is quoted from Ch. Albeck, ששה סדרי משנה, מפורשים בידי חנוך אלבק ומנוקדים בידי חנוך ילון, ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, ותל-אביב: דביר, תשט"ז (1956), introduction to the Tractate Giṭṭin; cf. also *Enṣiqlopediya talmudit*, s.v. 'Geṭ'.

It may be noted that the text of our spell uses two types of style: the rigorous style of legal documents and the poetic style that is typical of the liturgy. The language is decidedly literary, aiming at high and formalized phraseology.

A much more elaborate spell, which makes use of the divorce device, is the following:

B[28] **[a]** [1] By the name of the lord of healings.

[b] This bowl is designated for sealing the house of this Gyonai son of Mamai, that there may be removed [2] from him the evil lilith.

[c i] By the name of **pzryh yh'l**. Lilith, male lili and female lilith, the grabber (?)[29] and the snatcher:[30] [3] the three of you, the four of you, the five of you. You are stripped naked, without clothing, your hair dishevelled and thrown behind your back.

[c ii] It has been heard of you, (you) [4] whose father is Palḥas and whose mother is Palaḥdad.[31] Listen and hearken and go out of the house and the dwelling of this Gyonai son of Mamai and Rašnoi his wife, [5] daughter of Marat.[32] You should not again appear to them either in their house or in their dwelling or in their night chamber. For it has been heard of you, (you) whose father's name is Palḥas and whose mother's name [6] is Palaḥdad.

[c iii] For it has been heard of you that Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya has sent a ban against you.[33]

[c iv] I adjure you by the glory of your father, by the glory of your mother, by the name of Palḥas, your father, [7] by the name of Palaḥdad, your mother.

[c v] A deed of divorce has descended hither from heaven, and there has been found written in it for your notice and for turning you back:

[c vi] By the name of Palsa Pelisa, who renders to you your divorce and [8] your separation,[34] you lilith, male lili and female lilith, grabber and snatcher, be under the ban that Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya sent against you.

[c vii] Thus said Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya to us: [9] 'A deed of divorce came hither from across the sea, and there was found written in it: (You), whose father's name

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[28] This is a translation of Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 8, given in Appendix B/1. My edition takes into account the observations by A. Moberg, 'Review of Montgomery, *Incantation texts*', *OLZ* (1914), 425–432, esp. 430; Epstein, *REJ* 73, 36f.; B.A. Levine, 'The language of the magic bowls', in: *A history of the Jews in Babylonia* (J. Neusner; Leiden, 1970), vol. 5, 343–375, esp. 347ff. The parallel texts recorded are Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 17, and M.J. Geller, 'Two incantation bowls inscribed in Syriac and Aramaic', *BSOAS* 39 (1976), 422–427, esp. 426, lines 3–5.

[29] **šlnyt'** occurs here and in lines 8, 12, and in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 17:4. Another occurrence of the word is in M.J. Geller, 'Four Aramaic incantation bowls', in: *The Bible world. Essays in honor of Cyrus H. Gordon* (eds. J. Rendsburg *et al.*; New York, 1980), 58 (Geller D:7). The first letter is definitely *šin*, and the word must be different from **ṯlnyt'**, the term for a 'shadow-spirit'. **šlnyt'**, which comes in company with **ḥṭpyt'**, could be a term derived from the root **šll** 'to take by force, rob', although this root is only attested in Hebrew. Levine, 'Language', 349 explains it from the root **šlh**, **šly**.

[30] On *ḥaṭpīṯā* cf. Levine, 'Language', 349.

[31] These names of demons seem to occur only in the texts belonging to this type of divorce spells. Their meaning and derivation, and even their vocalization, are not clear.

[32] Mamai and Rašnoi are Iranian names, derived respectively from the words for 'mother' and the god of justice. Gyonai and Marat seem to be Semitic.

[33] The phrase 'it has been heard of you' is repeated twice above in § c ii. The aim of this repetition, which seems at first to have no object, is to prepare the way for the dramatic introduction of the ban sent by R. Joshua bar Peraḥya against the demons here in § c iii.

[34] The text has a redundancy here.

is Palḥas and whose mother's name is Palaḥdad. What was heard by us concerning you – we have caused to descend that which was heard by them from heaven, all of you (?), [10] evil names[35] (?) [....] **dwd nwd gd' bgr'**.

Listen, hearken and go out of the house and the dwelling of this Gyonai son of Mamai and Rašnoi, his wife, daughter of Marat, and do not appear to them again [11] either by dreams of night or by the pause[36] of the day.

For you are sealed by the signet-ring of El Šaddai and the signet-ring of Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya, and of the seven (angels?) who are before him.

[c viii] You, lilith, male lili and female [12] lilith, grabber and snatcher, I adjure you by[37] the mighty one of Abraham, by the rock of Isaac, by Šaddai of Jacob, by 'this is my name ... and this is my memory ... in the generation'.[38]

[c ix] I adjure .... and invoke [13] concerning you that you should receive from this Rašnoi daughter of Marat and Gyonai, her husband, son of Mamai your deed of divorce and document of release and letter of dismissal.

[c x] I send holy angels to you by the seal of light sparks in the wheels of the chariot riders, [14] and the animate beings stand and kneel by the fire of his throne and by the (different) sorts of his banner. His name is I-am-who-I-am, his name is **'yn**, his name is **ḥyy**, his name is **'dr[.....]**, his name is **ywqwdy**.

[c xi] And by the adjuration of the holy angels, by the seal of ... and of 'Azriel the great [15] angel, and Qabqabqiel the great angel, and 'Aqriel the great angel, I have uprooted the evil (female) fiends.

[d] You, too, evil lilith, take your deed of divorce, pick up [your document of release] and letter of dismissal from [16] this Gyonai son of Mamai and Rašnoi, his wife, daughter of Marat, and do not come back again to them from this day to eternity. Amen, Amen, Selah.

[e] There are signed on it **ywdh** and Gabriel.

[f] Again, I adjure and invoke against you, [....] evil lilith and evil spirit [....]. I ad[jure against you ...] [17] on the chariots of glory, that you should accept the adjuration [...] and keep away from this Rašnoi daughter of Marat, and that there should be for her ... Amen, Amen, Selah.

This long and repetitive and badly preserved text is also based on the motif of the deed of divorce. It contains some further information on this theme, as well as some insight into the structure and mode of transmission of such incantation texts.

A short look at its structure may be helpful. It consists of **(a)** an opening invocation (line 1); **(b)** a designation of the purpose of the spell (lines 1–2); **(c)** the body of the spell (lines 2–15); and **(d)** a concise summary (lines 15–17). To **d** is attached a short sentence

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[35] Epstein (*REJ* 73, 36) proposed first to read **ml'kyn šwmyn byšyn** 'anges, mauvais noms', and then (*REJ* 73, 42) suggested the reading: **wl'bwn šwmwn byšy** 'et obéi à notre père, mauvais'. None of these proposals (nor, for that matter, the one preferred by me), seems to me entirely convincing. I assume that **(k)l'kwn** is badly written for **kwlkwn**.

[36] The reading proposed here assumes a form derived from the verb **ŠHY** 'to pause'. One should have expected here **bšynt'** 'sleep'.

[37] Epstein (*REJ* 73, 36) already drew attention to the fact that the preposition is written here and in Montgomery 1913, No. 30:4 **p-**; I believe this could be an indication of the influence of the Persian preposition *pa*(*d*).

[38] This phrase seems to be constructed on the pattern of Exod. 3:15.

(e), which contains the confirmation signatures needed for verifying the validity of a document. A similar signature was given in Text A/1:10 above, in the exterior part of the bowl, and another signature is contained in the *geṭ*-within-a-*geṭ* formula inside the words attributed to Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya at the end of **§ c vii**.

This kind of division is common in bowl texts. In this case the section **c**, the main body of the spell, is particularly long and shapeless. And yet there are elements in **c** that deserve attention. For convenience, I have marked the sense divisions with roman numerals.

C begins (**§ c i**) with an address that contains also a physical description of the beings addressed. They are all members of the demon species, all are evil, and all have unattractive shapes. It is noteworthy that they are addressed by the same form as one addresses the deities and angels that are invoked, by the word **byšmyh d-**, although it is arguable that the name(s) **pzryh yh'l** does not form part of the group that follows, and that therefore this mode of address is reserved for the angels alone.

The address contains the picture of naked and dishevelled demons, a symbol of a woman who is equated with a harlot and is sent away from her husband's house. It also makes a play on numbers. The total number of the demons mentioned is five (lilith, male lili, female lilith, shadow-spirit, snatching spirit), but the text reaches this number by teasingly mentioning at first 3, then 4, and only at last 5.

§ c ii states the aim of the spell: to drive the demons out of the house of the married couple. Great precision is exercised in giving the full magical name (consisting of the proper name and matronymic) of the two clients, with the full legal name of the demon, which includes the names of both her parents. It may be remarked that although a group of demons is invoked, the object of the exorcism seems to be one particular female demon.

§ c iii introduces the main theme of the spell. It is Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya who is the author of the ban against the demon. In the preceding section, **c ii**, two references were made to something that was heard, but no further specification was given. The suspense created by these unexplained references is now resolved.

§ c iv invokes the demon to be under the ban and **§ c v** recounts it as a fact that the deed of divorce came to the house addressed to the demon. This is not a divorce written and pronounced by the clients, but, as stated in **§ c vi**, by a certain spirit called Palsa Pelisa, and ultimately by Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya, the author of the writ.

At this stage we are witnessing a game within a game, a mirror reflection within a mirror reflection: **§ c vii** recounts the same story in the words of Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya. We are supposed to be entering now the very heart of the deed of divorce, but all we see is that it contains the same story that was previously narrated to us from the outside.

The signet ring of God, called here El Šaddai, is reinforced (an interesting detail) by that of Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya. In text A:10 a more respectable list of signatories is given, with YHWH, Gabriel, Michael and Raphael forming the group that lends power to the writ.

§ c viii may already be outside the text of the writ, although it is difficult to tell. This is a demand made of the demon in the name of God under a variety of epithets.

§ c ix clearly stands outside the *geṭ*: it demands of the demon to accept the divorce document, for the legal situation regards the act of divorce as valid only when the

document has not only been transmitted to, but also received by, the female party. Her compliance is thus an essential element in the success of the operation, and it is achieved, as most other acts that seek to force the demons into compliance are, by 'adjuring' the demon –literally, by making the demon swear, take an oath– that it is going to accept the demand of the human side. The magic act is not a mechanical, one-sided, expulsion of demons, but needs to have a certain measure of cooperation, however grudging, on the part of the demons.

This is followed by further paragraphs, **§§ c x-xi**, which reinforce the action of the *geṭ* by the intervention of various great powers, as was done in the previous text. There is a smack of *Hekhalot* phraseology in **§ c x**, with its allusion to Dan 7:9. As the text here is not very well preserved, it is difficult to be certain about the exact wording, but the poetic character of the passage is manifest even so.

Despite the repetitions and sloppy style, the spell does have a structure and its purpose is brought out with a measure of lucidity. The specification of the names is done with great legal rigour, and the authorities on whom the text relies are enumerated at each stage in the proper manner. At the same time, not too much care is taken over such matters as spelling. When an error occurs, as at the end of line 8 and at the beginning of line 9, the writer is meticulous enough to repeat the words in the proper form (he obviously regards the archaic and poetic form of the second person possessive pronoun suffix **-kyn** as preferable to the suffix without the final *nun*), but he does not cross out the words that have been replaced.

A clue to the over-long and somewhat cumbersome structure of the spell may be found when parallel texts are studied. Texts B/2 and B/3 show that what constitutes **§§ c i-ii** in Text B/1 circulated as an independent text unit, without being directly connected to the divorce formula. The writer of B/1 combined two text formulae within his spell. He is not unique in making this combination, for a similar combination was made, in a much shorter spell, in Montgomery 1913, No. 17.

A third type of spell-text which makes use of the divorce-trick is the following:

C[39] **[a]** [1] [By] your name I make this amulet that it may be a healing to this one, for the threshold [of the house of ...] [2] [and any possession that] he has.

[b] I bind the rocks of the earth and tie down the mysteries of heaven, I suppress them ... [3] I rope, tie and suppress all demons and harmful spirits, all those who are in the world, whether male or female, from the big ones to [4] the young ones, from the children to the old ones among them, whether I know the name (of the particular individual) or I do not know it.

[c] That one whose name I do not know, (that name) was already divulged to me from the seven days of [5] creation. That one which was not divulged to me from the seven days of creation was divulged to me in the deed of divorce that came hither from across the sea. It was written and dispatched to Rabbi Joshua bar [6] Peraḥya at the time of the lilith who strangles human beings. Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya dispatched a ban against her, but she did not get it because he did not know her name. Her name was (then) written [7] in the deed of divorce and announced in

[39] The text, given in Appendix C/1, was first published in J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and magic bowls. Aramaic incantations of Late Antiquity* (Second edition, Jerusalem and Leiden, 1985), B5. A parallel text is in Moussaieff Collection, Bowl 2 (Appendix C/2).

heaven by a deed of divorce that came hither from across the sea.

[d] You too are roped, tied and suppressed, all of you, under the soles of the feet of this Marnaqa son of Qala.[40]

By the name of [8] Gabriel, the mighty hero, who kills all heroes that are victorious in battle, and by the name of Yeho'el, who shuts the mouth of all [heroes]. By the name of Yah Yah Yah, Sabaoth. Amen, Amen, Selah.

The central portion of this formula, in sections **b** and **c**, deals with the legal dispute with the demons. The high point of the reference to the divorce formula is the question of the proper name by which the demons can be controlled. That name is tied up with the divorce formula of Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya, which acquires a mythological quality, associated as it is to the seven days of creation. The story referred to may be reconstructed as follows. It seems that the name was initially absent from the divorce deed, and this might have invalidated it. To avert the danger, the name was announced in heaven and was dispatched to earth in a special deed of divorce that did contain the appropriate name.

The divorce situation does not seem here to be an essential component of the act of dismissing the demons. It is only brought in in order to underline the importance of a precise quotation of the names of the demons. The story told guarantees that the name is known and that the demons are under control, although it is remarkable that no actual demon's name is mentioned in the spell.

The final two types of text that I should like to quote do not refer to the position and function of Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya, and make use of the divorce formula in a more casual manner.

D[41] **[a]** [1] This deed of divorce is (designated) for the demon, *dēv*, satan, Nerig,[42] [2] Zakkaya, Abitur the mountain,[43] Danahiš, and Lilith, that they may be annulled

[40] These names appear to be Semitic.

[41] British Museum 91710, first published by Th. Ellis in A.H. Layard, *Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (New York, 1853; reprint London, 1953), 437f. (1953:510). Cf. also D. Chwolson, *Corpus inscriptionum hebraicarum* (St. Petersburg, 1882), 105; M. Schwab, 'Les coupes magiques et l'hydromancie dans l'antiquité orientale', *PSBA* 12 (1890), 292–342, esp. 299f.; Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, 168–170; I. Jeruzalmi, *Les coupes magiques araméennes de Mésopotamie* (thèse pour le doctorat du troisième cycle présentée à la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Paris (unpublished); Paris, 1963), 64ff. (where a photo is given); E.C.D. Hunter, 'Combat and conflict in incantation bowls. Studies on two Aramaic specimens from Nippur', in: *Studia aramaica. New sources and new approaches* (eds. M.J. Geller, J.C. Greenfield, and M.P. Weitzman; JSS Sup 4; Oxford, 1995), 61-75. Parallel texts for this formula are: Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, Nos. 11, 18; Baghdad, Iraq Museum 5497 (published C.H. Gordon, 'Aramaic magical bowls in the Istanbul and Baghdad museums', *ArOr* 6 (1934), 319–334, No. G); 9737 (published C.H. Gordon, 'An Aramaic incantation', *AASOR* 14 (1934), 141–143; 11113 (extracts published in Gordon, 'Aramaic incantation bowls', *Or* 10 (1941), 116–141, 272–284, 339–360, esp. 350ff.). A Mandaic text which carries the same essential formula is preserved in Paris, Louvre A.O. 2629 (published in M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, I (Giessen, 1902), 102ff. and often quoted as Lidzbarski V). The Mandaic text is evidently based on the Jewish model, containing as it does, among other features, a reference to the Jewish phrase 'six days of creation'. At the same time, it seems plausible to assume that it was written by a Mandaean scribe, as it concludes with the pious Mandaean phrase **uhiia zakin**. These texts were studied and compared by Hunter, 'Combat and conflict', 67ff., but the text of the Iraq Museum bowl 18 N 18, which she compares to these, belongs, according to our present classification, to type E. To these one may add the unpublished text Schøyen Collection, MS 1928/47, edited in Appendix D/2.

[42] Nerig is the ancient Mesopotamian deity Nergal. My reading, from the facsimile in Layard, *Discoveries*, 1853, differs from the previous editions.

[43] Abitur is probably the same as Abatur, a Mandaean deity; cf. Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, 96 n. 5;

from [3] Bahrānduḵ daughter of Nēwānduḵ and from Māhdād son of Ispandarmed[44] and from the whole of his house.

[b] [4] El-Isur Bagdana,[45] the king of the demons and the *dēv*s, and the great ruler of the liliths. I adjure you, *Ḥablas[46] [5] lilith, granddaughter of Zarnai[47] lilith,[48] whether male or female, I adjure you that you should be smitten[49] in your pericardium[50] and with the spear of the mighty **tyqs**,[51] [6] who rules over the demons and liliths.

[c] Here I write concerning you, here I annul you from Bahrānduḵ daughter of Nāwānduḵ and from her house [7] and her son, just as demons write deeds of divorce and hand (them) to their wives, and they do not come back to them again.[52]

[d] Take your deed of divorce, accept your adjuration, go out, flee away, [8] run away and go away from the house of Bahrānduḵ daughter of Nēwānduḵ.

[e] By the name of **hydhwdyr wṭṭm** it was sealed and by the signet-ring of the mighty **tyqs** and the signet-ring on which there was carved and engraved [9] the great ineffable name. Amen, Amen, Selah.

This text does not contain the full formula of the divorce deed. It clearly alludes to it, however, in paragraphs **c**, **d**, **e**: the writing of the spell is declared to be a deed of divorce.

A new feature is introduced here into the discussion, namely that the demons themselves use such deeds of divorce and hand them to their wives. When the demons do this, the deed is effective, and their wives do not come back to them again. The magician wishes his text to have the same effect on the demons. This is not only a novel motif, it somehow stands in contrast to the perception of Text A:10, where the document of divorce is said to be drawn according to the custom used with regard to Jewish women.

Drower and Macuch 1963:2 s.v. The word could be of Iranian origin, and an etymology has been proposed by Andreas (cf. Drower and Macuch, ibid.). The writer of this bowl seems to have connected it, by popular etymology, to the Aramaic word *ṭūrā* 'mountain'.

44 Bahrānduḵ is an Iranian name: 'daughter of Bahrām', the god of victory; Nēwānduḵ, a widespread name, means 'daughter of the brave'; Māhdād is 'created by the Moon (god)', cf. Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and magic bowls*, 156f.; Ispandarmed is the deity Spentā Ārmati, which represents the earth (a female figure).

45 These words are written **'l 'syr 'bwgd'n'** in the Mandaic text (wrongly translated 'Zum Fesseln des Abugdana' by Lidzbarski, and similarly by Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, 170f.). The deity Bagdana is discussed in Shaked, 'Bagdāna, King of the Demons, and other Iranian terms in Babylonian Aramaic magic', *Acta Iranica* 24 (1985), 511–525. That **'l'yswr** is also a divine name was demonstrated by Jeruzalmi, *Coupes magiques araméennes*, 70f. by reference to Baghdad, Iraq Museum 11113 (Gordon, 'Aramaic incantation bowls', 351), where the spelling is **'ylyswr bgdn'**. It seems clear that the spellings **'l 'yswr, 'l 'syr** constitute a reflection of a popular etymology of the name Elisur (or something like that). The name seems characteristic of this type of text, and is unattested, to my knowledge, in other texts.

46 Written, perhaps by a scribal error, **bsls**. The name is attested in different forms in the parallel texts: Halbas, Haldas (in Mandaic), etc.

47 'The golden one'.

48 The names of the demons in the Mandaic text are given as Haldas Lilita and Taklat Lilita the granddaughter of Zarne Lilita (if the readings are to be trusted).

49 For **dtymḥyn** in our bowl, the two parallel versions, Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 11 and Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, No. V, have a clear *ithpe'el* form (Montgomery No. 11 **dtytmḥyn**).

50 Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 11:7 **bṭwrps lybbky** (with a further *lamed* written above the line); Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, No. V: **bṭ'rpws lybyk**.

51 The name is not attested elsewhere in the spell texts. It corresponds in the Mandaic text to **q'ṭry'wys** and in the Schøyen text (Appendix D/2) to **ḥwnrws**.

52 Levine, 'Language', 350f. differs from Epstein in supposing that this expression refers to the female demons (who are not allowed to come back to their husbands). I think that he is right despite the grammatical gender of the verb.

In Type D, the writer is bent on integrating himself into the society of demons to make the divorce work, while in Text A, the point of comparison and the source of authority is drawn from human society. As in other divorce situations, the demons are commanded to accept the deed (D, **d**), and the divorce is said to be signed and sealed by a higher authority (D, **e**). The names adduced as signatories of the document are however unfamiliar from other texts, but the presence of God is not entirely absent here either. It occurs in an allusive form when the text says that he uses 'the signet-ring on which there was carved and engraved the great ineffable name (of God)'.

Another type of use for the divorce motif is by enclosing in the exorcism spell a phrase such as 'take your deed of divorce and dimissal, your document of being sent away, your letter of release ...', as in the following spell:

E[53] **[a]** [1] 'Hear O Israel: God is our Lord, God is One' (Deut 6:4). 'At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. [2] They kept the charge of the Lord at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses' (Nu 9:23). 'And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke [3] you, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?' (Zach 3:2).

[b] Again. Bound and seized are you, [4] evil spirit and mighty lilith, that you should not appear to Berik-Yah-Be-Yah[54] son of Mamai and to this Ispandarmed daughter of Ḥada-Dura (?)[55] [5] either by day or by night, either in the evening or in the morning, at no time at all, at no period at all.

[c] But[56] move away [6] from their presence, and take your divorce and your dismissal, your document of separation and your letter of release, just as the demons give a divorce to their wives, and they do not come back.

[d] [7] 'Plead my cause with your mother. Is she not my wife and I her husband? Plead with her to forswear those wanton looks, to banish the lovers from her bosom. Or [8] I will strip her and expose her naked as the day she was born, I will make her bare as the wilderness, parched as the desert, and leave her to die of thirst. I will show no love for her children, for they are the offspring of wantonness' (Hosea 2:2–4).

Here and in a number of similar texts the divorce situation is only alluded to as a theme that is familiar and needs no elaboration. Its mere recollection (in section **c**) is sufficient for invoking its power. Although it forms the centrepiece of the spell, it does not occupy a large proportion of the text.

* * *

[53] Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 26; cf. Moberg, 'Review of Montgomery', 429; Epstein, *REJ* 73, 54. A similar use of the divorce formula is found in Baghdad, Iraq Museum 1149880, 18 N 18, extensively quoted in Hunter, 'Combat and conflict'. Other parallel texts are in Schøyen Collection, MS 2053/166; Moussaieff Collection, Bowls 5 (edited in Appendix E/2), 46 (not yet properly studied).

[54] **yhbyh** may be a way of spelling the current pronunciation of the tetragrammaton. Cf. Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, 209; Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and magic bowls*, 164ff.; R. Kotansky and J. Spier, 'The "horned hunter" on a lost gnostic gem', *HTR* 88 (1995), 318 n. 14.

[55] Mamai 'mother', and Ispandarmed, name of the deity of earth, are Iranian names. Ḥada-Dura, if the reading is correct, looks Semitic, although it is difficult to interpret.

[56] The word is probably *ellā hen* (?).

By looking closely into the variations and elaborations of a single popular theme in the spell texts we can begin to appreciate the manner of their composition and transmission. They are built around a model, which may have often been transmitted orally, although in some cases copying from a written *Vorlage* cannot be excluded. The writers apparently felt free to add or detract from the core formula, and they must have felt particular freedom with the introductory text and the conclusion. They also tend to use free variation within the framework used. Despite this relative fluidity of the text, it is hard not to be impressed by the fact that a number of well-defined forms are present in several elaborations, without losing their essential features.

Thus, type A has a text that mentions Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya together with the poetic formula 'one character out of many, one name out of many, one space (?) out of the blank surrounding the text'. This is combined with the figure of speech referring to a heavenly ascension, and occurs in company with the opening formula that alludes to a lot drawn. All of these elements seem to form one complex text that occurs in several exemplars of the extant literature.

Type B uses several figures of speech: the demons are sent away unclad, to indicate their immorality, their lack of respectability and their alienness; this type is based on the figures of the demons Palḥas and Palḥadad, but the names of the demons are liable to corruption; and this is combined with a complex reference to the legal situation of a *geṭ* that comes from across the sea. Text B/1, which is long and elaborate, consists apparently of two independent text-forms, one of which is attested independently.

Type C declares the spell text to be a deed of divorce. It is addressed to Ḥablas Lilita the granddaughter of Zarnai Lilita (again with variations taking place in these names), and invokes El-Isur Bagdana, the king of demons and *dēvs*, the ruler of the liliths.

Type D concentrates on the manner by which the full name of the demon to be divorced can be discovered. The divorce formula as instituted by Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya is a device for overcoming this problem.

Type E is akin to type C in that it implicitly maintains that the spell text is a deed of divorce. It uses the language of the divorce text to tell the demons to move away and leave the house which they inhabit.

It is noteworthy that each type, besides its peculiar contents and style, is as a rule based on a different set of demons and angels that are invoked, with the exception of Type D, where no name is given.

It does not seem possible at this stage to go beyond this sketchy typology of the divorce formula. We are unable to suggest a chronology of the variations, a futile effort in any case. The list of permutations of this theme may be larger; we only have a limited number of texts at our disposal, and further types of divorce spells may come to light as more bowls are studied. It is however unlikely that the general pattern will change considerably. The divorce *topos* made it possible to chase away the demons from the house by a combination of legal pretence, of calling upon the authority of a great rabbinical figure to whom extraordinary powers are assigned in the magical tradition, and a string of pious quotations from the Bible.

APPENDIX

A/1. Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 9.[57]

[1] פורא רמינא ו[שקי](ל)נא ועובדא [2] עבידנא והוא הוה במות[ביה] דרבי יהושע
[3] בר פרחיא כתבנא להון גיטי לכל ליליתא דמתחזין להון בהדין [4] דבבנוש בר
קיומ[תא] וד(פ)דר<ד>וסת בת שירין אינתתיה בחילמא דליליה ובשינתא [5] דיממא
דגיטא דפי[טורין] ודשבוקין בשום אות מתוך אות ואותיות מתוך אותיות [6] ושום מתוך
השימות ונקב מתוך [...] דיבהון איתכנעו שמיה וארעה טוריא איתעקרו ורמתא בהון
איתמסיאה [7] שידי חרשי ודיוי ולטבי וליליתא בהון אבדו מן עלמא בכין סליקית
עליהון לימרומא ואיתיתי עליכון [8] מחבלא לחבלא יתהון ולאפקא יתכ[ון] מן בתיהון
ומן דירתיהון ומן איסקופתיהון ומן כל (....) אתר בית מישכביה(ון) דבאב[אנו]ש בר
(ק)יומת[א] [9] ודפדרדוסת בת שירין [אי](נתת)יה ותוב לא תית[חזון להון] לא בחילמא
דליל[י](א) ולא בשינתה [די](ממ)א דפטרנא ותרכנא [ית]כ[ון] בגט פיט[ורין ו]ספר תירוכין
[10] ואגרת שיבוק[ין] כדת בנת ישראל [...]

Exterior:

[11] אני לישמך עשיתי יהוה אלהים צבאות גבריאל ומיכאל ורפאל חתימו על הדא
חתמתא ועל הדא איסקופתה אמן ואמן (ס)[לה]

A/2. Moussaieff Collection, Bowl 11.

[1] לישמך אני עושה דין קמיעה דיהוי להון [.... לה]דין [2] אבונא בר חתוי ולהדא
רהבניתא בת ש[יילוי ....] בתיה וכל שידי (....) דין [3] פורא רמינא ושקלנה עובדא עבדנא
הוא חוה כ[מו]ת וכרבי יהושוע בר [4] פרחיה כתבנא להון (ג)יטא לכל סטנין ולילין דאית
עם אבונא בר חתוי ודהדא רהבניתא [5] בת שיליי איתתיה (ג)יטא גיט פיטורין ואגרית
שיבוקין בשום אות מיתוך אות ואותיות מתוך [6] אותיות ושם מיתוך השמות ונקיב
מיתוך הגילוי דיבהון אייתבזעיי שמיא וארעה וטוריה בהון אייתעקרו [7] וירמ[תא] בהון
אייתמסיאה ושיידי וחרשי ודיוי וט(מ)ירי וסטני ולטבי בהון אבדו מן עלמה בכין סליקית
עליכון למרומה [8] והיתית עליכון חבלא יחב<ל>ון יתכון ינפיק יתכון מן ביתיה דהדין
אבונא בר חתוי ומן הדא רהבניתא בת שיילוי [9] איתתיה דפטרנא יתכון מינהון בספר
תירוכין ואגרית שיבוקין מן יומא דין ולעלם אמן אמן סלה

[1] By your name I act. This is an amulet that it may be [for healing?] to them, [to th]is [2] Abuna son of Ḥatoi and to this Rahbanita daughter of Sh[iloi his wife ...] and all the demons [...].

This [3] lot I cast and draw. I am performing a (magic) act, and that is that. Like and in the manner of Rabbi Joshua son of [4] Perahya I have written a deed of divorce to them, to all the satans and liliths that are with Abuna son of Ḥatoi and (with)

[57] In the present transcription I have included emendations suggested by Epstein (*REJ* 73, *REJ* 74, and מחקרים בספרות התלמוד ובלשונות שמיות צפורה אפשטיין, עריכת עזרא ציון מלמר, ירושלים: מאגנס, תשמ"ד) and a number of my own readings, based on the facsimile copy in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*. The name of the female client, clearly written in line 9, **pdrdwst**, has not been previously recognized. This is a Persian name meaning 'beloved by her father'. In line 4 one of the *dalet*s was dropped from this name.

this Rahbanita [5] daughter of Shiloi his wife, a deed of divorce and a document of dismissal.

By the name of one character out of a character, of (one set of) characters out of [6] characters, and one name out of names, and one blank out of an empty space, by which heaven and earth are split, and by which the mountains are removed, [7] and by which the heights are dissolved, and by which demons, sorcerers, *dēv*s, hidden ones, satans and no-good-ones are annihilated from the world.

Well then, I ascended the heights, [8] and brought upon you an injurer *that may injure you, and may cause you to leave the house of this Abuna son of Ḥatpoi and from this Rahbanita daughter of Shiloi [9] his wife, that I have dismissed you from them by a deed of release and a document of dismissal from this day and for ever. Amen Amen Selah.

B/1. Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 8.[58]

[1] בישמיה דמרי אסואתא מזמן הדין כסא לחתמתא דביתיה דהדין גיונאי בר מאמי
דתיזה [2] מינה ליליתא בישתא בישמיה דפזר(יה) יהאל ליליתא לילי דיכרא וליליתא
ניקבתא ושלניתא וחטפיתא [3] תליתיכון ארבעתכון וחמי[שתיכון ערטיל] שליחיתון ולא
לבישיתון וסתיר סעריכון ורמי אחור גביכון שמיע עליכון [4] דאביכון פלחס שמיה
ואימיכון פלחדד שמה שמעי וצותי ופוקי מין [בית]יה ומן דירתיה דהדין גיונאי בר
מאמאי ומין רשנוי איתתיה [5] בת מארת ותוב לא תיתח[זי]ן להון לא בבית(הון) ולא
בדירתיהון ולא בבית מישכבי[הון] מיטול דשמיע עליכון דאביכון פלחס שמיה ואימיכון
[6] פלחדד שמה מיטול דש(מי)ע עליכון דשלח עליכון שמתא רבי יהושע בר פרחיא
אומית[י] עליכון בריקא[59] דאבוכון ביקרא דאימיכון בשום פלחס אבוכון [7] ובשום
פלחדד אימיכון ג[י]טא נחית לכא מין שמי(ה) ואישתכח כתיב ביה לשימועיכון ולחדוריכון
בישמיה דפלסא פליסא דהוא מתיב לכי {גיטכי ופיטורי} גיטיכון [8] ופיטוריכון אנתי
ליליתא לילי דיכרא וליליתא ניקיבתא ושלניתא וחטפיתא הוי בשמתא ד[שלח עליכין
ר] ב יהושע בר פרחיא והכין אמר לנא רבי יהושע בר פרחיא [9] גיטא אתא ל[כא] מין
עיבר ימא ואישתכח כתיב ביה [ד]אביכון פלחס שמיה ואימיכון פלחדד שמה [ודשמ]יע
לנא [עלי]כון אנחתנא ית מאי דשמיע להון מין רקיעא (כ)לאכון [10] שומין בישן
[....] דוד נוד גדא בג(ר)א שמעי וצותי ופוקי מין ביתיה ומין דירתיה דהדין גיונאי בר
(מא)מי (ומין ר)שנוי איתתיה בת מארת ותוב לא תיתחזין להון [11] לא בחילמא ד[ליל]ה
ולא בש(הי)תא <ד>יממא מיטול דחתימתי בעיזקתיה דאל שדי ובעיזקתא ד[רב יהושע
בר] פרחיא ובשבעה דקדמוהי אנ(ת)[י] לילן[י]תא לי(לי די)[כרא] וליליתא [12] ניקבתא
ו(של)ניתא וחטפיתא משבענא לכון פאביר אברהם בצור יצחק בשדי (יעקב) ב(זה) שמי
מ(ש)ד (וזה) זיכרי (....) (בדור) (ופה) אומיתי [....] מומינא [13] עליכי [ד]תיסבין מין הדא
רשנוי בת מארת ומין גיונאי [ב]עלה בר [מ]אמי גיטכי וספר תירוככי וא[גרת] שיבוקכי
[...] משדרנא [ל]ך מלאכין קדישין בח[ת]מיה ד(שב)יב(י) נורא בגלגלי רכובי אופני(ם)
[14] ועומד(ות) החי(ו)[ת ומי]ישתחות באש כיסאו ובמי(ני) דיגלו אהיה אש[ר] אהיה
שמו א(ין) שמו חיי שמו א(דר)[...] שמו (יוקודי) שמו ובמומתא (ד) מלאכין קדישין
בחת[מא ....]תא ודעזריאל מלאכא [15] רבא ובקבקביאל מלאכא רבה ובעקריאל
מלאכא רבא עקרית (סנא)תא בישאתא אף אנתי ליליתא בישת{י}א (ק)[בל]י (גי)טה

[58] In the transcription given here I have benefited from Epstein's emendations, and have added some suggestions of my own. See also Moberg, 'Review of Montgomery', 430; Levine, 'Language', 347ff.

[59] Read: **byqr'**.

טו[לי ספר פיטורבי] ואגרת שיב[ו]קכי [16] מין הדין ג[יונאי בר מאמאי ורש]ני איתתיה [בת] (מארת) ותוב לא תיהדרין עליהון מין יומא דנן ולעולם אמן אמן סלה חתימי עלוהי יו(ד)ה (ג)ב(ר)יאל תוב אומיתי וא(ש)[בעתי עליכי ...] לילתא ב[ישתא] ורוחא בישתא [....] אשב[עית עלכי ...] [17] על מרכבות יקרא דתיקבלין (מו{י})מתא [.....] ותיתרחקין מין הדא רש[נוי] בת מארת ויתקימון לה[.... א]מן אמן סלה הללויה

B/2. Bowl in the possession of Mrs. M.C. Wiseman, published by Geller.[60]

[1] אסותא מן שמיה לאסקופתיה [2] דאפרידוך בר (!) אימא ותיתסי ברחמי שמיה ותינטר [3] מן כל מידעם שידא את שידא דדברא ערטיל שליחתון ולא [4] לבישיתון סתיר שעריכון ורמי על אחורי גביכון שמענא עליכון [5] דאביכון פלפס שמיה ואמיכון פלחדד לא ידענא מישמי(כו) ולא ידענא [6] מיעובדתיה מי(דב)עותיה[61] דאשמדי מלכא דשידי אסירי(ת)ון מ( )דתון חתימיתון ומחתמיתו [7] אתון חרשי בישי ומעבדי סניאי וליליא וכל (ביגדן) ו(כל) ק(בא) בעיזקתא רבתא דלית בר מינה [8] ואם לא שמעיתון אתון שידי ודיוי ולוטאתה וליליתא וסטני ואיסתראתה וחרשי בישי ומעבדי [9] סניאי מ(תחנא) עליכון (סוסטמין) רברזל ר( ) דברזל ושושלן ד( ) ומ(ס)סטימנא יתכון וחתמנא יתכון [10] בחתמא רבא (בשמיה) דגבריאיל ומיכאל ורפאיל (ח)ניאיל ושמישיאיל וש(לי)טאל ומיטטרון דאת(ון) ממני על כל א( ) [11] ( ) (אתון) ( ) ביתיה איסקופתיה דאפרידוך (בר) אימא ( ) (כל חרשין בישין) וליליתא ד(יכרי) וניקבא(תא) [12] ( ) מן יומא ולעלם אמן אמן סלה אל( ) אמן אמן סלה

[1] Healing from heaven to the threshold [2] of Afridukh son (!) of Ima, and may she be healed by the mercy of heaven and may she be preserved [3] from all <evil> thing.

Demon, you demon of the desert! You have been sent away naked and [4] unclad, your hair dishevelled and thrown behind your back. I have heard of you [5] that your father's name is Palpas (!) and your mother's (name) is Palaḥdad. I know nothing of your name and nothing [6] of the action and desire (?) of Ashmedai, the king of the demons.

You are bound ... sealed, doubly sealed, [7] you, evil sorcerers and hateful wizards, and lilis, and all bigdan and all ... by a great signet-ring of which there is no way out.

[8] If you do not hearken, you demons and *dēv*s and curses and liliths and satans and female deities and evil sorcerers and hateful [9] wizards, I shall stretch over you spears (?) of iron, ... of iron, chains of iron, and I shall spear you and seal you [10] by the great seal.

By the name of Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Heniel, Shamishiel, Shalitael, Metatron, you who are appointed over all ... [11] ... you ... the house and the threshold of Afridukh son (!) of Imma ... all evil sorcerers and male and female lilis ... [12] from (this) day and for ever. Amen Amen Selah ... Amen Amen Selah.

60 Geller, 'Two incantation bowls', 425ff.

61 The reading here is doubtful.

B/3. Frau Hilprecht Collection, Gordon K.[62]

[1] מזמן הנא [כסא לחת]מתהון ד(לו)לוי בת (!) שרקו וניונדוך איתתיה בת כפני וזדוי בריה דיתחתמון ברחמי שמיה מחרימנא וגזר[נ]א [2] ומקימ[נ]א ... לילי(תא) ומבכלתא ושידין ושיבטין ופגעין וסטנין וחילמין בישין וסיוטנין תקיפין ולילי דיכרי וליליתא [3] ניקב[ת]א [תל]יתיכון ארבע<ת>יכון חמשתכון ערטיל שליחיתון ולא לבישיתון סתר סעריכון רמי על גו[ביכון] [4] [שמיע על]יכון דאבוכון פלחס שמיה ואימכון פלחדד ליליתא אתון לא תיתחזון [ללולוי בר] [5] שרקוי ול<נ>יונדוך בת {כפנאי} כפנאי (ולז)דוי ברה לא חברא ביממא [6] ולא צותא בליליה ליט עכמומת בר טיט ובר [7] פומא אמן אמן סלה הללויה שריר

[1] [This bowl] is designated for [sealing] Luloi (?) daughter (!) of Šarqoi and Nēwāndukh his wife, daughter of Kafnai and Zādoi his son, that they may be sealed by the mercy of heaven.

I ban and decree [2] and make an oath (against you), liliths and destroyers and demons and plagues and afflictions and satans and bad dreams and mighty nightmares and male and [3] female lilis.

The three of you, the four of you, the five of you: you have been sent naked and unclad, your hair dishevelled and thrown over your backs.

[4] It has been heard of you that your father's name is Palḥas and your mother's (name) is Palaḥdad Lilita.

You should not appear to [Luloi son of] [5] Šarqoi and to Nēwāndukh daughter of Kafnai and to Zādoi his son. No friend by day [6] and no associate by night.

lyṭ 'kmwmt br ṭyṭ wbr [7] pwm'.

Amen Amen Selah. Hallelujah. Valid.

C/1. Naveh and Shaked, 'Amulets and magic bowls', B5.

[1] [ב](ש)מך אני עושה הדין קמיעא דיהי לה לאסו להדין לאסקופת (ביתה) ... [2] (וכל קנין דאית) לה כפתינון לכיפי ארעה ואסרתינון לרזי (רקי)עא כבשתינון ... [3] [... כפ]תינון אסרתינון כבשתינון {כל} לכל שידי ומזיקי כולהון דאית בה בעלמא בן דכר ובן נקבא (מרבר)[בי]הון ועד [4] דערדקיהון מעולימיהון ועד סביהון בין דידענא שמה בין דלא ידענא שמה דלא ידענא שמה כבר פירישו (לי) משבעה יומי [5] בראשית ודלא פירישו לי משבעת יומי בראשית כבר פרישו לי בגיטא דאתה לכא *מן עיבר ימא דכתבו ושדרו לה לרבי יהושע בר [6] פרחיה כד הות ההיא ליליתא ד(ח)נקא לבני אינשה ושדר עלה יהושע בר פרחיה שמתא ולא קבילת מחמת דלא הוא דידע שמה וכתבו שמה [7] בגיטא וכריזו עלה ברקיעא בגיטא דאתא לכא מן עיבר ימא אף אתון כיפיתון אסיריתון כביש<י>תון כולכון תחות כיפי רגלה דהדין מרנקא בר קלא בשום [8] גבריאל גבר תקיף דקטל כל גיברי כולהון (ד)נצחין בקרבא ובשום יהו(אל) דסתם פום כל גי(ב)[רי כ]להון בשום יה יה יה צבאות אמן אמן סלה

[62] C.H. Gordon, 'Aramaic and Mandaic magical bowls', *ArOr* 9 (1937), 84–106.

C/2. Moussaieff Collection, Bowl 2.

[1] קרי<נ>א ומומנא הדא ח(מ)תא לביתיה דהורמ(צ) בר דשמוי כפתינהו לכיפי ארעה [2]
ואסרתינהו לר(ז)י רקעה ו<א>סרתינה וכפתינה לשידי ודיוי ולילי̇תא מבכלתא פתכרי [3]
סטני לטבי וסר(אי) ונלאיי ור(ח)בני בנקב וחנית במתברא ורוחי ושי(פטי)ופגעי ופלגי וגיסי
ופגעתא וחומרי בישתא [4] וחומרי זידניתא ומרכבתא בני חשוכא ואיסתרא ניקבתא ורוחי
(בישתא) כולכו (מי)רברביכון (לד)רדקיכון מ(י)[5](עו)לימיכון ל(סביכו)ן בן די<ד>ענא
שמיכון בן דלא ידענא שמיכון בן די־ד־ענא שמיכון כבר פשר ל(י)אנא מן יומי{ן} אדם
בגטא ד(אתא) [....] [6] ליליתא מן עבר ימא רמני באבני ושדר עליך רבי יהושע בר פרחיה
ש(מ)[ת ...]תא (קבלי)(....ת)א מטול מאי דלא [...]ת [7] (ה)ודע שמיה <ד>חילת מיניה
אף אתון (שידין ודיוין ולילי)תא מבכלתא (....)תון ומתחמיתון וכבשת[ון ...] [8] [...] בר
דשמוי מן (י)מא (רבא) אמן אמן סלה

[1] I call and adjure this wrath (demon)[63] to the house of Hormiz[64] son of Dašmoi. I tie the cliffs of the earth [2] and bind the mysteries of the sky.

I bind and tie the demons, *dēvs*, liliths, tormentor (demons), idol-demons, [3] satans, no-good-ones, stinking ones, complaint demons,[65] haughty ones (?), by a piercing instrument and a spear,[66] by a childbirth chair (?),[67] spirits, plagues, misfortunes, splitters, troops, afflictions, evil pebble-spirits, [4] mischievous pebble-spirits, chariots of the dark ones, female deities, evil spirits – all of you, from adults to children, from [5] lads to old men, whether I know your names or I do not know your names.

Whether I know your names,[68] (this) was already divulged to us (?) from the days of Adam by a deed of divorce that came ... [6] lilith from across the sea, ...[69] and Rabbi Joshua bar Peraḥya sent against you a b[an....] accept [....] for the sake of [....] [7] .... its name, she feared from him. So you too, demons, *dēvs*, liliths, tormentors, [..... do not appear] and be visible and suppress [.... Hormiz] son of Dašmoi from the great sea. Amen Amen Selah.

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[63] The word **ḥmt'** could also signify 'mother-in-law'. This demon seems not to have turned up yet in the spell bowls. Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, 289 lists **ḥym'** 'wrath' in Schwab F (Schwab, 'Deux vases judéo-babyloniens', *Revue d'Assyriologie* 2 (1892), 136–142, esp. p. 137). The syntax is not very good, and it is possible that **hd' ḥmt'** does not belong to the phrase. These words may have been intended as a legend describing the demon in the drawing: 'This is the demon of wrath'. The rest of the text may have been added later around these words. It seems however best to emend to **ḥtmt'** 'seal'

[64] The reading of this name, seemingly written **hwrmṣ**, with a non-final *ṣade*, is doubtful. One could possibly read **hwrmyn**.

[65] The same sequence **wrwḥ sry wn'ly** in Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, 16:9. For *nāla* 'lamentation, complaint', cf. Shaked, 'Bagdāna', 512.

[66] **nqb** and **ḥnyt** are Hebrew words, making a strange appearance in this context.

[67] **bmtbr'** (seemingly written **bmtkr'**) is not easy to interpret. One could possibly read **bptkr'**, which might be interpreted as a loan-word from Persian *pati-kāra-*, attested in Middle Persian as **phyk'r**, New Persian *paykār* 'war, battle'. This would yield a somewhat better sense, but the second letter does not look like a *pe*.

[68] This could be a repetition caused by the writer's awareness of the omission of a *dalet* in the preceding writing of the phrase.

[69] The words **rmny (b)'bny**, if the reading is correct, make no clear sense.

D/1. British Museum 91710.

[1] הדין גיטא לשידא ול(ד)[יו]א ולסטנא ולניריך [2] ולזכיה ולאביטור טורא ולדנח[י](ש) וליליתא דיבטלון מן [3] בהרנדוך בת ניונדוך ומן (מ)הדד בר איצפנדרמיד ומן ביתה כוליה [4] אלאיסור בגדנא מלכיהון דשידי ודדיוי ושליטא רבה דליליתה משבענא על(י)כי חבסלס [5] ליליתה בת ברתה {ה} ד(ז)רני ליליתה אם דכר אם ניקבה משבענא על⌜י⌝כי דתימחין בטופרס לי{ל}בכין ובמורניתה דתיקס [6] גיברא דהוא שליט על שידי ועל{י} ליליתא הא כתבית בכון הא הא בטלית יתכון מ⌜י⌝נה ומן ביתה דבהרנדוך בת ניונדוך [7] ומן ברה כמא דכתבין שידין גיטין ויהבין לינשיהון ותוב לא הדרין עליהון שקול גיטיכון וקבילו מומתכון ופוקו וק(ד)חו [8] ועיריקו ואיז⌜י⌝לו מן ביתה דבהרנדוך בת ניונדוך בשום הידהודיר וטט(ם) חתימת ובע(יז)קתיה דתיקס גיברא ובעיזקתיה דציר גליך[70] [9] עלוהי שם מפורש רבה אמן אמן אמן סלה

D/2. Schøyen Collection, MS 1928/47.
[I] Inside the central circle:

[1] אסותא מן שמיא [2] דיחתמא [3] אמן [4] אמן [5] מן ס [6] סלה

[II] Main inscription:

[7] אליסור בגדנא מלכיהון דדיוי ושליטא רבא דליליתא מומינא ליכי חבלס ליליתא [8] בת ברתה דזרני ליליתא דשריא על איסקופת ביתיה דפרוך בר רשיונדוך ומחיא ושקפא [9] דרדרקי ודרדקתא אשבעית עליכי דתימחין בטרפסי ליבביכי ובמורנ(יינה)[71] דחונרוס גיברא [10] דהוא שלי(ט) על שידי ועל (דיוי ועל) ליליתא כתבית ליכי גיטיכי ותריכית יתיכי מן פרוך בר רשיונדוך כמה דכתבין [11] שידי גיטי לינשיהון ותוב לא ה[ד](רין) [ע](ליהון) שקולי גיטיכי וקביל מומתיכי ופוקי וקרו(חי) ופטורי וערוקי מן ביתיה דפרוך בר רשיונדוך [12] ודמשכוי איתתיה בשום [ ] (יתיכי) אסירת וחתימת בעיזקתיה (דציר) גליף עליה שם מפורש סידור עלמא מישישית ימי בראשי[ת]מן א [ ]

[*Inside the central circle*:] [1] Healing from heaven, [2] that seals. [3] Amen, [4] Amen, [5] Men, S [6] Selah.

[*Regular lines of inscription outside the central circle*:] [7] Elisur Bagdana, King of the *dēv*s, and the great ruler of the liliths.

I adjure you, Hablas Lilit, [8] the granddaughter of Zarnai Lilit, who dwells on the threshold of the house of Farrokh son of Rašewandukh, and who strikes and smites [9] young boys and girls. I adjure you that you should be stricken in the pericardium of your heart and by the lance of the mighty Hunarus, [10] who is ruler over demons, *dēv*s, and liliths.

I have written to you your deed of divorce, and I have caused you to depart from Farrokh son of Rašewandukh,[72] just as the demons [11] write deeds of divorce to their wives and they never come back to them.

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[70] Read **glyp**, as suggested by Jeruzalmi.

[71] Perhaps to be read **wbmwrn(yth)**.

[72] Both names are Iranian. The former means 'fortunate', the latter perhaps reflects a derivation from *rašn*, the name of the deity of justice.

Take your deed of divorce, accept your adjuration, depart, go away, abandon, flee from the house of Farrokh son of Rašewandukh [12] and of Maškoi his wife, by the name of ....

May she be bound and sealed by the signet-ring on which is the ineffable name engraved and incised for ever, from the six days of creation...

E/1. Montgomery, *Incantation texts*, No. 26.

[1] שמע ישראל ייי אלהינו ייי אחד על פי ייי יחנו ועל פי ייי יסעו [2] ואת משמרת (יי)יי שמרו על פי ייי ביד משה ויאמר ייי אל הסטן יגער ייי [3] בך הסטן יגער ייי בך הבוחיר בירושלים הלא זה אוד מוצל מאש תוב אסירת ואחידת אנתי [4] רוחא בישתה וליליתא תקיפתה דלא תיתחז(ן) להון לבריכיהביה בר מאמי והדא איצפנדרמיד בת ח(ד)הדורא [5] לא בימם ולא בלילה ולא בכל רמש וצפר ולא בכל שעתה ושעתה ולא בכל עידנא ועידנא אילהין זעי [6] מן *קדמיהון [73] ושקולי גיטכי ופיטורכי וספר תירוככי וא[גרת] שבוקכי כמא דיהבין שידי גיטי לינשיהון ותוב לא הדרין [7] ריבו באימכם ריבו כי היא לא אישתי ואנכי לא אישה ו[תס]ר זנונהה מיפנהיא (ו)נאפופהיה מיבין שדה(ה) [פן] [8] (א)פשיטנא [ערמה והצג]תיהה כיום היולדה ושמתיה כמדבר ושתיהה כארץ ציה והמיתהה בצמא ואת בניה לא אירחים כי בני [זנונ]ים המא

E/2. Moussaieff Collection, Bowl 5.

[1] (ק)[בלי] דין איגרתא וגיטיכי [2] ליליתא בישתא מ<ב>כלתא דמיתחזיא לה [3] לאימא רזין בת אימא מהמד בידמות אנתתא פוקו מינה [4] (ד)אימא רזין בת אימא מהמד מן יומא דין ולעלם ולא תיתעכבון אא[5]א אאא ואו או ואאו או יאו יאו / והו יהו אמן אמן סלה אסירית ו(חתימית) [6] (פי)טוריתא ומלויתא בריסיסין וסיס איג(אז?)[74] מן ליבה ומן גופה ומן מרבעה דאימא [7] רזין [בת] אימא מהמד שמ(ותו) וז(ועו ושב)[וקו]

Reverse (on the outside of the bowl):

[8] דתעו(...)על [9] מן (פא ....) [10] בן פרת יוסף [11] בן פרת עלי עין [12] בנות צעדה [13] עלי שור

[1] [Accept] this epistle and your (deed of) divorce, [2] evil lilith, destroyer, that appears [3] to Imma Rāzēn daughter of Imma Mehmād[75] in the shape of a woman.

Go out of [4] Imma Rāzēn daughter of Imma Mehmād from this day and for ever, and do not tarry.

" [5] ' "' w'w 'w w"w 'w y'w y'w / whw yhw. Amen Amen Selah.

Bound and sealed are you, [6] Piṭurita and Melawwita[76] **brysysyn wsys 'yg'z**

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[73] Written **qwmyhwn**.

[74] Perhaps **'ygzyz**.

[75] Both names are preceded by the Aramaic title (or proper name?) *imma* 'mother, mum'. The names that follow are Iranian, the former seemingly derived from the word *rāz* 'mystery' (although other possibilities of explaining it exist) and the latter meaning, I believe, 'great(er) mother'.

[76] The names are not otherwise attested, but they can signify in Aramaic something like 'the dismissed one' and 'the accompanier' respectively.

from the heart, body and resting place of Imma Rāzēn [daughter of] Imma Mehmād. Be banned, move away, leave.

[*Reverse*:] [7] ... [8] from ... [9] 'Joseph is a fruitful bough, [10] even a fruitful bough by a well, [11] whose branches run [12] over the wall' (Gen 49:22).

Interrelations between Mandaic Lead Rolls and Incantation Bowls

Christa Müller-Kessler

Survey of Sources

The history of the discovery and the decipherment of Mandaic incantations, dating from the fourth to the seventh century CE, that were incised with a stylus on metal sheets or inscribed with ink on earthenware bowls does not go very far back, but it begins far earlier than is actually known from the scholarly literature on this matter. The first eight Mandaic lead rolls (amulets) came to light in 1853, the same year as the publication of the first Babylonian Jewish Aramaic and Syriac incantation bowls by Th. Ellis in A.H. Layard's travel book *Discoveries in the Ruins of Niniveh and Babylon*.[1] Colonel Rawlinson, decipherer of the cuneiform script, gave orders to J.G. Taylor, Vice-Council of Basrah, to look for written artifacts in the area of the marshes in southern Iraq. The first mission was not very successful as fighting was then going on among the Sheikhs. So only during his second trip did Taylor discover various kinds of objects including the desired texts. Arabs produced eight lead sheets[2] found in sepulchral jars at Tell Abu Shudhr.[3] Rawlinson classified them as apotropaic texts written in a 'Chaldaean' script.[4] He copied the inscriptions of three unrolled lead stripes shortly afterwards, but the publication of one reverse side was undertaken by a certain Professor F. Dietrich, who in 1854 interpreted the language as Arabic.[5] Nearly forty years later the great epigraphist M. Lidzbarski recognized the script as Mandaic and travelled to London to collate the amulet. As some rebuilding was going on in the British Museum, the roll could not be traced, but the keeper, A.G. Ellis, drew attention to a long and well preserved Mandaic lead roll in the private possession of a Mr Lyon. This is the very one which was published by Lidzbarski in 1909 in the de Voguë 'Festschrift'[6] and is today in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society, London.[7] Besides this roll, Lidzbarski came across another seven owned by a Mr Klein. As Lidzbarski had not enough time to study them during his stay in London, they were sent to him in Kiel where he copied them. For some reason, the rolls were never published but are quoted by Lidzbarski a few times in the footnotes of *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*;[8] he did not mention the fact that the clients in the rolls

[1] *Op. cit.*, (London, 1853), 509–526.

[2] The number of rolls is given here according to the entries in the register book of 1853 of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, British Museum, although at least four of them cannot be traced today in the magazine of the Department.

[3] E. Sollberger, 'Mr. Taylor in Chaldaea', *AnSt* 12 (1962), 130–133.

[4] *Ibid.*, 134.

[5] Professor Francis Dietrich, 'The Inscription of Abushadhr', in: C.C. Bunsen, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History, applied to Language and Religion* (London, 1854), vol. 2, Appendix C, 360–374.

[6] M. Lidzbarski, 'Ein mandäisches Amulett', in: *Florilegium ou recueil de travaux d'érudition dédies à M. Melchior de Voguë* (Paris, 1909), 349–373.

[7] The object itself is on deposit in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, British Museum.

[8] M. Lidzbarski, *op. cit.* (Giessen, 1915), 12/3 n. 1; 16 n. 3; 152 n. 3; 193 n. 3.

were identical with the ones of the formerly published lead roll.[9]

Subsequently, there is a long gap in the publication of Mandaic lead rolls. Only in 1967, R. Macuch published four more rolls,[10] A. Caquot followed in 1972 with another,[11] J. Naveh presented a short one in 1975,[12] and J.C. Greenfield and J. Naveh published in 1985 a lead amulet from Khuzistan with four short incantations.[13] The amount of hitherto published material is small compared to what has been lying unpublished in the British Museum for many decades.[14]

The British Museum collection comprises 35 unpublished Mandaic lead rolls of varying sizes and some additional gold and silver amulets. There exist about six different groups and at least three of them form private incantation archives. One archive of twelve lead rolls, including three gold and three silver amulets, can be attributed either to a certain Mah-Adur-Gušnasp named Bewazig, son of Mama, or to his father Šabur, son of Narsaydukht, and his wife Mama. This archive stored in a lead jar was unearthed by a Colonel Alexander during a private excavation in the early twenties in the vicinity of el-Qurnah in southern Iraq between the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The jar contained two bundles with six rolled up lead rolls each. It was closed by a bitumen stopper to prevent the demons from escaping and buried underneath the foundation of a private house. The second archive (formerly in Mr Klein's and Mr Lyon's possession) is attributed to a certain Pir named Nukraya, son of Abandukht. Unfortunately, its provenance is unknown. Some texts are of interest for a demonstration to be undertaken later in this article that will show how Mandaic lead rolls with their often lengthy inscriptions and the texts on incantation bowls are interrelated.

To date, there are only 58 published incantation bowls written in Mandaic.[15] At least 31 bowls come from a cemetery of Khuabir, a site situated on the bank of the Euphrates, several miles south of Baghdad. In 1898, they were published in a monograph by H. Pognon former consul of Baghdad. Many duplicates are found among them. A short note on the outside of some bowls indicates to which keeping place they were destined, *ḏ-byt qwbryʾ* 'of the cemetery'.[16] A further 35 Mandaic bowls in the British Museum

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[9] This information is missing from the introduction in E.M. Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts* (AOS 49; New Haven, 1967), 1–62.

[10] R. Macuch, 'Altmandäische Bleirollen', in: *Die Araber in der Alten Welt* (ed. F. Altheim and R. Stiehl; Berlin, 1967), vol. IV, 91–203; *idem*, vol. V, 1, 34–72.

[11] A. Caquot, 'Un phylactère mandéen en plomb', *Sem* 22 (1972), 67–87.

[12] J. Naveh, 'Another Mandaic Lead Roll', *IOS* 5 (1975), 47–53.

[13] J.C. Greenfield and J. Naveh, 'A Mandaic Lead Amulet with four Incantations' [in Hebrew], *ErIsr* 18 (1985), 97–107.

[14] As the work of deciphering of the difficult fragmentary texts is nearly finished, I hope to present the text edition in the near future. Just recently I received notice of a further two dozen lead rolls in the possession of a Mandaean Sheikh from Iraq.

[15] For a list of published Mandaic bowls see Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts*, 4–6. Add: A.J. Borisov, 'A Mandaic Magic Bowl in the Hermitage Museum' [in Russian], *Travaux du Département Oriental* 1 (1939), 227–235, pl. IV/V. Two additional bowls in an easily legible script excavated in Nippur during the 18th campaign of 1989 were published recently by E.C.D. Hunter, 'Two Mandaic Incantation Bowls from Nippur', *BagM* 25 (1994), 605–618, pls. 25/6. As the *w* has not been recognized after several letters one has to add a list of corrections: 18N19:4, 8, 10 *nhwrʾ*; 23 better *wb*[*šwm*]*ḫ* as in l. 20; 40 *mwqbʾtʾ*; 44 *lkwl*; 18N97:4 read ... *hʾzyt wmšmtʾ b* ... '... I, ..., saw, and banned by ...' instead of *hʾzyky wmšmtʾ b* ... '... I, ..., verily conquered and excommunicated', the latter reading would require that the interjection *hʾ* has to start the sentence, e.g. *ḏ-hʾ ʾnʾ* ..., and the verb in the perfect should read *z*(*ʾ*)*kyt*; 5 *qʾdmʾyyḫ*; 9 *wnwqbʾtʾ*; 11 *lkwlhwn*; p. 616, last paragraph BM 91715 read *wnyrbʾ*.

[16] H. Pognon, *Inscriptions mandaïtes des coupes de Khouabir* (Paris, 1898). It is not known where the

from various sites are expected to be published soon.[17]

Text on Lead Rolls and Bowls

It is not really surprising that identical incantation formulas can be found on lead rolls as well as on magic bowls. Recently several examples turned up. One is a stereotyped incantation formula on the Mandaic magic bowl E, published by McCullough,[18] which parallels the fifth incantation on a lead roll written for a certain Papay, son of Mamay.[19] Another example is the story of a succubus Lilit, called Bguzan(/Buznay)-Lilit on a large bowl of the Yale Babylonian Collection and attested again in a very corrupt variant version on a lead roll of the Pir Nukraya archive.[20] However, some years ago Greenfield and Naveh already pointed out that similar formulas were used in Mandaic lead rolls as well as on Babylonian Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls.[21] The identical formula is found on a magic bowl written in proto-Manichaean, an alternative script for writing Syriac on such bowls.[22]

Interrelations between texts on lead rolls and incantation bowls of a different kind can be demonstrated with the help of the contents of three unpublished lead rolls, comprising between 160 and 240 lines each. The lead rolls come from the already mentioned archive of Pir Nukraya, son of Abandukht, but were written by different hands in a neat and tiny script. With the exception of the Lidzbarski roll, the scribes made many mistakes by frequently beginning to write a word, then crossing it out, starting again – sometimes up to three times – as well as omitting passages.

The incantation on the lead roll BM 132947[23] is divided as follows. It starts with the usual Mandaic doxological introduction,[24]

obverse

(1) [*bšwm*]ʾ [*d*-]*hyyʾ rbyʾ*

(1) [In the nam]e [of] the great Life.

---

bowls are kept today. Only one of inferior quality probably from the same provenance is found in the Louvre collection.

[17] J.B. Segal has been entrusted for nearly fifty years with the publication of the British Museum bowl collection.

[18] W.S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto, 1967), 48–57.

[19] BM 134699 (1965–10–13,4) unpublished.

[20] The bowl was published by Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts*, 296–305 and by the same author as a separate article, 'A Mandaic Magic Bowl from the Yale Babylonian Collection', *Berytus* 17 (1967), 49–63. The collated and revised reading of the bowl and part on the lead roll of BM 132948 obverse is in Ch. Müller-Kessler, 'The Story of Bguzan-Lilit, Daughter of Zanay-Lilit', *JAOS* 116 (1996), 185–195.

[21] Greenfield – Naveh, 'A Mandaic Lead Amulet', 99–100.

[22] The bowl is kept among the collection of magic bowls in the Département des Antiquités Orientales of the Louvre, Paris. It will be published by me in 'Aramäische Koine. Ein Beschwörungsformular aus Mesopotamien', *BagM* 29 (1998) 337–352, pl. 1–2.

[23] All British Museum texts are published with the kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

[24] Signs in the transliteration: [...] additions for illegible or damaged letters; ⌜...⌝ partially legible letters; {...} superfluous letters; <...> letters omitted by the scribe; ˆ...ˆ suprascript; ~~xxx~~ annulled letters by the scribe. In translation (...) added for textual understanding.

followed by the client's name and his belongings,

(2) [*ʾsw*]*tʾ thwylẖ* ~~*thwyl*~~ (3) [*pʿ*]*yr nwkrʾyʾ br* ʾ(4)*bʾndwkt* [*wl*]*dʾyr*[*ẖ*] (5) ⌜*w*⌝*byt*ẖ

(2) [Heali]ng shall be for (3) Pir Nukraya, son of (4) Abandukht [and for] his *dwelling?* (5) and for his house.[25]

Then follows the opening of the incantation formula,

(5) ... *bgʾn šwmʾ rb*[ʾ] (6) *wbgʾn mʿmrʾ qʾdmʾyʾ* (7) *bgʾn mndʿʾ ḏ-hyyʾ bgʾn* (8) *yʾwʾr zywʾ bgʾn hybyl* (9) {*w*}*ʿwtrʾ mzrzʾ bgʾn hy*(10)*yʾ qrynʾ ʿl* {*msrʾ msw*(11)*rʾ*} *msʾr* {*šydyʾ wdywy*} (12) *shryʾ šydyʾ wdywyʾ* (13) *nksyʾ ʿstrtʾ hw*(14)*mryʾ wlylyʾtʾ msdʾ*(15)*m wmrgʾl kwlhwn* (16) *šbyʾhyʾ ʿlʾhyʾ* (17) *wmlʾkyʾ hwmryʾ wʿk*(18)*wryʾ wptykryʾ prkyʾ* (19) *ʾrkwnyʾ mšbʾq* (20) *hrbʾ nwrʾ wyʾqʾdnʾ* (21) *wšmʾtʾ wʾgzrʾtʾ ʿl* (22) *q*{*n*}*ynyʾ qyn*{*yn*}*yʾ wʿl š*(23)*wrbʾtʾ šwrbʾtʾ wʿl* (24) *bytyʾ bytyʾ ʿl hw*(25)*mryʾ hwmryʾ* (26) *ʿsyrʾ tltmʾ wštyn* (27) *qryʾtʾ ḏ-hšwkʾ ḏ*-(28)*ʿkʾ brqʿyhʾ bʾrb*{*y*}(29)*yʾ qr*<*nʾ*>*tẖ ḏ-ʾlmʾ byt* (30) *mwzynyʾ ʿsyrʾ kwlhn* (31) *qryʾtʾ ḏ-ʿkʾ bʾrqʾ* (32) *ptyhnʾ mn mrbʾ lm*(33)*d*{ʾ*n*ʾ}ʾ*n*ʾ *wmn grbyʾ ltmnyʾ* (34) *ʾlmʾ lskʾ ḏ-myʾ syʾ*(35)*wyʾ ʿsyrʾ kwlhywn* (36) *qynyʾ wšwrbʾtʾ* ...

(5) ... By the protection of the gre[at] Name (6) and by the protection of the first Word, (7) by the protection of Mandʿa ḏ-Hiyya, by the protection (8) of Yawar Ziwa, by the protection of Hibil, (9) the armed ʿUtra,[26] by the protection of (10) Life, I recite against (11) the roaming of (12) Sahirs, Šedas and Dews, (13) Nakas, Istartes, Hu(14)martas and Lilits, to bind (15) and fetter all (16) Šabiahas, Ilahas (17) and Malakas, Humartas and E(18)kurs and Patikars, Parikas, (19) (and) Arkonas, to release (20) the sword, the fire and the flame (21) and the ban and the condemnation against (22) all families and against (23) all tribes and against (24) all houses, against (25) all *amulets*.[27] (26) Bound are the three hundred sixty (27) curses of darkness which (28) exist in the firmament, in the four (29) corners of the world, the house (30) of scale. Bound are all (31) curses which exist on the earth. (32) I open (them) from the west to the (33) east and from the north to the south (34) to the boundary of the Black (35) Sea. Bound are all (36) their families and tribes ...

After this exceptionally long introduction, there follows an extremely long demon list which continues on a second lead roll (BM 132954). Some of the demons are mentioned only in anonymous groups, but many appear with their individual names. They are associated with specified dwelling places, and sometimes the cause of the demon's or demoness' misdoing is described. These individual demons do not live and act for themselves, but appear in groups of helpers who in general are called *šwrbʾtʾ* 'tribes'. Examples are selected here for demonstration,

[25] Textual, grammatical and language problems will be dealt with in the coming text edition.

[26] The names of Mandaic higher beings or demons are not translated here but are given generally in their singular absolute/emphatic state. To translate the names would be very artificial as their names are already used as fixed proper names in these Late Antiquity incantation texts.

[27] The meaning of *hwmryʾ* is not clear in this context.

(50) ... *ʿsyryʾ d̲-bt* (51) *pqʾ shr<y>ʾ d̲-lbyš*(52)*yʾ blʾyyʾ*[28] *wmksyn* (53) *blʾyyʾtʾ wyʾtyb<yʾ> ʿl qy*(54)*qlʾtʾ hrwbʾtʾ hynwn* (55) *mytqryʾ pʿgʾ d̲-lylyʾ* (56) *wqryʾ d̲-ʿmʾmʾ* ...

(50) ... bound are the ones of Bīt (51) Paqa, Sahirs who are clothed (52) with rags and covered (53) with worn-out fragments, and they sit on (54) rotten dung-heaps (55) calling themselves misadventure of the night (56) and mishap of the daytime ...

the list continues,

(56) ... *ʿsyr*(57)*ʾ d̲-byt ʾlgʾ sh{y}r<y>ʾ* (58) *d̲-ʾtybyʾ twtyʾ nrzw*(59)*byʾ ʿsyryʾ d̲-byt mqʾ*(60)*dwn shr<y>ʾ d̲-ʾtybyʾ* (61) *bzwyʾtʾ d̲-btyʾ hrby*(62)*ʾ* ...

(56) ... boun(57)d are the ones of Bīt Alga, Sahirs (58) who sit under (59) gutters, bound are the ones of Bīt (60) Maqedon, Sahirs who sit (61) in the corners of privies ...

now an interesting demoness is listed,

(69) ... *ʿsyrʾ kwmyš*[29] *lylytʾ d̲-*(70)*šryʾ mn šwš ʾlmʾ* (71) *lšwštryʾ bhrbyʾ* (72) *qdrwn mʾtyn wmʾdʾy* (73) *wʾrqʾ d̲-rhymʾyyʾ* (74) *wdybrʾ d̲-byt ʾspnyʾ* (75) *ʿsyrʾ hʿyʾ wkwlh{w}n* (76) *šwrbʾt̲h* ...

(69) ... bound is Komiš-Lilit who (70) dwells from Šuš to (71) Šustar, in the waste lands of (72) Qidrun (Gedrosien?), of the Matiene, and of Media (73) and the land of the Rahimayye (74) and the desert of Bīt Aspaniya, (75) she and all (76) her tribes are bound ...

or another Lilit,

(82) ... *ʿsyrʾ* (83) *nmlyk lyly{ʾ}tʾ d̲-šryʾ bʾrqʾ* (84) *d̲-prsyʾ hʿyʾ wkwlhywn* (85) *šwrbʾt̲h* ...

(82) ... bound is (83) Namlik-Lilit who dwells in the land (84) of Parsia, she and all (85) her tribes ...

or

(106) *ʿsyrʾ npʾzʾṯ lylytʾ* (107) *d̲-šryʾ {bprʾn}* ~~*pʾb*~~ (108) *bpwmh̲ d̲-nhʾr zptʾy* (109) *ʿsyrʾ hʿyʾ wkwlhn <šwrbʾt̲h>* reverse (110′) *ʿsyr ʿwlmʾyʾ d̲-šryʾ bd*(111′)*brʾ d̲-kwlʾnyʾ wʿsyr ʿlmʾyʾ* (112′) *dywʾ d̲-šryʾ bhrbyʾ* ~~*d̲ʾbw*~~ (113′) ~~*d̲ʾbwrʾ*~~ *d̲-ʾwbr<y>ʾ*

[28] *blʾyyʾ* might have the same meaning as in Syriac *blyʾ* 2. *vestis trita*, C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Halle, 1928), 74 as it parallels *blʾyytʾ* which is only attested in Mandaic, see E.S. Drower – R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1963), 65.

[29] *kwmyš* is also attested as a female client's name in a magic bowl from Nippur published by J.A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia, 1913), 190–191.

ʾm?yqʾtʾ {*ʿ*(114′)*syrʾ lylytʾ mrdyʾ klybyʾ*} (115′) *ʿsyrʾ lylytʾ mrdyʾ klybyʾ* (116′) *ḏ-šryʾ ʿl nhʾr pyšrʾ*

(106) bound is Npazaṭ-Lilit (107) who dwells (108) at the mouth of the river Zaptay (Little Zab?), (109) bound is she and all her [tribes], (reverse 110′) bound is ʿUlmaya who dwells in the (111′) desert of Kulaniya and bound is ʿIlmaya-(112′)Dew who dwells in the waste lands (113′) of Ubriya (and) Amiqta, (114′/5′) bound is the rebellious, dog-like Lilit[30] (116′) who dwells on the river Pišra.

The list continues in the same manner.

The mention of the last three demons leads to a consideration of four incantation bowls. Three are in the possession of the British Museum (BM 91724, 91777, 132168). Two of them are unfortunately partially faded and therefore difficult to read. The fourth belongs to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. All have a certain formula in common. Despite the fact that two of these bowls (BM 91724, Fitzwilliam) were already published, neither their first editor C.H. Gordon nor E.M. Yamauchi, who republished them, were aware of the connection among them, although Gordon noted a similarity between the BM bowl and a bowl from Nippur.[31] As already mentioned before, it is the structure of the formula which gives the clue to the understanding of all four bowl texts. The formula can be repeated in similar words several times on a bowl depending on its size. The Fitzwilliam bowl[32] is chosen here to demonstrate the pattern of the formula. The inscription is divided into three sections (pl. XX).

Fitzwilliam Museum E.2–1907

Section I

1	*bš⌜wm⌝ʾ[y]wn ḏ-hyyʾ rbyʾ nwkrʾyyḫ*	In the name of the great, unknown,
2	*ytyryʾ ḏ-ʿylʾwyʾ kwlhwn ʿwbdyʾ*	outstanding Life which is above all deeds.
3	*ʾswtʾ w[z]rztʾ whtmtʾ wnṭʾrt[ʾ]*	Healing and arming and sealing and protection
4	*⌜thw⌝lḫ lpgrḫ wlrwhḫ wlnyšy*	shall be for his body and his psyche and his soul
5	*⌜m⌝tḫ wlbʾytḫ wldwrḫ wlhyklḫ*	and his house and his dwelling-place and his residence
6	*[wlby]nyʾnḫ wltwrḫ bnyʾ*	and his building and his ox, possessed
7	*[qʾ]rnyn wlhwmrḫ bnyʾ*	of horns, and his donkey, possessed of
8	*qʾqyn dylyʾ šʾbwyʾ*	molars, belonging to Šaboy,
9	*br šyryn ʿsyr*	son of Širin. Bound
10	*grwd gwspwhrʾ*	is Grud-Guspuhra

[30] Cf. Caquot, 'Un phylactère mandéen en plomb', 78 for this Lilit.

[31] C.H. Gordon, 'Aramaic Incantation Bowls', *Or* 10 (1941), 344–345; *idem*, 'Aramaic and Mandaic Magical Bowls', *ArOr* 9 (1937), 103–105; Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts*, 276–283.

[32] Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge E.2–1907 is republished here with collated readings by the author. The photograph is reproduced with the kind permission of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

11	*ʿsyr ʿlʾhʾ brwqʾ*	bound is ʿIlaha-Bruqa
12	*ḏ-ʿl gʿybʾ dydygʾlʾt*	who sits on the bank of the Tigris.
13	*yʾtyb ʿsyryʾ*	Bound are
14	*kwlhwn shrʾ*	all their Sahirs,
15	*ywn wdʾywʾy*	and their Dews
16	*wn whwm*	and their
17	*rʾywn*	Humartas

Section II

18	*wlylyʾthwn ḏ-šbʿyqʾlwn*	and their Lilits who are left
19	*ʿl⌜ʾrqʾ⌝ tʿybʿyl ʿsyryʾ kwlhwn*	on the earth Tibil. Bound are all
20	*šwrbʾt⌜h⌝wn ḏ-ʾzylyʾ wšʾry⌜ʾ⌝*	their tribes who go around and dwell
21	*ʿl ʿnšyʾ wʿl gwbryʾ wmš*	on women and men, and
22	*lpylwn wmqṭylwn wnklybhwn*	fleece and slaughter and betray them
23	*nʿklʾ wmytqʾryʾ kwmryʾ*	and they are called Kumras
24	*wzʾbyʾ wdydyʾ ḏ-ʾklyʾ mn*	and Zabas and Didas who eat
25	*bʿysʾrywn lsybʾ*	of their flesh to satiety
26	*wšʾtyʾ mn zmʾywn*	and drink of their blood
27	*lrʿwyʾ wmzyhwlwn lʾlmʾ*	to intoxication[33] and they are expelled for ages
28	*wldʾryʾ ʿsyryʾ*	and generations. Bound
29	*dwglyʾ wkbʿyš<y>ʾ*	are the lies and suppressed
30	*twtḫ lygryʾ*	under both feet
31	*kwlhn*	
32	*ḏ-gʾbrʾ*	of Gabra,
33	*bhyr ḏ-zydq⌜ʾ⌝*	the chosen of righteousness,

Section III

34	*bmʿymrʾ ḏ-yʾwʾr ʿwtrʾ*	by the word of Yawar-ʿUtra,
35	*br nhwrʾ ʿsyrʾ gyswr*	son of light. Bound is the Persian Gisur
36	*prsʾytʾ wʿysyr mwhbʾṭ shrʾ*	and bound is Mohbaṭ-Sahir,
37	*ḏ-qʾym qwdʾmḫ ḏ-bʿyt mgʿryʾ*	who stands in front of Bīt Mgiriya,
38	*ḏ-hw hwʾ wmyqʾlylʾ ḏ-mʾrḫ ʿsyrʾ*	the one who *reveals and is the curser* of his master. Bound are
39	*kwlhwn lwṭʾthwn wqryʾth{w}wn*	all their curses and imprecations
40	*ḏ-ʾzl<y>ʾ wšʾryʾ ʿl bʾytḫ wʿl*	that go around and dwell on the house and on
41	*qʿyn{ʾ}yʾnḫ ḏ-šʾbw br šryn*	the possession of Šaboy, son of Širin
42	*ʿsyryʾ wk<b>ʿyšyʾ brʾzʾ*	Bound and suppressed are they by the Mystery

[33] This popular passage in Mandaic magic texts is also found in the *Ginzā yamīnā* 28, M. Lidzbarski, *Ginzā, der Schatz* (Göttingen, 1925), 29, describing here the helpers of Nerig in modified words (see Naveh, 'Another Mandaic Lead Roll', 48, ll. 18–22).

43	*wml'l' ḏ-hwy ršwmḫ*	and by the Speech which revealed its great Sign
44	*rb'*[34] *wmymr' q'dm'yyḫ*	and its first Word.
45	*w<'>swt' thwlḫ ltwrḫ wlhwmrḫ*	And healing shall be for the ox and for the donkey
46	*ḏ-š'bw br šyry⌜n⌝*	of Šaboy, son of Širin.
47	*'myn 'myn s'lḫ*	Amen, Amen, Sale.
48	*whyy' z'ky'*	And Life is victorious.

The bowl BM 91724, formerly published by Gordon and again without alterations by Yamauchi,[35] has after the usual introduction (of the incantation) a demon list, and thereupon one reads,

(7) ... *ʿsyr' wrgyl' wm'tn' twty'* (8) *ʿqb' ḏ-sm'lḫ ḏ-šrwlḫ br dwkt'nwbḫ* ...

(7) ... they are bound and fettered and placed under (8) the left heal of Šarule, son of Dukhtanube ...

again there follows a list of demons and the same wording appears in line,

(12) ... *ʿsyry' kwlhwn wm'tny' twty' ʿqb'y ḏ-sm'l'y ḏ-y'l' šrwlḫ br dwkt'nwbḫ*

(12) ... they are all bound and placed under the left heal of Šarule, son of Dukhtanube.

In this bowl the client replaces the commonly mentioned Mandaic higher being, under whose feet or heels the demons are suppressed.

The best example of the formula is taken from the unpublished bowl BM 132168,

(5) ... *w ʿsyryn* (6) *[w]rgylyn wp⌜k⌝yryn wkbyšyn wmhtyn* (7) *twty' lgr'yhwn ḏ-bhyry' zydq'* (8) *bh⌜y⌝lḫ ḏ-mndʿ' ḏ-hyy'*

(5) ... and they (the demons) are bound (6) and fettered and tied and suppressed and put (7) under the feet of the chosen of righteousness (8) by the power of Mandʿa ḏ-Hiyya.

The formula is concluded by the usual closing words of the Mandaic incantations.

Then a second formula follows with a list of demons and a call for the help of a Mandaic higher being,

(23) ... *wbr'z' wbml'l' ḏ-*(24)*y'w'r rb' ḏ-hyy' ʿsyryn wkbyšyn* (25) *wrgylyn wmhtyn twty' lgr'yhwn ḏ-*(26)*bhyry' zydq'*

(23) ... And by the mystery and by the word of (24) the great Yawar ḏ-Hiyya they

[34] Cf. *bmlylḫ ḏ-hw r'šwm' rb'* BM 91777, l. 18′.
[35] See note 30.

are bound and suppressed (25) and fettered and put under the feet of (26) the chosen of righteousness.

A third formula with different words but in the same meaning conludes the incantation,

(33) ... *wʿsyrʾ wrgylʾ* (34) *wkbyšʾ ˆwpkyrʾˆ wmhtʾ twtyʾ ʿqbtẖ ḏ*-(35)*ywzʾṭʾr mndʿʾ ḏ-hyyʾ*

(33) ... and they are bound and fettered and (34) suppressed and tied up and put under the heels of (35) Yuzaṭar Mandʿa ḏ-Hiyya.

The last bowl BM 91777 is the largest in size (40 × 18.6 cm) and was found in Kutha. It has been restored and the beginning of the text is missing, but there is enough text left to reconstruct the whole incantation. In this bowl the formula is repeated more than ten times. After a list of demons, the following occurs,

(21′) ... *wpkryʾ wrgylyʾ wkbyšyʾ wmhtyʾ lygrʾywn ḏ*-(22′)*bhyryʾ zydqʾ wdylyʾ hʿbyl hlwpʾ br nnʾy {wm} wbhylʾ ḏ-hyyʾ wmlʾlẖ ḏ-mndʾ ḏ-hy⌜yʾ⌝* ...

(21′) ... and they are bound and fettered and suppressed and put under the feet of (22′) the chosen of righteousness and me Hibil-Halupa, son of Nanay, and by the strength of Life and by the Word of Mandʿa ḏ-Hiyya ...

One can postulate a rough pattern of the formula for all these bowls:

'In the name of the great Life. Healing and arming etc. shall be for so-and-so, son or daughter of so-and-so, for his or her family members and for all his or her possessions. Bound is demon X or demoness Y who dwells at place X, he or she and all his or her fellow demons Z are bound and fettered and suppressed and put under the feet of the chosen of righteousness or so-and-so, (under the left heel of a Mandaic higher being X) by the help of the great Life (by the Word of Mandʿa ḏ-Hiyya). Healing shall be for so-and-so, son or daughter of so-and-so, for his or her family members and for his or her possessions. Life is victorious'.

One has to remark that the individual text may vary in the wording, but the pattern of the formula remains the same.

By means of the following synopsis it will be demonstrated how the scribe employed the demon-list for writing such bowl texts. He selected a demon name, his abode, and his misdoings (if known), and entered them into the formula of a bowl, while retaining the same sequence as in the demon list. Only in case of bowl BM 91724, the quotations of the demons are missing in the list of the lead roll, but as the scribe of this demon list did not write very painstakingly, it is not surprising that he left out whole passages from time to time. The comparison between both demon groups shows how close the text of the demon list comes to the text on the magic bowls with the exception that in the bowls the plene spelling is the rule and their orthography is more accurate.

Synopsis

	Lead roll BM 132947+ (unpublished)	Incantation bowl BM 132168 (unpublished)
I	(110′) *ʿsyr ʿwlmʾy ʾ d̲-šryʾ bd*(111′)*brʾ*	(1) *ʿsyr ʿlmʾyh̲ d̲-šryʾ bdybrʾ*
	d̲-kwlʾnyʾ	*d̲*-(2)*kwlʾnyʾ*
II	*ʿsyr ʿlmʾyʾ* (112′) *dywʾ d̲-šryʾ*	(12) ⌜*ʿs*⌝*yr ʿlmʾyh̲ dywʾ d̲-šryʾ*
	bhrbyʾ {*d̲-ʾbw* (113′) *d̲-ʾbwrʾ*} *d̲-ʾwbryʾ*	(13) [*bhʾrbyʾ d̲-ʾwbryʾ*]
	ʾmyqʾtʾ	⌜*ʿ*⌝*myqʾtʾ*
III	{*ʿ*(114′)*syrʾ lylytʾ mrdyʾ klybyʾ*}	*ʿsy*⌜*rʾ*⌝ (14) *lyl*⌜*ytʾ*⌝ [*mrdyʾ*] *klbyʾ*
	(115′) *ʿsyrʾ lylytʾ mrdyʾ klybyʾ*	
	(116′) *d̲-šryʾ ʿl nhʾr pyšrʾ*	*d̲-šryʾ ʿl* (15) *nhʾr pyšrʾ*
	(117′) *wmʾmʾy qryʾ lnpšʾ*	(16) *wmʾmʾy qrʾt lnpšʾ*
IV	*ʿsyrʾ* (118′) *kwlhyn lylyʾtʾ wʿstrtʾ*	(28) *ʿsyrʾ kwlhyn lylyʾtʾ wʿstrʾtʾ*
	d̲-(119′)*šryʾ bʾqrʾ škytyn* {*šʾ*}	(29) *d̲-šʾryʾ bʾqrʾ*
	(120′) *šʾqrʾt*	*d̲-byt* (30) *ʿškʾtʿyl wšrmʾt*
	wbʾtnyʾ {*ʿbtnyʾ*} *d̲-byʾ* (121′) *ʾwlyʾ*	(31) *wbʾtwnyʾ d̲-byʾ ʾwlyʾ*
		BM 91777 (unpublished)
V	(157′) *sdym mryʾ d̲-byt zʾmʾn*	(10′) *sdy*[*m mryʾ*] *d̲-byt zʾmʾn*
VI	*ʿsy*(158′)*rʾ ʿstrʾ ʾmšmyš*	*ʿsyrʾ ʿstrʾ ʾmšʾmyš*
	d̲-š(159′)*wš bʿ<r>tʾ ʿsyrʾ wsydymʾ*	*d̲-šwš byrtʾ ʿsyrʾ sdymʾ*
	ʿs(160′)*pndʾrmyd lylytʾ d̲-qrʾt* ~~*lnš*~~	*ʿspʾ*[*ndʾr*]*myd lylytʾ hʿ qrʾt*
	(161′) *lnpšʾ bʾnwg ʿsyrʾ ʾnʾhyd lylytʾ*	*lnpš*[ʾ] *ʿspʾn*[*dʾr*]*myd bʾnwg*
	(162′) *d̲-ʾrymyn d̲-kldʾyyʾ*	(11′) [.....]
VII	(168′) *ʿsyrʾ nʾnʾy d̲-bwrṣyp*	(13′) *ʿsyrʾ wsdymʾ nnʾy d̲-bwrṣyp*
	wnʾnʾy	*ˆwsdymʾˆ nnʾy*
	(169′) *d̲-byt gwzʾyyʾ ...*	*d̲-byt gwzʾyyh̲ d̲-bghzʾy*
		Fitzwilliam Museum E.2–1907[35]
VIII	(182′) *ʿsyr grwd gwsphʾrʾ*	(9) *ʿsyr* (10) *grwd gwspwhrʾ*
	ʾlʾhʾ (183′) *brwqʾ d̲-ʾtyb ʿl gybh̲*	(11) *ʿsyr ʿlʾhʾ brwqʾ* (12) *d̲-ʿl gʿybʾ*
	d̲-dyg(184′)*lʾtʾ*	*dydygʾlʾt* (13) *yʾtyb*
IX	(171′) *ʿsyrʾ* (172′) *gyswr prsytʾ ...*	(35) *ʿsyrʾ gyswr* (36) *prsʾytʾ*
	(176′) *ʿsyr mhbʾṭ* (177′) *shrʾ*	*ʿysyr mwhbʾṭ shrʾ*
	d̲-yʾtyb ʿl tylʾ d̲-mwrʾ	(37) *d̲-qʾym qwdʾmh̲ d̲-bʿyt mgʿryʾ*
		BM 91777 (unpublished)
X	*ʿsyrʾ* (230′) *mlʾkʾ d̲-rʾdyn šʔwṭʾgdʾ*	(18′) *ʿsyrʾ mlkʾ d̲-rʾdyn šṭwrgʾ*
	ṭyzʾnʾ	*ṭʿzʾnʾ*

[35] Gordon, 'Aramaic Incantation Bowls', 344–345.

(231′) {ʿ}*wʿsyrʾ mrtʾ ḏ-byt* (232′) *zybnʾ*
ʿsyrʾ ʿstrʾ ḏ-mʾ(233′)⌜*tʾ*⌝ *h*{*rʾ*}*dʾtyʾ*
ʿs(235′)[*trʾ ḏ-*]⌜*ʿl*⌝ *prʾt yʾtyb*[ʾ]
(236′) [*ḏ-m*]*wlyʾt* ...

XI (237′) ... *ʿsyr*[ʾ] (238′) [*šytyn*] *wšytʾ ʾlʾhyʾ*
(239′) [*plng*]ʾ *ḏ-nʾnʾy wʿsyrʾ nʾ*[*nʾy*]
(240′) [*hʿ*]*yʾ wšbʾ ʾhw*⌜*ʾ*⌝[*th*]
ḏ-šryʾ ʿl hrynʾ ḏ-nhʾrʾ
{*nhʾrʾ*} *ḏ-byt hym*

(19′) *ʿsyrʾ ʿstrʾ mʾrth ḏ-byt zyb*⌜*nʾ*⌝
[*ʿsyrʾ ʿstrʾ*] *ḏ-mʾtʾ hʾdtʾ*
(20′) *ʿstrʾ ʿl prʾt yʾtbʾ wmwlyt qrʾt lnpšʾ*
ʿsyryʾ šytyn wšytʾ
ʾlʾhyʾ pʾndyʾ [...]
(21′) *ʿsyrʾ plʾngʾ nnʾy*
hʿyʾ wšʾbʾ⌜*ʾ*⌝*hʾwʾtʾ*
ḏ-š⌜*ryʾ ʿl*⌝ *hwrynʾ nhrʾ*
ḏ-byt hʾšwm

BM 91724[36]

XII (6) *ʿsyrʾ wsdymʾ ʿstrʾ ḏ-ʾkʾt whyʾ wtltmʾ* (7) *wšytyn šwrbʾtʾ* ...
(9) *ʿsyr nʿryg ḏ-zʾmbwr wʾlʾhʾ ḏ-byt* (10) *twldʾnʾ hynwn wkwlhyn qryʾtwn wšwrbʾtwn* ...

Translation

I Bound is ʿUlmaya who dwells in the desert of Kulaniya.

II Bound is ʿIlmaya Dew who dwells in the waste lands of Ubriya (and) Amiqta.

III Bound is the rebellious, dog-like Lilit who dwells on the river Pišra and calls herself Mamay.

IV Bound are all Lilits and Istartes who dwell in the fortress of Škatin(/Bīt ʿIškatil) and Šarmat and Batunia of Bīt Ulaya.

V Shackled is the Lord of Bīt Zaman.

VI Bound is Istarte Amašmiš of Šuš-Birta. Bound and shackled is Ispandarmid-Lilit, who (/she) calls herself Lady(/-Ispandarmid). Bound is Anahid-Lilit of Arimin of Kaldayye.

VII Bound and (/shackled) is Nanay of Borṣip and shackled is Nanay of Bīt Guzayye which is in Gahzay.

VIII Bound is Grud-Guspuhra. (/Bound) is Ilaha Bruqa who sits on the bank of the Tigris.

IX Bound is the Persian Gisur ... Bound is Mohbaṭ-Sahir who sits on the hill of Mura (/who stands in front of Bīt Mgiriya).

X Bound is Mlaka of Radin, the reckless Šṭurga and bound is Istarte, the Lady of Bīt Zibna. Bound is Istarte of the new town (territory), the Istarte who sits on the bank of the Euphrates and calls herself Mulit.

XI Bound are the sixty-six Ilahas. (/Bound) is the phalanx of Nanay, she and her seven sisters who dwell on the river Harin(/Hurin) in Bīt Hašim (/Hašum).

[36] Gordon, 'Aramaic and Mandaic Magical Bowls', 103–105.

XII Bound and shackled is the Istarte of Akat, she and her three hundred and sixty tribes ... Bound is Nerig of Zambur and Ilaha of Bīt Tuldana, they and their imprecations and their tribes ...'

Among the demons and dwelling-places some names sound familiar. Most demons have their background in earlier Mesopotamia or Iran. They took their names quite often from former gods and goddesses. We detect a Mesopotamian Nanay of Borsip, an Istarte called Mulit, the Neo-Assyrian Mulissu, Nerig, the Mandaic variant for Nergal, and Istarte of Akat (the 'Ištar of Akkad'). The Iranian background is evident in former goddesses as Anahid and Ispandarmid who carry both the title *bānūg* 'lady', as they do in the Iranian texts. Or one has demon names like Mohbaṭ-Sahir and Guspuhra, and Komiš-Lilit who took her epithet probably from the Parthian or Sassanian town and province Komiš, dwelling in the nearby desert areas of Matiene and Gedrosien.

Although many other demons and place names are known from Iranian and Mesopotamian sources, one finds a considerable number of unknown demons and their abodes. An interesting question concerns the date of compilation of this long demon list. This question is difficult to solve. A possible hint could be, for example, the appearance of the Mesopotamian city of Kaškar (BM 132947:171′), pointing to the 4th or 5th century CE. The demon-list may well be older than the lead rolls themselves, which were written prior to the Islamic conquest of Mesopotamia, since they show not the slightest traces of Islamic influence. In contrast to later classical Mandaic literature, one finds – beside a Mešiha demon that resides in the church of Qrabul (BM 132947:121′/122′) – no influence of or reference to the Christian religion for this area.

It has been the purpose of this contribution to show how the Mandaean scribe produced a certain standard type of incantation, quoting from a fixed corpus of incantations and added only the names of the individual clients. At least in some parts of these Mandaic magic texts of Late Antiquity a continuation of a much older Babylonian magical tradition can be recognized. As there exists now a considerable number of duplicating incantations, one may hope that further research and new texts – more lengthy lead rolls but also more incantation bowls – will eventually reveal the size and scope of the Mandaic magical corpus.

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge E.2–1907

III Texts

On Some Dog, Snake and Scorpion Incantations[1]

Irving L. Finkel

Introduction

The following pages serve to make available fifteen hitherto unpublished Mesopotamian incantation texts, chiefly from the second millennium BCE, that served to combat the everyday dangers posed by feral dogs, poisonous snakes and deadly scorpions. Incantations of this type found their way on to tablets as early as sources from Fara and Ebla,[2] and many contemporary texts of this kind have already been published.

Local exorcists and itinerant magicians were no doubt always in demand to deal with such problems. It is suggestive, however, that prescriptions for bites and stings by and large did not enter the traditional corpus of therapeutic medical texts; obviously no effective treatment for snake-bite or scorpion sting will have been stumbled upon, and thus dealing with these problems was usually left to the more 'magical' stratum of curative practice.[3] The majority of afflictions, illnesses and diseases that were encountered by the *āšipu* or the *asû* would normally have been slow-moving, and often self-righting. In such cases there would always have been room for bedside manoeuvre that would allow the practitioner to try now one approach, now another. In the case of many bites and stings there would have been no such flexibility: those bitten by a palpably mad dog, or struck by what was known to be a deadly species of snake or scorpion, would die notwithstanding. This left little for a professional healer to do.

Accordingly, relatively few texts of this type are known from the first millennium BCE, though five examples bearing a single incantation (with or without an accompanying ritual) have been brought together here. Such texts, standing independent as they seem to do from the large first-millennium healing compendia, represent the direct counterpart of the relatively plentiful Old Babylonian corpus of such magical texts.

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[1] I owe grateful thanks to the editors of this volume for the chance to publish this paper here, in lieu of that presented at the 1995 NIAS conference (entitled 'Babylonian Dream Magic'), which, it is hoped, will shortly form the subject of a separate treatment.

[2] See M. Krebernik, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (Hildesheim, 1984), nos. 1, 3, 30, 35 and 36. For a general overview of 'early' incantations see P. Michalowski, *Or* 54 (1985), 216–218; idem, *Quaderni di Semitistica* 18 (1992), 305–326. G. Cunningham, '*Deliver me from Evil*': *Mesopotamian Incantations 2500–1500 BC* (StPsm 17; Rome, 1997), appeared too late to be used.

[3] Therapeutic recipes for dog-bite and scorpion sting seem to be limited to the Old-Babylonian(?) source *BAM* 393; see rev. 5–8 and obv. 19–20 respectively; certain Late Assyrian treatments for snake-bite seem to have been added as something of an afterthought in *BAM* 42 rev. 63–68; see also *BAM* 176, 11′–15′. Note that zú-muš ti-la and gír-tab ti-la are listed as *āšipūtu* responsibilities in *KAR* 44.

Section 1: Dogs

In *ZA* 75 (1985), 182–183, R.M. Whiting called fresh attention to three closely related Old Babylonian 'dog' incantations, namely LB 2001 (*BiOr* 11 (1954), 82, I), VAT 8355 (VAS 17, 8), and A 704 (Oriental Institute, unpublished). A fourth text associated with this group is AB 217 in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, subsequently published by O.R. Gurney as OECT 11, 4 ; cf. W. Farber, *ZA* 71 (1981), 59 d). Despite some differences in wording the three published versions of the one incantation agree on an extraordinary motif:

LB 2001, 5–9:

i-na ši-in-ni-šu e-'i-il ni-il-šu a-šar iš-šu-ku ma-ra-šu i-zi-ib
From his teeth hangs his semen: wherever he bit he left behind his child

VAT 8355, 5–6:

i-na pi-i-šu na-ši-i ni-il-šu a-šar iš-šu-ku ma-ra-šu i-zi-ib
In his mouth is carried his semen: wherever he bit he left behind his child

A 704 rev. 5–8:

i-na ši-in-na-ti-šu i-za-a-ab mu-tum i-na pi-šu na-ši ni-il-šu
a-šar iš-šu-ku ma-ra-šu i-zi-ib
From his teeth flows death: in his mouth is carried his semen:
wherever he bit, he left behind his child.

The likely explanation for this remarkable image is that the reference is to a rabid dog, with strings of saliva swinging from its jaws suggesting semen. Observation over time had no doubt led to the understanding that a bite from a rabid dog produced what is now known as rabies in the sufferer; thus the 'semen' so copiously visible engendered 'offspring' in the body of the victim, who in turn would come to exhibit savage and unpredictable behaviour.[4]

This basic understanding seems to be confirmed by a further incantation subsequently published by M. Sigrist, AUAM 73 2416, in: *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (eds. J.H. Marks and R.M. Good; Guilford, 1987), 85–88. Here lines ii 3-vi ll read as follows:

ka-al-bu-um a-wi-lam iš-šu-uk
a-nu-um-ma a-na ša-ri-im
a-li-ki-im qí-bi-a-ma
ni-ši-ik ka-al-bi-im
me-ra-ni a-a(!) *ib-ni*

[4] Some general remarks on the history of rabies with reference to Mesopotamia were given by P.D. Adamson, *JRAS* (1977), 140–144.

šu-ri-ma ka-al-ba-am
a-na ṣí-bi-it-tim
ka-al-bu-um li-mu-ut-ma
a-wi-lum li-ib-lu-uṭ-ma

A dog bit a man, now, do you (f. pl.) speak to the passing zephyr: 'May the dog's bite not produce whelps! Take the dog away into custody! Let the dog die that the man may live!'

AB 217 mentioned above, not a duplicate but a closely related incantation, reduces this idea to a single line (7):

e-ma iš-šu-k[u m]e-ra-nam i-zi-ib
Wherever he bit he left behind a whelp

Two further texts may now be added to help trace the history of this incantation theme, both from the British Museum.

Text 1: BM 79125

The first is BM 79125 = Bu. 89–4–26, 422, here copied as Fig. 1. This unprovenanced and unbaked tablet is completely preserved, measuring 4.6 × 4.7 × 1.9 cms, and is written in a characteristically difficult Late Old Babylonian cursive hand. Importantly, this tablet appends a short ritual to the incantation, which from the mention of *ne-ši-ik* UR (rev. 12) shows for certain that these spells were literally used in cases of dog-bite. This supports the idea that rubrics of the pattern ka-inim-ma ur-KU ti-la-kam, such as occurs in VAT 8355 above, should simply be understood as 'incantation to cure (the bite of) a dog'.[5]

The orthography of this tablet is quite remarkable. The scribe has employed unusual ideograms and exceptional syllabary to the point that one might accuse him of a weakness for cryptography. The text reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse 1 [G]ÍD.DA.GÍD-*uk* ⌜*bir*⌝-*ki*
2 *šar-úḫ lá-an-šu*
3 GUD.DA ki AG DU ki? DU x
4 *ina* KA-*šu nà-ši ne*-ŠID-*šu*
5 KI *iš-šu-ku me-ra-nam íb-ni*
6 KAXUD É.ÉN.NU.RU
7 KAXUD-*tum* NU *ia-át-tum*$_4$
8 KAXUD-*át* ^{d}*da*$_7$(UD)-*mu ù* ^{d}*gu*-⌜*la*⌝
9 ^{d}*gu-la* BÍ.IN.DUG$_4$-⌜ma⌝
10 *a-na-ku ád-di*

[5] See J.J.A. van Dijk, YOS 11, 7.

Reverse 11 KAxUD É.ÉN.NU.RU
12 *a-na* ŠÀ *ne-ši-ik* UR
13 MURUB$_4$? BUR Ì ŠÉŠ?-*ša-aš*
14 *ḫé-me-tam* GAR.RA-*an*
15 KAxUD *á-ni-tam*
16 *tà-nà-di-ma*
17 *i-ne-e-eš*

Translation

Obverse 1 Long of leg,
2 Proud of form,
3 He jumps like a ..., walks like a ...
4 In his mouth he carries his semen;
5 where he bit he created a whelp;
6 En-e-nu-ru incantation.
7 The incantation is not mine;
8 the incantation is of Damu and Gula;
9 Gula spoke,
10 I recited (it).
11 En-e-nu-ru incantation.

Reverse 12 For the inside of a dog-bite:
13 anoint ... with oil from a bowl(?);
14 apply ghee;
15 recite this incantation, and
16 he will recover.

Remarks

1 GÍD.DA.GÍD-*uk* represents *urruk*; cf. LB 2001, 1. It is uncertain whether the second BU represents an attempt at reduplication (i.e. GÍD.DA = *arāku*, GÍD.GÍD.DA = *urruku*), or whether it is simply an error.

2 Although *šaruḫ* with *lānu* can be supported (PBS I/1, 13 rev. 45; *Maqlu* IX 84), *lasāmu* is rather to be expected; see the remarks to the following tablet, and *Gilgameš* VI 20: *lu šaruḫ lasāmu(ma)*.

3 This line, which has no equivalent in the parallel texts, is possibly to be interpreted after a line in the incantation against *uzzu*, 'anger', also edited by R.M. Whiting, *ZA* 75 (1985), 180–182, where his three sources B, C and D read as follows:

B: *i-la-ka ri-ma-ni-<iš> [iš]-ta-na-ḫi-ṭà-am ka-al-ba-ni-<iš>*
ki-ma UR.MAḪ *e-zi a-la-ka-am*
C: *[i]-la-ka ri-mi-ni-i[š i]š-ta-na-ḫi-iṭ ka-al-ba-n[i-iš] ki-ma*
ni-ši-im e-ez a-la-ka

D: *i-i*[*l-la-ka-am*] *ri-ma-ni-iš iš-t*[*a*^{1}*-na-ḫi-ṭa-am*]
⌜*ka-al-ba*⌝-[*n*]*i-i*[*š*] *k*[*i-ma* UR.MAḪ *e-ez*] *a-l*[*a*$^{?}$*-ka-am*]

With due hesitation one might propose reading here *ištanaḫḫiṭ kī* AG *illak kī illaku/alāk* ...; AG remains unexplained, but the final sign, which looks most like ZU or LU, could perhaps be seen as UR$^{!}$, and read *nēši*.[6]

4 This and line 16 below show the first documented use of AG = *nà* as a phonetic value in a connected Akkadian text. This value of the sign is otherwise seemingly restricted to ^{d}NÀ (= Nabû).

From the parallels *ne*-ŠID-*šu* should represent *nīlšu*, 'his semen'. While one is naturally reluctant to posit ŠID = el_x on the basis of this text alone, even given the fancy writings adopted by this scribe, the values ŠID = *élal*, ŠIDxA = *elal* could be adduced in support (see *CAD* A/1 329 sub *alallû*, lex. for the readings ŠID, ŠIDxA = *elal, alal*), especially if the gloss *e*-LAL (*Hh* VI 223) is read *e-lá*, and the compound sign understood as ŠID = /el/ with internal A to mark /ela/.

5 This text, like AUAM 73 2416 and AB 217 already quoted, offers the var. *mirānum* for *māru*. That the semen creates a whelp confirms the interpretation offered above, in that it proves that the possessive suffix in *ma-ra-šu* must refer to the dog.

6 KAxUD here, and in lines 7, 8 and 11, is to be compared with the occurrence of KA+UD-dug$_4$-ga and KA+UD in Fara incantations, and UD-dug$_4$-ga (and NE-dug$_4$-ga) in incantations from Ebla, where later incantations have tu$_6$-dug$_4$-ga; cf. M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 208–209. Very clear examples of KAxUD-dug$_4$-ga corresponding to tu$_6$-dug$_4$-ga occur in several unpublished Ur III Nippur incantations.[7] Note that both here and in line 11 the scribe writes É.ÉN.NU.RU for ÉN.É.NU.RU.

9 BÍ.IN.DUG$_4$ is for *iqbi*; cf. M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 209–210; R.D. Biggs, TCS 2, 38–39 etc.

12–17 Cf. generally J. Nougayrol, *RA* 66 (1972), 141, 10–14.

13 This line is written over multiple erasures. The meaning of MURUB$_4$, if this be the correct reading, is obscure: it can hardly refer to the bite in view of the preceding line, and some item of materia medica is expected. Given the reverse order in line 6 it is probable that BUR Ì should be understood as Ì BUR, *šaman pūri*; ŠÉŠ-*ša-aš* stands for *tapaššaš* or *tupaššaš*.

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[6] Compare also *na-ša-ak ba-ar-ba-ri-im i-na-aš-ša-ak ša-ḫa-aṭ ka-al-bi-im e-la-m*[*i-im i*]-*ša-ḫi-iṭ* and related passages, for which see J.J.A. van Dijk, in: *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (eds. H.-J. Nissen & J. Renger; Berlin, 1982), 109; YOS 11, 23, no. 14.

[7] See, for example, I.L. Finkel, 'A Study in Scarlet: Incantations against Samana', in: *FS Rykle Borger* (ed. S. Maul; CM 10; Groningen, 1998), 71–106.

15 *á-ni-tam*, as *lá-an-šu* in line 2, recalls Old Akkadian orthography.

It is an interesting question whether the scribe here is attempting to give an archaic flavour to his text, whether he is being deliberately obscure, whether this is merely *jeu d'esprit* on his part, or whether indeed this text survives from a tradition with which we are unfamiliar. Another noteworthy feature is that the obverse looks as if it should be the reverse, and vice versa. The same curiously enough applies to BM 62899 below, and evidently to LB 2001, since Böhl confused obverse and reverse in the editio princeps, as clarified now by Whiting, *ZA* 75, 183; see the photograph of the tablet's profile in *BiOr* 11 (1954), pl. II.

Text 2: BM 79938

The second tablet given here in copy as Fig. 2 is BM 79938 (89–10–14, 486). This is unbaked but blackened by fire, and measures 5.7 × 4.7 × 1.4 cms.; no provenance is recorded. It contains two incantations but no ritual, and reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse 1 *ur-ru-uḫ bi-ir-ki-i*
2 *ḫa-mu-uṭ la-sa-ma-am*
3 *bu-bu-tam a-li*-IB *a-ka-la-am* ⌜*e*⌝-[*eṣ*]
4 *i-na ši*-[*i*]*n-ni-šu na-ši ni-il-šu*
5 *e-ma iš-šu-ku ma-ra-šu*
6 *i-iz-zi-ib*
7 ^{d}*da-mu be-el ba-la-ṭi*
8 *ana* TI *ana* ^{d}*ša-la ša-il-ma*
9 ^{d}IM *li-*⌜*il*⌝*-qu*⌜?⌝*-nim-ma*
Reverse 10 *li-ib-lu*-[*uṭ* ...]x x

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11 *at-la-ak* ⌜ḪUL?⌝ x[.....] x x-*ú*
12 *pu-ṭu-ur* [.....]
13 *ṭu-ur-d*[*a* .....]
14 *i*-x[.....]
15 *i*-x[.....] x
(Remainder lost)

Translation

Obverse 1 Swift of leg
2 Rushing at speed
3 He is ... with regard to food, short of bread
4 In his teeth is carried his semen,
5–6 Wherever he bit he will leave behind his child.
7 O Damu, lord of life,
8 For curing he has appealed to Šala,

Reverse 9 O Adad, may they take up (the appeal)!
10 May he be cured [...]...!

---

11 Be off evil(?)[.....] ....
12 Release [.....]
13 Go away [.....]
14 ... [.....]
15 ... [.....]
(Remainder lost)

Remarks

1-3 Cf. LB 2001, 1–4: *ur-ru-uk bi-ir-ka-šu a-ru-uḫ la-sa-ma-am i-iṣ bu-bu-tam it-nu-uš a-ka-lam*; VAT 8355, 1–2: [(*w*)*a-ru*]-*úḫ bi-ir-ki-in da-an la-sà-ma-am* [*pa-g*]*i-il ka-ab-ba-ar-ti-in* (after *CAD* K, 19 sub *kabbartu*); AB 217, 1–2: *ú-ug-gu-ur ši-⌜pi⌝ x* [...]. *a-ru-úḫ la-sà-ma-am*. A 704 differs.

5 This line, as AB 217, 7, shows that KI in BM 79125, 5 above may as equally well be read *ēma* as *ašar* of the duplicates.

6 This is the only version that puts the verb in the present tense.

7–10 The interpretation of these lines is tentative; cf. YOS 11, 4, 17–18, from the end of a scorpion incantation: *ṣú-ḫa-rum li-ib-lu-uṭ-ma zu-⌜qí-qí⌝-pu-um ⌜li-mu⌝-ut*, the end of AUAM 73, 2416 above, and AB 217, 12–13: *ka-al-bu-um li-⌜mu⌝-ut⌝ <a>-wi-lum li-ib-l*[*u-uṭ*].

In this text some quite unconnected material (lines 7–10) is appended to the end of what elsewhere is a complete incantation. The range of six manuscripts preserving what is effectively the same short text but with considerable lexical variation throws some welcome light on Akkadian incantations prior to the 'canonisation' process. Unfortunately no first millennium version has so far come to light.

Text 3: BM 28944

BM 28944 = 98–1–12, 120, a Late Babylonian tablet of unknown provenance here copied as Fig. 3, preserves a short incantation and ritual against dog-bite that is likely to derive from an Old Babylonian tradition, both on grounds of content and orthography. It has a fine white slip, and measures 5.9 × 4.3 × 2.0 cms. It reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse 1 ÉN *i-na* É.GAL.MAḪ.A
2 *áš-ba-at* ^{d}*gu-la*
3 ⌜*ù*⌝ *ku-nu* GIŠ.GU.ZA-*šu*
4 *ru-ub-bu-ṣu mi-ra-nu-šú*

5 *iš-ḫi-iṭ* UR.KU *it-ta-šu-uk*
6 *a-me-lu* TU$_6$ ÉN

---

7 DÙ.DÙ.BI IM *ta-leq*-qu
8 *pa-ni* ⌜*si*⌝*-im-mu tu-ṭar-ri*
9 UR.KU *ina lìb-bi te-ep-pu-uš*
10 *ina i-ga-ri* IM.SI.SÁ
Reverse 11 *ina ma-ḫar* ^{d}UTU-*ši ta-šak-ka-an*
12 ÉN *an-ni-tú* 3-*šú ana* UGU ŠID-*nu*
13 *u ka-a-am ta-qab-bi um-ma*
14 *a-di i-ḫal*^{l}*-lu* UR.KU *ib-ba-lu*
15 *ni-ši-ik a-me-lu-*⌜*tim-ma*⌝

---

16 *pa-liḫ* ^{d}*gu-la li-šá-*⌜*qir*⌝
17 ⌜GABA⌝.RI BARÁ.SIPA.KI *ki-ma* ⌜*la*⌝*-bi-ri-šú*
18 *šá-*⌜*ṭi-ir*⌝ IGI.TAB IM.GÍD.DA ^{m}⌜*ki-di*⌝*-nu*
^{d}A[MAR.UTU]
19 A-*šú* ^{md}AG-DU-DUMU.NITA A-*šú* GAL x x [...]
20 *pa-liḫ* ⌜^{d}AG⌝ *u* ^{d}*gu-*⌜*la*⌝ *ina* ⌜*mi-riš-tu*$_4$⌝ *la*^{l} *ú-šá-ka-áš*

Translation
Obverse 1 ÉN In Egalmaḫ
2 dwells Gula,
3 and(?) her throne is established;
4 her whelps crouch.
5 A dog sprang up: it bit
6 the man. TU$_6$ ÉN

---

7 Its ritual: you take some clay,
8 and rub the outer surface of the wound (with it);
9 you fashion a dog from the clay,
10 you place it on the north wall
Reverse 11 directly in the sun.
12 You recite this incantation three times over it,
13 and thus you say as (above)
14 until the dog gives up its moisture (and)
15 the man's bite dries up.

---

16 Let the one who fears Gula treasure (this tablet)!
17 A copy of a Borsippa tablet, written according to its original
18 (and) collated. A small tablet of Kidinnu-Marduk,
19 the son of Nabû-mukīn-apli, descendant of the chief ...
20 Let the one who fears Nabû and Gula not hold it back wittingly!

Remarks

1 For the variety of Gula temples named Egalmaḫ see A.R. George, *House Most High. The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Winona Lake, 1993), 88.

7–15. Note the namburbi's against dogs in *Or* 36 (1967), 1–9 (which do not include dog-bite).

8 *CAD* S 276 gives *simmu* as 'carbuncle, skin eruption', and a general word for disease, but the present context like many others requires the meaning 'wound, bite'; cf. YOS 11, 4, 21, for example, where *simmu* is the result of a scorpion sting. The verb *ṭerû* is not previously known in the II-stem. TAR should perhaps rather be read *–ṭer–*, although this value too is not an established one.

14 The tablet seems to read *i*-AŠ-*lu*; an emendation is required, and that adopted here assumes the secondary meaning given for *hâlu*, *CAD* H 54 (2), namely 'to exude (a liquid)', i.e. in the heat of the sun the clay model will lose its moisture and dry up, as, therefore, will the victim's bite.

The import of this spell is no doubt that Gula is 'theologically' conceived to be the mother of all dogs, even of a wild one that bites a human being, and that since the bite is ultimately attributable to her, a cure might be expected from the same quarter, the more especially in that she is also the goddess of healing. The ritual is a good example of sympathetic magic: the danger or evil of the bite is transferred to clay, which is then used to make a figurine of the dog itself, thus curing the victim, whose bite dries up as the figurine dries out in the hot sun.

Text 4: U. 30655

Fig. 4 shows a further small tablet in Late Babylonian script with a Gula incantation and ritual, probably also against dog-bite. This is U. 30655 from Ur, at present kept in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities in the British Museum. This tablet, now baked, measures 5.3 × 3.7 × 1.7 cms. The style and writing of the ritual in lines 8–10 in particular again suggest dependence on an Old Babylonian forerunner. The text reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse 1 [ÉN (...) ^{d}]*gu-la lik-tar-ra-b*[*u-ki*] ZÚ.KUD *ḫas*$_{x}$(ḪUŠ)-*sa-*⌜*a*⌝-[*ti*]
2 [TU$_{6}$.DUG$_{4}$].⌜GA⌝ *ù bul-lu-ṭu* [(*šá*)] ZÚ.KUD *mu-da-a-ti*
3 [*a*]-*sa-a-ti ba-ra-a-ti mu-bal-li-*⌜*ṭa-ti*⌝ ^{d}*gu-la*
4 *a-na maḫ-ri-ka al*⌜-*li-*⌜*ka*⌝
5 ⌜*ba-la*⌝-*ṭi al*⌜-*te-bi*⌝ *šá* x [...]
6 ⌜*šam*⌝-*mi ba-la-ṭu šá* GAŠAN-⌜*ia*⌝ *a*[*l-te-qí*]
7 *šam-mi* ⌜*al*⌝-*qí* Ú GIŠ NA *gab*-[*bi-šú-nu*] *te*$^{!}$-*e*$^{!}$ É[N]

8 DÙ.DÙ.DÙ (sic) *3-šú* TU$_6$ *a-na* UG[U]
9 Ú *nam-ruq-qu ta-man-ni-m[a]*
10 LÚ *i-šat-ti-ma i-ne-i-i[š]*

11 GIM SUMUN-*šú* IGI.KÁR
12 [D]UB ^{md}EŠx4-*taq-bi*-S[I.SÁ]
13 [D]UMU ^{md}30-EN-MU [...]

Translation

Obverse 1 [ÉN ...] Gula, may they prai[se you], informed as you are about bites;
2 You know all about incantations and the healing of bites,
3 You are a physician, an omen expert, a healer O Gula!
4 I went before you!
5 I bemoaned(?) my life which . [...];
6 I have taken up(?) my Lady's life-giving drugs,
7 I took up the drugs, the plant, the wood, the stone – all [of them(?)] *te* ÉN

8 Its(!) ritual: you recite the incantation three times over
9 *namruqqu*, and
10 the patient should drink it and he will recover.

11 Collated according to its original.
12 Tablet of ...-taqbi-līšir,
13 Son of Sin-bēl-šūmi, [the ...]

Remarks

1 The proposed reading *ḫas*$_x$(ḪUŠ) to provide *ḫas*$_x$*-sa-a-ti* (I/1 2nd fem. stative of *hasāsu*) is provisional, but is perhaps slightly supported by the scribe's use of the very rare sign in line 12. ZÚ.KUD in this and the following line is taken to be *nišku*, 'bite'.

1–3 These lines represent stock Gula phraseology that occurs elsewhere; cf. K 10268 + Rm 2, 315 (*AMT* 62/1) rev. iii 8–10 (coll.), where they constitute the beginning of a second incantation after a first concluding in standard doxology, and VAT 9024 (*KAR* 73), 24–26, where the same sequence is viewed as a single incantation:

AMT: [ÉN *a*]-*na* ^{d}*gu-la lik-tar-ra-ba ka-liš* [UB.MEŠ]
KAR: .....*a-na* ^{d}*gu-la lik-ru-bu ka-liš* UB.MEŠ

AMT: [*šá tu*]-*du-qa-a ù bul-lu-ṭa š*[*u-tu-rat* .....] *a-sa-ta*
KAR: *ša* TU$_6$.DU$_{11}$.GA [*ù*] *bul-lu-ṭu šu-tu-rat* GAL-*at a-su-tú*

AMT: *mu-bal-li-ṭa-at* ⌜^{d}⌝*gu-la* ....
KAR: *mu-bal-li-ṭa-at* ⌜^{d}⌝*gu-la* ....

Cf. also the Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi, *Or* 36 (1967), 120, 79–91, especially 79–81.

4–5 The AL sign in these lines, if correctly read, differs from that in lines 6–7.

5 *al⁷-te-bi* is very provisionally taken to be I/1 perf. of *lebû*, 'to howl, moan', although such a use of the verb (both in context, and with a direct object to moan 'about') is without parallel.

7 It is tentatively proposed that NA might stand for NA_4, and that Ú GIŠ NA relates to the sequence *šammu abnu iṣu* in, for example, BM 34035, 38–39 (quoted by A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Oxford, 1986), 73), and other texts.

8 DÙ.DÙ.DÙ is no doubt an error for DÙ.DÙ.BI. It is unusual to find 3-*šú* placed before TU_6/ÉN in this phrase.

9 Properly the verb should be *tamannuma*, but *ta-man-ni-ma* appears regularly in, e.g., BM 48481 (Egalkura incantations); cf. E. von Weiher, *SBTU* 2, no. 20 rev. 5: ÉN 3-*šú ana* UGU ŠID-*ni-ma*.

12 It is but seldom that one encounters an unknown cuneiform sign in a tablet of the first millennium BC, but the complex EŠx4 used to write a god name here seems to be previously unattested. The sign belongs with such compounds as ENx4, IMx4 etc. Signs of this type are to be found in Rm 611 (CT 11, 43), and can be found in writings of god names (e.g. Anu formed with compounded PAP: CT 19, 19 rev. 30; Adad formed with IM: CT 25, 13 rev. iii 31). The name type can occur both as *Taqbi-lišīr*, and with a preceding god name; Tallqvist *NBN* 149, documents *Nabû-taqbi-lišīr*. Whether ^{d}EŠx4 stands for Nabû here is unknown.

Section II: Snakes

Snakes, together with scorpions, receive much attention in Old Babylonian incantation literature; see most recently A. Cavigneaux, *ASJ* 17 (1995), 75–99, and references.

Text 5: CBS 7005

With regard to snake incantations, the first text to be given here is CBS 7005, a complete unprovenanced Old Babylonian tablet now housed in the University Museum, Philadelphia.[8] This rather poetic incantation is cast against a snake (variously *ṣēru* and *bašmu*, sometimes translated 'viper'), and has many points in common with IM 51292 and IM 51328, the two duplicating snake incantations published by J.J.A. van Dijk, TIM 9, 65

[8] This tablet was first drawn to my attention in 1976 by the lamented Stephen Lieberman, and permission to publish it at that time kindly afforded me by A.W. Sjöberg, Curator of the University Museum collection.

and 66 (previously *Sumer* 13 (1957), nos. 95a and 93 respectively). Since the latter have often been quoted but never edited, all three incantations are given here.[9]

Transliteration

Obverse 1 *šu-ut-tu-uḫ la-nam*
2 *da-mi-iq zu-um-ra-am*
3 *sú-um-ki-nu-šu sú-um-ki-in gišimmarim*(GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR)
4 *i-na šu-ub-tim i-ra-bi-iṣ ṣēru*(MUŠ)
5 *i-na šu-up-pa-tim i-ra-bi-iṣ ba-aš-mu*
6 *ša ba-aš-mi-im ši-it-ta*
7 *ka-ga-da-tu-šu-ma*

Reverse 8 7 *li-ša-na-šu* 7 *pa-ar-ul-lu*
9 *ša ki-ša-di-šu*
10 *am-ḫa-aṣ*! *pa-ar-ba*? *-la*
11 *ù pa-ra-ku-ul-la*
12 *ša-am-ma-nam ṣēri*(MUŠ) *qištim*(GIŠ.TIR)
13 *šu-ba-dam ṣēri*(MUŠ) *la ši-ip-ti-im*
14 *ṣēri*(MUŠ) *qarāni*(GIŠ.GEŠTIN.NA) *ša it-ti wa-ši-pí-šu*
15 *im-ta-aḫ-ṣú*

Translation

Obverse 1 Elongated of form
2 Beauteous in body
3 His (rotten) wood shavings are (rotten) shavings of palm-wood,
4 The snake waits coiled in the dwelling;
5 The serpent waits coiled among the rushes;
6 As for the serpent, two are
7 his heads,
8 Seven his forked-tongues, seven the *par'ullu's*
9 of his neck.
10 I smote the *parbalû*(?) (snake),
11 Even the *parakullu* (snake),
12 *Šammānu*, the forest snake,
13 *Šubādu*, the snake that cannot be conjured away,
14 (Even) the wine-snake, who does battle with the exorcist (summoned against) him!

Remarks

1 *šuttuḫu*, translated *AHW* 1199 as 'lang wachsen machen', occurs with *lānu* in *KB* 6/2, 132, 12, *ušattaḫ lānka*, interpreted *CAD* L 79 as 'I will make you prosper'. In the present context what is meant is no doubt the literal length of the snake, as now *CAD* Š/2 185 sub *šatāḫu* 2.

[9] I have had the benefit here of photographs of the two Iraq Museum tablets kindly loaned me by Brigitte Groneberg, and of unpublished draft copies by F.W. Geers, now available in the Oriental Institute, Chicago.

3 *sumkīnu*, 'etwas Verrotetes, Verfaultes', according to *AHW* 1057, is applied both to vegetable and mineral substances, viz. corn, wood (as here), and copper. *CAD* S 378 differs in translating as 'wood shavings(?)', 'copper shavings(?)', ignoring the apparent implication of the Sumerian from which it is loaned; cf. Lieberman, *Loanwords*, I, 544 sub 738, zumgin$_x$. It has been assumed here that the creature's nest is being described, the snake evincing a preference for mouldy palm fibres; cf. perhaps *allānam ḫamadīram uštelqi* below.

4–5 See at IM 51292 and 51329, 7–8 below.

6–8 See at IM 51292 and 51328, 9–10 below. Note also *Hh* XIV 16–17; VAS 17, 1 iii 34–37; YOS 11, 34, 1; J. M. Durand and D. Charpin, *Documents Strasbourg*, no. 153 (evidently a snake, see ibid. line 4); B. Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien nach der 14. Tafel der Serie Ḫar-ra= Ḫubullu* (Leipzig, 1934), 60, and the comment on an unidentified snake described as MIN SAG.DU-*šú* IMIN EME.MEŠ-*šú*, quoted *op.cit.*, 53, 18. Note that the little-known series *ṣēru šikinšu* of which this latter passage is an extract is referred to by incipit in the Late Babylonian Uruk compendium TCL 6, no. 12 rev. lower register col. v 16: MUŠ GAR-*šú*.

8 *li-ša-na-šu* is dual; cf. VAS 17, 4 (= *Or* 38 (1969), 540, 4: *li-ša-na-šu bi-ir-bi-ru-um*, 'his forked (or double) tongue is flame'.

10 *amḫaṣ...*, 'I smote', constitutes the beginning of a section that corresponds to that beginning *aṣbat ...*, 'I seized', in the following texts; cf. inter alia the incantation 3N T30 (MAD 3, 242) beginning *aṣ-ba-su ki ma-i*, 'I seized him like water...' (quoted *CAD* K 332 s.v. *kî*); or the unpublished. Old Babylonian incantation BM 97331 (1902–10–11, 385), which begins *aṣ-ba-at pí* AN *aṣ-ba-at pí ka-ka-bi*, and perhaps also F. Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 36 (1939), 10, no. 3, 1: AT-*ba-at-ka* for *aṣbatka*?

The reading *pa-ar-ba-la* has been provisionally adopted above, assuming an identification with the snake name *bu-ru-ba-la-a* in IM 51292 and 51328, 2 below, for which M.J. Geller suggests a derivation from sum. bùru-bal, to mean 'hole-digger', cf. muš-bùru-da quoted below under text 5. Alternatively, one could read here:

am-ḫa-aṣ pa-ar-ku-la ù pa-ra-ku-ul-la,
I smote the *parkulla*, yea even the *parakulla*,

assuming one snake name *par(a)kullu*. In support of this the erasure before -LA at the end of line 10 does look as if it might have been UL.

11 *pa-ra-ku-ul-la*: the 'seal-cutter' snake?

12 *šammānum* is taken to be the name of a kind of snake, perhaps the 'oily one' or 'fatty one'; see *CAD* Š/1 314. The following muš-giš-tir, 'forest snake', is now documented *CAD* Q 275 f) after this text.

13 *šubādum* is likewise no doubt a type of snake. For *ṣēru lā šipti* see below, where it is applied to *kurṣindu*.

14 For muš-giš-geštin-na cf. *Hh* XIV 28. With *wa-ši-pi-šu* compare, perhaps, W. Farber, *ZA* 71 (1981), 56, 15′, and, equally tentatively, YOS 11, 11, 11.

Transliterations of related texts:

(a) IM 51292:

1 *aṣ-ba-at pí ṣé-ri ka-li-i-ma ù ku-ur-si-da-am*
2 *ṣe-ri la ši-ip-ti-im aš-nu-gal-la-⌜am⌝ bu-ru-ba-la-am*
3 *ša-⌜nap?⌝-ša-ḫu-ra-am ba-ar-ma-am i-ni-in*
4 *ku-pí-a-am ṣe-ri zi-zi na-zi-za-am ṣé-ri a-ap-ti-im*
5 *i-ru-ub ḫu-ra-am ú-ṣi nu-ṣa-ba-am*
6 *im-ḫa-aṣ ṣa-la-ta-am ṣa-bi-ta-am a-la-na-am ḫa-ma-di-ra-am*
7 *uš-te-el-qí i-na ši-bi-im ṣe-ru-um i-ra-bi-iṣ*
8 *i-na ši-pa-ti-im i-ra-bi-iṣ ba-aš-mu-um*
9 *ša ba-aš-mi-im ši-ši-it pí-šu si-b[i .....]*
10 *si-bi-it u si-bi-it [ú-l]u-mi-ma ša li-b[i-šu]*
11 *ú-lu-ḫa-am ša-ra-ti-im ⌜pa-al⌝-ḫa-am zi-m[i]*
12 *na-mu-ra-ta i-na-šu i-na pí-šu ú-ṣa-am pu-[.....]*
13 *e-li-ta-šu i-pa-ṣí-id ab-na-am*
14 *tu-en-ni-nu-ri*

(b) IM 51328:

1 *aṣ-ba-at pí-i ṣe[r-ri] ka-li-ma ù ku-ur-si-d[a-am]*
2 *ṣer-ri la ši-ip-ti aš-šu-nu-gal-lam bu-ru-ba-la-a*
3 *ab-sa-⌜ḫu⌝-ra-am ba-ar-ma-am i-ni*
4 *ku-pí-am ṣer-ri zi-iz-zi na-zi-za-am ṣer-ri a'-ap-ti*
5 *i-ru-ub ḫu-ur-ra-am ú-ṣi na-[ṣa]-ba-am*
6 *i[m]-⌜ḫa⌝-[aṣ] ṣa-la-ta-am ṣa-bi-ta al-la-na-am ḫa-ma-di-ra-am*
7 *uš-te-el-qí i-na ši-ib-bi ṣer-⌜ru⌝ i-ra-bi-iṣ*
8 *i-na šu-pa-tim i-«na»-ra-bi-iṣ ba-aš-mu*
9 *ša ba-aš-mi ši-ši-it pí-šu si-bi-it li-ša-nu-šu*
10 *si-bi-it ú-lu-mi-ma ša li-bi-šu*
11 *u-lu-[ḫ]a-am [ša-r]a-tim pa-al-ḫa-am zi-mi*
12 *na-mu-ra-ta i-na-šu i-na pí-šu ú-ṣa-am pu-⌜lu-uḫ-tum⌝*
13 *e-li-ta-šu i-pa-ṣí-id ab-na-am*
14 *tu-ú-en-ni-nu-ri*

Translation

1 I seized the mouth of all snakes, even the *kurṣindu* snake,
2 The snake that cannot be conjured, the *aš(šu)nugallu* snake, the *burubalû* snake,
3 The *(šan)apšaḫuru* snake, of speckled eyes,
4 The eel snake, the hissing snake, (even) the hisser, the snake at the window,
5 It entered the hole, went out by the drainpipe,

6 It smote the sleeping gazelle, betook itself to(?) the withered oak.
7 The snake lies coiled in ...;
8 The serpent lies coiled in wool/rushes;
9 Six are the mouths of the serpent, seven his tongues,
10 Seven (and seven) are the ... inside him/of his heart;
11 He is wild of hair, fearful of appearance,
12 His eyes are of awful brightness, fearfulness issues from his mouth;
13 His very spittle can split stone!
14 *En-e-nu-ru* incantation.

Remarks

1–4 Comparison with CBS 7005 above shows that *ṣēri la šiptim, barmam īnīn, ṣēri zizzi and ṣēri aptim* stand in apposition to the preceding snake names; in line 2 *burubalû* can be seen as an adjective, or a gentilic noun in apposition; see at CBS 7005, 10.

1 *kurṣindu*: *Hh* XIV 20; perhaps 'viper', with Landsberger, *Fauna*, 62.

2 *aš(šu)nugallu*: this word occurs only here. *CAD* A/2 452 sub *ašnugallu* disassociates it from *ašnugallu/gišnugallu*, but 'alabaster snake' seems perfectly possible.

3 *abšaḫūru* might well derive from Sum. áb-suḫur, a kind of fish, loaned as *absaḫurakku*, in view of, e.g., *kuppû* (here line 4), both an eel-like fish and a snake. IM 51292 seems to be read *ša-nap-ša-ḫu-ra-am* in van Dijk's copy, confirmed by the photograph. Geers' copy shows apparently *ša-⌜ap⌝-*. If *ša-nap-ša-ḫu-ra-am* is a genuine variant to be taken seriously one might think of a Hurrian loan; cf. *šinapši-*, 'ein Torbau' (AOAT 3 36/8), to mean 'snake that ... in the gate-house'.

4 *kuppû*: Hh XIV 14.

5 *īrub ḫurram*; cf. VAS 17, 1 iii 20: muš-bùru-da. Perhaps this Sumerian snake name gave rise to the image.

6 *imḫaṣ ṣallatam ṣabītam*: cf. muš-maš-dù = *ṣa-bi-tum*, *Hh* XIV 32; VAS 17, 1 iii 12 etc. These lines read as if referring to a mythological event. Line 5 suggests that it took place within a building, thus raising the question as to whether the *ṣabītu* might not be a woman, and thus whether one should not possibly read *sabītu*, 'ale-wife' cf. generally the passages collected *CAD* 43 sub *ṣabītu* a). The image of the gazelle as a deep sleeper recurs in the first millennium baby incantations published by W. Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf! Mesopotamische Baby-Beschwörungen und -Rituale* (Winona Lake, 1989); see particularly his discussion in *ZA* 71 (1981), 69–70. *uš-te-el-qí*: the translation follows the suggestion of *AHW* 545–6 sub *leqû* Š. The suggestion of *CAD* A/1 354 sub *allānu* that the writing stands 'for *ušterqi*?', translated 'disappeared', is impossible if *rêqu* is taken as the root.

7–8 See at CBS 7005, 6–8, *šubtu* and *šuppatu*.

Regarding *ina ši-bi-im/ši-ib-bi*, compare *CAD* B 141 s.v. *bašmu*: '... (lit.: belt) [i.e. *šibbu* B, "belt, girdle"]'; *CAD* Š/3 94 s.v. *šīpu* B (a part of the roof); similar understanding in *AHW* 1247 s.v. *šīpu* (ein Balken an Gebäuden); *CAD* Š/3 326 s.v. *šuppatu*: 'in the root(?)' [technical error for 'roof'??]. If *CAD*'s earlier understanding as *šibbu*, 'belt', is correct, one thinks of Conan Doyle's 'speckled band', of a deadly snake wound round the head; cf. *Hh* XIV 11: muš-mir = *šibbu* A, (a snake), perhaps underlying the image.

Regarding *ina ši-pa-ti-im/šu-pa-tim*, compare *CAD* B 141 s.v. *bašmu*: 'in the foliage(?) (lit.: wool, var.: in the pits?)'; *CAD* Š/3 326 s.v. *šuppatu*: 'in the reed/rush/thicket', [i.e. **šipattu* var. to *šuppatu*?] – similarly *AHW* 1280 s.v. *šuppatu*, but the var. questioned as (*ši*?? –).

9 See at CBS 7005, 6–8; J. J. A. van Dijk, *Or* 38 (1969), 544, note on line 1.

10 The photographs confirm [*ú-l*]*u-mi-ma/ú-lu-mi-ma*, tentatively construed as dual of **ulumīmu*, a word without independent support. E. Reiner, in: *Neues Handbuch der Literaturgeschichte I* (ed. W. Röllig; Wiesbaden, 1978), 191, has translated 'Giftblasen'.

11 *ulluḫam šārātim* follows *AHW* 1410 sub *ulluḫu*, 'vertreut (in Büscheln)'.

12 E. Reiner, *op. cit.*, has evidently understood *bu-ur-*[*tum*], but Geers' copy shows ⌜*lu*⌝ more clearly, and good traces for –⌜*uḫ*⌝– (omitted, TIM 9, 65); the photograph is illegible. For the pair cf. *namurratu* = *puluḫtu*, Izbu Comm. 272. *AHW* 839 sub *paṣādu* derived *e-li-ta-šu* from *elītu*, 'upper lip'; for the derivation from *ellītu*, 'spittle', see C. Wilcke, *ZA* 75 (1985), 206 and references.

The structure of these two compositions may be compared as follows:

(a) CBS 7005:
- 1–2: description of the snake's appearance in flattering terms
- 3: preferred habitat (i.e. where to be sought by snake-charmer?)
- 4–5: lying in wait
- 6–9: the dangerous parts of the snake
- 10–15: claim by snake-charmer that his conquests include even the most dangerous snakes and those resistant to magic

(b) IM 51292 and IM 51328:
- 1–4: claim by snake charmer corresponding to CBS 7005, 10–15
- 5–7: mythological reference(?) to snake smiting sleeping gazelle and escaping to his preferred habitat, corresponding partly to CBS 7005, 3
- 7–8: lying in wait; cf. CBS 7005, 4–5
- 9–10: the dangerous parts of the snake; cf. CBS 7005, 6–9
- 11–13: descriptions of the snake's appearance, stressing fearfulness, approximating to CBS 7005, 1–2

As remarked above, several Sumerian incantations against snakes include a long sequence of names, some of which are not found in the list of snakes in *Hh* XIV. The most extensive example is VAS 17, 1, but note also *RA* 23 (1926), 42–44; YOS 11, 30; YOS 11, 32 (= *Or* 38 (1969), 539–547); J.-M. Durand and D. Charpin, *Documents Strasbourg*, no. 158, and especially B. Lafont, F. Yildiz, *ITT* 2/1, 193–4, no. 1036.

Text 6: CBS 3833+3835

The text given here as Fig. 6 is CBS 3833+3835, a fragment of an Old Babylonian Sumerian snake incantation from Nippur also from the University Museum, Philadelphia.[10] The text reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse
1′ [muš]-x ⌜muš⌝-x-[x]-x-x
2′ ⌜muš⌝-ḫuš muš-lugal muš-ki-in-dar!
3′ muš-íd-da ki-a bar-ra-kam
4′ muš-kun-min-e AN.KAL lú bar-ra-kam
5′ muš-ḫuš lú-ḫuš ì-DU
6′ lú-ulu$_3$-bi mu-ná ku$_4$-ú-àm
7′ muš muš-⌜an-na⌝ x an x [.....]
8′ muš x [.....]
9′ m[uš .....]

(Gap)

Reverse
1′ [x] x [.....]
2′ x [x] muš x [x x x] x (x)
3′ ⌜muš⌝-an-ki mu[š-k]ur-kur-ra ⌜sa?⌝ nu-kéš-⌜dè⌝
4′ muš-ḫuš pirig-gin$_7$ nu-gù-dé
5′ muš-⌜ušumgal?⌝ lú-ra dúr?-ra-bi
6′ ⌜zi?⌝ [x] x lugal-zu ḫé-pà
7′ [x x]x-ka-ni
8′ [x x x x] x-na-ab sum-mu-un
9′ [.....]x ^{d}x me?-en
(Remainder lost)

Remarks

Rev. 6′. Cf. ^{d}nin-a-zu lugal-zu in the Old Babylonian snake incantations YOS 11, 32, 4; 34, 3, and pp. 241–2 below.

[10] Again, here published through the kindness of A.W. Sjöberg.

Text 7: BM 79949

Next offered is BM 79949 = 89–10–14, 498, a complete unbaked Old Babylonian tablet of unknown provenience measuring 8.6 × 6.0 × 2.3 cms, whose obverse alone is inscribed. The text is an incantation in phonetic Sumerian, probably addressed to a snake. In advance of finding a duplicate in conventional orthography, the interpretation of such a text is usually more than doubtful, so the translation given here is merely something to build on.

This tablet, copied as Fig. 7a, is of importance with regard to the reading of KA-inim-ma, regarding which W. Schramm has discussed the evidence for reading ka-inim-ma (see *RA* 75 (1981), 90). The clear ka-i-ni-ma of the present tablet offers further confirmation for this now widely-accepted proposal. See also BM 22559 (94–1–15, 361), published here as Fig. 7b, which evinces the same writing ka-inim-ma.[11]

Transliteration

Obverse 1 mu-gal ú-šu-⌜um⌝-gal e-ri-du-a ba-an-x
2 ur-gàr? du-ud ku-ku-ú ba-ad
3 mu-uš ri-ib ú-ga-su za-pa-ri
4 ap-pa-ar ti-la-zu ap-pa-ar su x x ki-a

---

5 ka-i-ni-ma tu-ni-nu-ra

Translation

Obverse 1 The great ..., the dragon, was spawned(?) in Eridu,
2 The dog, born(?), opening the darkness(?)
3 Angry snake, the top of your head(?) is bronze(?)
4 The swamp where you flourish, the swamp is ... of the Underworld(?)

Remarks

1 It is likely that one should emend to mu-<uš>-gal; cf. *Hh* XIV 4–5, VAS 17, 1 iv 36 and YOS 11, 33, 1.

2 ur-gàr for ur-gir? The phrase ku-ku-ú ba-ad is tentatively understood as ku_{10}-ku_{10} bad, in view of the expression *petû iklēti* in *BWL* 126, i 17 etc.

3 ri-ib = *ezzu*? or perhaps cf. muš-ú-rib-ba (Landsberger, *Fauna*, 49 § 4, 66). ú-ga for ugu/uga, za-pa-ri for zabar?

4 ap-pa-ri for ambar?

---

[11] Cf. M. Sigrist et al., *Catalogue of Babylonian Tablets* vol. II, 235; I read NÍG ḫé-è níg-gu-la níg-SI.A-ga ka-i-ni-ma ⌜lú⌝ du_8 tu-ú-en'-ne-nu-e-ú-ri; the structure of this brief incantation to 'release a man' is quite unusual.

5 Compare the list of spellings of TU$_6$ ÉN.É.NU.RU now given in YOS 11, p. 5, and by Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 198–100.

Text 8: A 30606

Fig. 8 is a copy of A 30606 = 5N T65, a one-sided fragment from the lower reverse of an Ur III Nippur tablet now in the Oriental Institute, Chicago.[12] It is part of the ritual from the end of an incantation closely related to the snake/scorpion/dog incantation[13] VAS 10, 193 which was recently discussed by N. Veldhuis, *ZA* 83 (1993), 161–169, with correction *NABU* 1994/3, 55, 63.

Transliteration

1′ [a-L]Á-kù-ga na-r[i-ga(?) a ...]
šu ù-m[a-e-ti]
2′ [a]-bi lú-kúr-a ba-ni-nag-[nag]
3′ uš ní-ba ḫa-ba-an-ta-⌜è⌝-[dè]

Translation

1′ Take [... water] from the holy, purifying tube,
2′ give it to the bitten man to drink;
3′ the venom[14] will come out of its own accord.

Cf. VAS 10, 193, 13–16:

Transliteration

13 a-LAL-kù-ga-na ba-ni-zalag
14 a-bi nam-šub ù-ma-sum
15 a-bi lú-kúr-ra ù-mu-ni-nag
16 uš-bi ní-ba ḫa-mu-ta-è-dé

---

17 lú muš zú-ba-dù-a-bi
18 lú-kú-ra nag-nag-da-kam

Translation

13 When you have purified his holy tube for him
14 recite the spell over its water;
15 give its water to the man with the bite as a drink;
16 the venom will come out of its own accord.

---

17 To administer as a potion to a man suffering from any kind of snake-bite.

[12] Copied in 1979, and published with the gracious permission of J.A. Brinkman, then Director of the Oriental Institute.

[13] That the incantation is for use against only one of these three dangers was pointed out by Veldhuis.

[14] The present writer differs here from Veldhuis in interpreting uš/ús in this group of incantations as 'venom' rather than 'spittle'. It is the poison which the magic is to remove, and attack by a scorpion hardly involves spittle, whatever may be the case with snake-bite.

This ritual is also related in some measure to VAT 8342 (VAS 17, 2) (cf. VAS 17, p. 10), an unusual example of an Old Babylonian ritual in circulation without its incantation:

Transliteration
Obverse

1 ⌜na$_4$⌝-muš-e šu um-me-ti
2 gaz-gaz lú-zú-kur$_4$
3 sag-gá-na dub-dub GAN.MU?
4 ú-me-mu$_4$-mu$_4$-e
5 bur sig$_7$-sig$_7$-ga a-ab e-si
6 lú-zú-kur$_4$ ù-me-nag-nag
7 [uš]-bi lú-ra ḫa-ba-an-e$_{11}$

Translation

1 Take 'snake stone',
2 crush (it), (and) heap (it) on the head
3 of the bitten man.
4 Have him wear a ...
5 Fill a yellow bowl with sea water,
6 let the bitten man drink it,
7 its venom will come out for the man.

It is assumed that lú-kúr-ra, lú-zú-kur$_4$ and lú-kúr-a reflect the compound verb zú-kud/r = *našāku*, 'to bite'; cf. YOS 11, p. 30, note on 30, and VAS 17, p. 10.

Text 9: HS 1526

The next snake incantation is found on a stone amulet excavated in one of the early seasons at Nippur, and here copied as Fig. 9 from an old excavation photograph now preserved in the University Museum, Philadelphia.[15] This inscription (now HS 1526) is an outstanding example of the art of engraving cuneiform on stone. The elaborate script is most probably deliberately archaising, and thus difficult to date, but it seems unlikely to be substantially post Ur III, although a note on the original photograph itself reads 'fragment of tablet from Kassite dynasty', perhaps reflecting the archaeological context in which it was discovered. The reverse was not photographed, but apparently contains just the colophon. This text reads as follows:

Transliteration

1 AN.U.DAG-nu-ru
2 muš-e kur-muš-ta KA nam-gi$_4$
3 ⌜me⌝-TAR an-ki-ka
4 me KA ba-ni-ak

[15] Neg. 5846. This text was kindly drawn to my attention and the photograph made available in Chicago in 1978 by A. Westenholz.

5 dumu me-TAR an-ki imin a-ne-ne
6 pú é-àm ì-dù
7 a é-àm ì-in-dé
8 a ZI+ZI.A é-àm zag-ga íb-NIGIN
9 a ZI+ZI.A-bi ga-bu-ni
10 m[u(-x)]-x-zé
11 [.....-n]i? šu um-ma-gi_4
12 [muš-e...]x-a KA ḫé-[ma-an-l]á-e
13 [nam-šub eri]du^{ki}-ga
14 [tu_6-dug_4-ga(?) ^{d}en(?)]-ki-ke_4

Translation

Obverse 1 En-e-nu-ru incantation
2 The snake hissed(?) from the land of snakes(?)
3 The one who ... the me's of Heaven and Underworld,
4 ...-ed the me's;
5 Seven are the sons of the one who ... the me's of Heaven and Underworld.
6 He dug(?) the well for the house,
7 He poured the water of the house,
8 (With) water in a ... (vessel) of the house he surrounded its right side,
9 (With) that water in a ... (vessel) its left side
10 He [..]..
11 Turn back his [.....]!
12 Let [the snake(?)]tie up .... tooth(?)!
13 [A spell of Er]idu;
14 [A conjuration of En]ki.

Remarks

1 It is unlikely that AN.U.DAG-nu-ru is meant to represent AN.LAK 397-nu-ru, as in PBS 1/2, 131, 1 and rev. 5 (see M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 198 (f)), in view of the indisputably broken final vertical wedge. AN.U is very probably a graphic variant for U.AN, but DAG for É is a true early Nippur variant and not an error, since it is paralleled in several unpublished Ur III incantations from Nippur. Since DAG (= *šubtu*) is semantically speaking a legitimate alternative to É (= *bītu*), one is left wondering if this variant provides a clue to the meaning of én-é-nu-ru at least as it was understood in the Ur III period, and possibly even favours a return to the old interpretation '... house of ...'; contrast here strongly the writings of J.J.A. van Dijk, YOS 11, p. 5 and refs.; M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 197–207.

In addition to Krebernik's list note the list of writings collected in YOS 11, p. 5. It is likely that a further YOS 11 example has been omitted from this latter list; no. 66 line 1 reads as copied en-é-EN.LU?. This is evidently a writing of én-é-nu-ru, since the duplicates show that ḫé-da-da MIN MIN in line 2 is the first line of the incantation itself, and this is confirmed by the last line before the double ruling, line 14: tu-en-é-EN.LÍL. The signs copied as EN.LU? and EN.LÍL evidently correspond to -'nu-ru'; most probably one should read (tu) en-é-en-ur.

3–5 Perhaps me is to be read išib here.

5 The spelling a-ne-ne together with dumu to indicate a plurality of sons indicates either real or imitated antiquity for this text.

8 For ZI+ZI.A as a vessel see Deimel, *ŠL* 66: 3, and A. Salonen, *Hausgeräte*, 182. For the sign generally see M. Civil, in: *FS E. Reiner*, 49.

9 ga-bu-ni represents gùb-bu-ni; for the writing, and the verb here cf. Genouillac, *Dréhem*, 1 rev. 16–17: šu-zi-da-ni-ta kalam-ma an-zé šu-ga-bu-ni-ta kalam-ma an-sur; cf. also *ASJ* 17 (1995), 92, 25.

12 cf. Génouillac, *Dréhem*, 1 rev. 18: ušumgal-e gi-U.U-a-ba KA ḫé-ma-an-lá-e.

Section 3: Scorpions

Text 10: IM 61749

It is not certain that the first incantation given under this heading is against a scorpion, since the rubric is obscure. The tablet is IM 61749 = 6N T47, an Ur III tablet from Nippur here copied from a cast in the Oriental Institute, Chicago as Fig. 10.[16] The single short incantation reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse 1 ⌜U.⌝AN é-nu-ru
2 i-in-ti kur-kur-ra
3 gu_4 giš-šu-dul_5-la zi-ga-[(x)]

Reverse 4 é ^{d}e[n-x]
5 la-ba-ḪU.ḪU-ga
6 [x-g]a$^?$ -a-sìg-dam

Translation

Obverse 1 Enenuru incantation
2 Warrior of the lands,
3 Ox that rears up in the yoke

Reverse 5 Do not ...
4 (In) the temple of E[n-x]!
6 It is for smiting a ...

Remarks

2 i-in-ti is taken to mean *qarrādu*, following such spellings as en-ti/an-ti/in-te/in-ti = *qurdu*, and i-in-si = $ensi_2$. Compare IGI.DU kur-kur-ra said of a gír in VAS 17, 10, 26.

[16] Kindly shown to me by M. Civil in 1978, and again published here with the permission of J.A. Brinkman.

3 gu_4 (equally 'ox' and 'hero') is said of a muš gír[17] in VAS 17, 22 ii 47 and of a scorpion (gír) in YOS 11, 37, 2; compare *tar-ṣu qar-na-a-šá* GIM *ri-mi* KUR-⌜*e*⌝ said of a scorpion in a namburbi incantation, Rm 2, 149 = *Or* 34 (1965), 121, 6′, and see Cavigneaux, *ASJ* 17, 80, especially fn. 15; idem, *Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka Endberichte* vol. 23, no. 139. 'Rearing up in the yoke' presumably depicts an angry scorpion spoiling for battle.

4–5 HU.HU-ga probably stands for ri-ri-ga, and perhaps for *maqātu*; cf. the rubric muš gír é-a šub-ba-kam, discussed YOS 11, 20, 23–26.

Text 11: FM 22878

The next incantation is merely a fragment, but is certainly against a scorpion. It is a flake from the reverse of a single-column Old Babylonian tablet now kept in the Field Museum, Chicago. This is FM 22878, discovered during the course of the first season of the joint expedition to Kish of the Field Museum of Natural History and the University of Oxford.[18] The rubric reads *ši-pa-at zu-qí-*[*qí-pí-im*]; the same rubric and spelling occur in TIM 9, 69, rev. 18, and ibid. no. 66 (see above) rev. 36, both of which texts are unintelligible; see also YOS 11, 4 rev. 19. What survives of FM 22878 is copied as Fig. 11 and reads as follows:

Transliteration

Reverse 1′ [(x-)]*ru-uḫ* ŠID⁷ [.....]
2′ [*b*]*i-iṣ-ṣú-úr ṣer-r*[*i* .....]
3′ *pa-še-e*[*r* .....]

4′ *ši-pa-at zu-qí-*[*qí-pí-im*]

These lines are probably the end of a ritual; *biṣṣūr ṣēri*, 'vulva of a snake', is presumably an ingredient for the prescribed antidote; cf. *biṣṣūr atāni*.

Text 12: U. 30501

The opportunity is taken to publish an even more fragmentary piece of an Old Babylonian incantation which probably belongs with the material collected here (note line 18, *ṣé-r*[*i* ...]), but not enough survives to allow a real identification. This is U. 30503, measuring 4.7 × 10.3 × 1.7 cms., presently housed in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities. The copy given in Fig. 12 shows what is left of this inscription, of which no transliteration is offered. Note particularly lines 23–24:

[17] That is 'snake or scorpion'; cf. A. Cavigneaux, *ASJ* 17 (1995), 76 fn. 3.

[18] For a survey of Old Babylonian written sources stemming from excavations at Kish see P.R.S. Moorey, *Kish Excavations 1923–1933*, 174–178. Thanks are due to Dr D. Whitcomb for facilitating my access to this tablet, which is here published with the kind permission of Dr B. Bronson of the Field Museum.

ši-ip'-tum ú-la ia-tum ši-pa-a[t]
^{d}nin-gi-ri-im-m[a],

a writing of Ningirimma that should be added to those collected by M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 238–239.

Text 13: BM 62889

Fig. 13 shows a small, Late Babylonian tablet inscribed with a single incantation to protect someone from inadvertently stepping on a scorpion, followed by a short ritual. This is BM 62889 (A.H. 82–9–18, 2858), an unbaked tablet found by H. Rassam probably at Abu-Habbah, which now measures 4.1 × 3.8 × 1.5 cms (at maximum). The right-hand edge is lost. It is perhaps probable that this incantation also derives from an Old Babylonian predecessor. It reads as follows:

Transliteration

Obverse
1 ÉN *ez-ze-e-tu$_4$-ma uz-zu* [.....]
2 *ez-zi-<iš> qar-ra-nu-ka ana na-[šá-ki* .....]
3 *a-ṣa-ba-at qim'-mat-ka it-t[i* .....]
4 GIM IM.DIRI.MEŠ *iṣ-ba-tu$_4$* x[.....]
5 GIM ^{d}IM *iṣ-ba-tu$_4$* x[.....]
6 GIM MUŠ *ez-⌜zu⌝* x x x [.....]
7 *ina* KI.TA-*nu* GÌR^{II}-*ia* [.....]
8 GIM *a-si-du šá* GÌR^{II}-[*ia* .....]
9 x x (x) [x]-*e la i*-[.....]

Edge
10 *u la i-z[i-*.....]

Reverse
11 ⌜*at*⌝-*ta* NENNI A NENNI [(...)]
12 *la ta-ra*-[.....]
13 *u la ta*-x-⌜UZ⌝ [.....]

---

14 DÙ.DÙ.BI *ana* UGU *a-s[i-di* 15]
15 *u* 150-*ka* ÉN 3 Š[ID-nu .....]

---

16 *ana'* KA D[U.....]

Translation

Obverse
1 ÉN You are furious, anger [.....]
2 Angrily your horns are [raised(?)] to st[rike]
3 I will seize your crown together with [.....]
4 Just as the clouds seized .[.....]
5 Just as Adad seized .[.....]
6 Just as the angry snake ... [.....];
7 Beneath my feet [.....]
8 When the soles of [my] feet [.....],
9 ..... he will not [.....]

Edge l0 and he will not .[.....]
Reverse 11 You must not ... So-and-so,
12 son of So-and-so.
13 and do not ...[.....]

---

14 Its ritual: You recite (this) incantation three times over your right
15 And left so[les and you can walk in safety(?)]

---

16 According to .[...]

Remarks

2 *qarrānu*, a by-form of *qarnu*, 'horn', is not apparently documented elsewhere, although perhaps the same word occurs in YOS 11, 1, 3–4: *sa-du-um zi-ba-ta-k*[*a*] *sa-du-um ka-ra-na-k*[*a*]; for the contrast *zibbatu/qarnu* cf. YOS 11, 87, 2–3. For *qarnu* said of a scorpion's pincers see M. Krebernik, *Beschwörungen*, 305–305, 12 (adding to the Sum. passages VAS 17, 10 ii 33; 44), and cf. Rm 2, 249 referred to above. Restore at end here perhaps [*te-bu-ú*].

11–12 Read possibly ⌜KI⌝.TA NENNI A NENNI *la ta-ra-*[*bi-iṣ*], 'you shall not crouch waiting beneath Mr So-and-so ...'

16 Alternatively this line could contain the scribe's name.

Text 14: BM 61471

To continue with sources in Late Babylonian script, Fig. 14 shows a somewhat comparable tablet with an incantation that is probably also directed against a scorpion. This is BM 61471 (A.H. 82–9–18, 1445), probably from Abu-Habbah; it preserves a bit more than the lower half of the original tablet. It measures 5.7 × 3.8 × 1.8 cms, and reads as follows:

Transliteration
Obverse

1′ [.....] x x [(x)]
2′ ⌜*ana na*⌝-*me-e ub-te-lu i-mat-ka*
3′ *ana-ku ina uṣ-ṣu še-e-lu ap-ta-taḫ* ⌜MURUB$_4$⌝
4′ *ak-ta-ba-as-ka* GIM GIŠ.⌜MÁ⌝
5′ *ú-ṭa-bi-ka* GIM *a-mu*
6′ *ki e-lu-ú at-ta-šab ina muḫ-ḫi-*⌜*ka*⌝
7′ ⌜KA⌝-*ka a-na pa-te-*⌜*e*⌝

Reverse

8′ [NUN]DUM.MEŠ-*ka ana ka-ta-am* EM[E-*ka*]
9′ [*ana d*]*a-*⌜*ba*⌝-*bi ul a-*[*nam-din*]

10′ [.....]*x bu ú ru nu uru*? [.....]
11′ [.....]-*ti* ᵈnin-líl *a-x-*[*x*]
12′ [.....] *ez-zu te* ÉN

13′ [DÙ.DÙ.B]I NA₄ *zi*-É SÚD
14′ [*ina* Ì.GIŠ ...] ⌜ḪI.ḪI ÉN⌝ [3]-⌜*šú* ŠID-*nu*⌝
(Remainder lost)

Translation
Obverse

1′ .....
2′ to the steppe(?); they have nullified your venom!
3′ I have run (you) through the middle with a sharp arrow,
4′ I have stepped on you as (on) a boat,
5′ I scuttled you like a raft,
6′ like a helmet I have settled on your cranium.
7′ Your mouth to open,
8′ your lips to (un)cover (themselves), your tongue
9′ [to spe]ak will I [not allow]!
10′ [.....] ... . [.....]
11′ [.....] . Ninlil will I[.....],
12′ [.....] furious [...] Incantation

13′ [Its ritual]: you crush *zibītu* stone
14′ (and) mix (it) [in ... oil], (and) you recite the incantation three times,
(Remainder lost)

Remarks

2′ For *bullû* with *imtu* cf. *Enūma Eliš*, IV, 62.

3′–9′ Similar lines occur in the Late Babylonian *SBTU* 2, no. 24, 8–12, in an incantation under the rubric KA.INIM.MA IGI.BI ḪÚL.LA.KE₄:

8. ..... *ak-ta-ba-as-ku-nu-ši*
9. GIM A.MEŠ *uṭ-ṭa-ab-bi-ku-nu-ši* GIM GIŠ.MÁ
10. *ki-i e-lu-ú at-ta-šab ana* UGU-*ku-nu*
11. KA-*ku-nu ana* BAD-*e* NUNDUN-*ku-nu ana ka-ta-mu*
12. EME-*ku-nu ana da-ba-bu ul a-nam-din*

A duplicate occurs in the unpublished Late Babylonian tablet BM 45755 (81–7–6, 169) obv. 5–7, where in contrast the incantation carries the rubric KA.INIM.MA MU.RU.UB *ana* DU₈:

5. [*ak-ta-ba-as-ku-nu-ši* GIM A.ME]Š *uṭ-ṭa-bi-ku-nu-ši*
GIM [GIŠ.MÁ]
6. [*ki-i e-lu-ú a*]*t-ta-šá-a*[*b ana* UG]U-*ku-nu pi-i-ku-nu*
ana pa-te-e šá-pa-ti-[*ku-nu*]
7. [*ana ka-ta-mu* EM]E-*ku-nu ana da-b*[*a*]-*bi ul a-nam-din* TU_6 ÉN

See also the scorpion incantation KBo I, 18 iv 17, quoted *CAD* Q 137 2. sub *qarnu*.

These passages incidentally seem to offer the first attestation of the rare *elû* D (*CAD* E 114, partly restored) meaning 'helmet', in a connected text.

Text 15: BM 64354

To conclude, an edition is offered of one further Late Babylonian magical snake text, BM 64354 (82–9–18, 4330), probably from Abu Habbah, which measures 5.7 × 7.2 × 1.5 cms. Almost the whole of the obverse is obliterated, but enough survives to show parts of a bilingual incantation. Most of the reverse is also given over to a bilingual incantation, and it is quite possible that a single passage is involved, but this can only be clarified by a duplicate.

The rubric in rev. 12′ reads [KA].INIM.MA ZÚ.KUD MUŠ.A.[KAM], 'Incantation for/against the bite of a snake', and part of a short ritual follows, with a trace of a third section before the break. This rubric should be compared with the *āšipūtu* genre in *KAR* 44 mentioned in fn. 2 above. The Sumerian in this bilingual is remarkably poor, and is evidently a back-translation. This may imply a first-millennium date of composition for the Akkadian text. A curiosity here is that Marduk seems to play a more elevated role than Ea his father. No transliteration is given here for the obverse.

Transliteration
Reverse

1′ [.....] ⌜a⌝-ri-⌜a⌝ [.....]
[.....*ri-ḫu-s*]*u a-na na-me*-[*e* .....]
2′ [..... nam-t]i-la x [x]
[.....*b*]*a-la- ṭu* x[.....]
3′ [.....$uš_{11}$(?) m]uš ì-bí-<gin_7> ⌜e_{11}⌝-d[a]
[.....*i-mat*(?)] *ṣe-ru ki-ma qut-ri li-*<*tel*>*-li*
4′ [..... ^{d}nin]-urta dumu ^{d}en-líl-lá igi-bi luḫ
[.... ^{d}MIN] *mar* ^{d}MIN *pa-ni-šú im*-[*si*]
5′ [.....] ti-la lú-u_{18}-lu
[.....] -x *bu-luṭ a-me-lu-tú*
6′ [.....^{d}as]al-lú-ḫi zú-kud muš nu te-BI lú-u_{18}-[lu]
[.....]⌜^{d}⌝AMAR.UTU *ni-šik ṣe-ru* NU TE-*ḫi ana a-me-lu*-[*tú*]
7′ [.....] ⌜abzu⌝-ke_4 a-gúb-ba šu-ti[-(x)]
[.....] ⌜*ap-si*⌝-*i e*-⌜*gub-bu*⌝-*u ú-kin*
8′ [.....] ⌜é⌝-an-na ugu-ba ⌜gub⌝[-(x)]
[.....*a-ya*]-*ak ina* UGU-*šú šak-na-a*[*t*]

9′ [.....] x UD.DA ^{d}utu igi-bi zalag-ga lú-⌜u_{18}-lu⌝
[*ki-ma ṣ*]*i-it* ^{d}UTU-*ši lim-mir pa-an* LÚ
10′ [^{d}asal-l]ú-ḫi abgal dug_4-ga-⌜a⌝
[^{d}AM]AR.UTU *ap-kal-lu iq-bi*
11′ [^{d}en-k]i ID-bi tu_6-ba šub-ba-a
[^{d}]*é-a* <*a*>-*bu-šu šip-ta*^{1} *id-di te* ÉN

12′ [KA].INIM.MA ZÚ MUŠ.A.[KÁM]

13′ [DÙ.DÙ.B]I DUG A.GÚB.BA GUB-*an* GIG *ina* A.ME ⌜*ta*$^{?}$⌝-x-[...]
14′ [Ú x]-*šá-* $^{?}$-*ú* NUMUN Ú.⌜KUR.RA⌝ x x SÚD KI NÍG.ŠID.G[Á ...]
15′ [Ú.IG]I-20 Ú.IGI-[*lim* .....] x–⌜*ma*⌝ [.....] x

16′ trace only
(Remainder, some few lines only, lost)

Translation

1′ [.....] seed ... to the steppe [.....]
2′ [..... of] life ... [.....]
3′ [..... let the snake's [venom] ascend like smoke!
4′ [... Nin]urta, son of Enlil, washed his face.
5′ [.....] ..... to cure mankind;
6′ [..... Oh] Marduk, let snake-bite not approach mankind!
7′ [...] set up a holy water basin in the Apsû;
8′ [...] from an *ajakku* structure was placed on it;
9′ 'Let the man's face shine [like the] rising of the sun!'
10′ [Mar]duk, the sage, spoke;
11′ [Ea, his father, recited the incantation. Incantation formula

---

12′ [I]ts [ritual]: set up a holy water vessel; sprinkle(?) the sick man with water;
13′ Crush [...]... [plant], *atāi'šu* seeds ... ; ... with dough;
14′ [*Imḫ*]*ur-ešrā* plant, *imḫur-līmi* plant [.....] ... and...[.....]

15′ trace only
(Remainder, some few lines, lost)

Remarks

6′ Is *te*-BI derived from *te*-GA, standing for te-gá?

8′ The scribe appears to have equated gub and *šakānu*.

9′ UD.DA seems to be a mistake for UD.DU; note that *pānu* here meaning 'face' is unusually conceived as sing.

11′ Since *<a>bu* is required in the Akkadian it looks as if somehow the Sumerian equivalent has come out as á-bi!

APPENDIX

Fig. 16 shows a copy by the present writer of the Old Babylonian Sumerian incantation BM 25415 (1918–2–16, 199) prepared for inclusion in this article many years ago, but long since published by P. Michalowski, *Or* 54 (1985), 219–224, and more recently discussed at length by A. Cavigneaux, *ASJ* 17 (1995), 75–99.

While this article was in proof, a further version of the Old Babylonian Ur III snake incantations edited by J.J.A. van Dijk, *Or*. 38 (1966), 542–3, mentioned above under text 6 as including the topos ^{d}nin-a-zu lugal-zu ..., was brought for examination to the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities. This example is of Old Babylonian date, and a transliteration and copy are given here with the kind permission of its owner, Mr. J. Greathead:[19]

Obverse. 1. muš eme-min eme-min ka ⌜an-na⌝
2. ušumgal-gin$_7$ ḫu-luḫ-ḫa
3. a-⌜ni⌝ x an-na ⌜6⌝ (x) ⌜na⌝ 6
4. muš lugal-zu ir šu-um-du
5. ^{d}nin-a-zu lugal-zu
6. me ba-ra-DU
7. ⌜KA⌝-zu gu-le-dè
8. eme-zu gu-le-dè
9. sa-gíd-da

Reverse. 10. sa-gin$_7$ bar-ra-zu
11. gu im-ma-lá
12. ka-bi an-na du$_8$-e
13. ⌜KA⌝ (or KA×X)-bi ša x x ni ta x
14. ka-inim-ma
15. nam-e-ni-in-⌜búr⌝-re

The name Nisaba, and the two-line Sumerian proverb(?) following the double ruling after the spell imply that this, most unusually, must be a school text.

[19] One further Old Babylonian version some years ago seen by the writer apud a compilation of incantations ended the spell as follows:

muš lugal-zu mu-ši-in-g[i$_4$]
^{d}nin-a-zu lugal-zu mu-ši-in-gi$_4$
ka-za ka-le-e-dè
ka-ba ki-le-dè

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Fig. 14	BM 61471
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Fig. 1 BM 79125

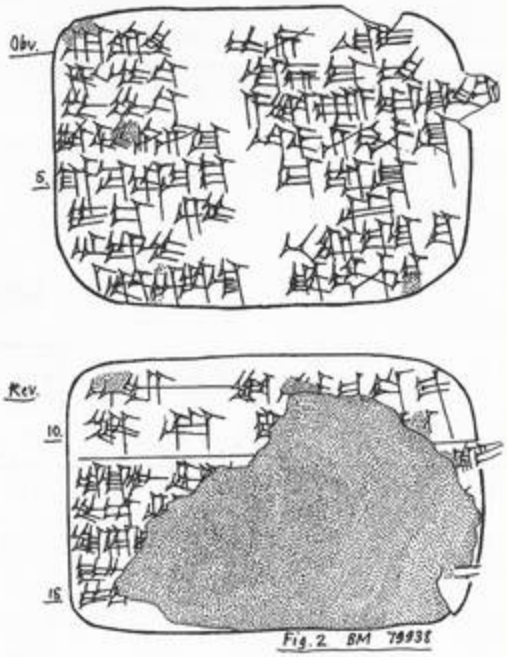


Fig. 2 BM 79938

Fig. 3 BM 28944

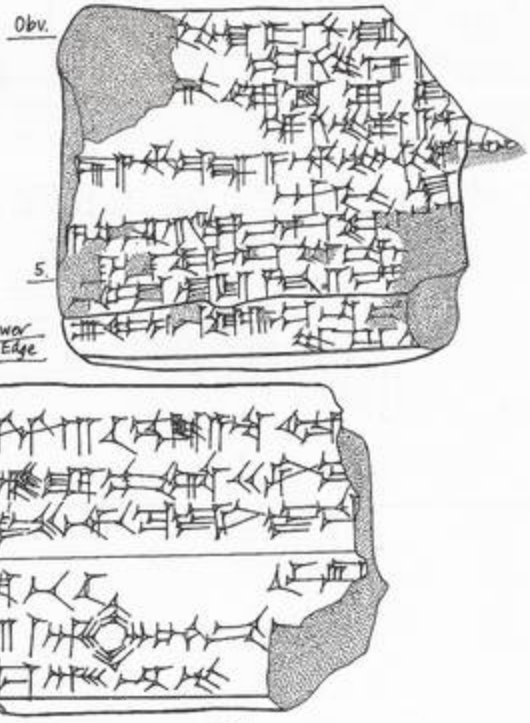


Fig. 4 U. 30655

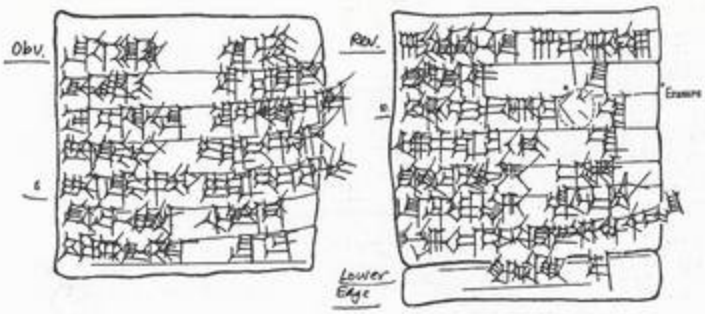


Fig. 5 CBS 7005

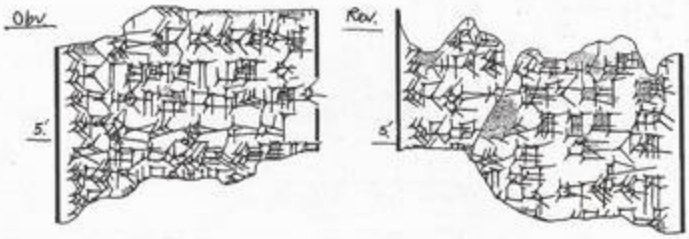


Fig. 6 CBS 3833+3835

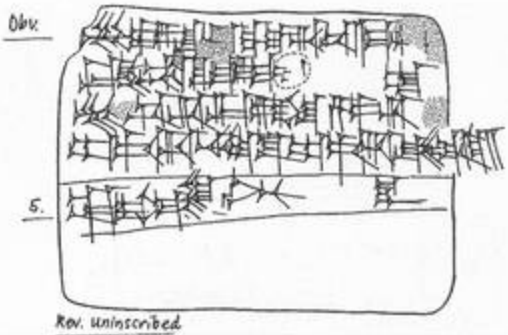


Fig. 7a BM 79949

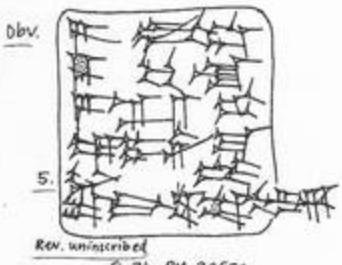


Fig. 7b BM 22559

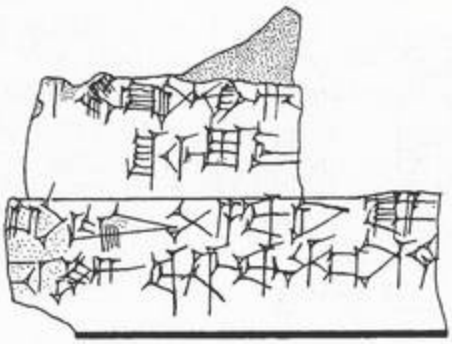


Fig. 8 A 30606

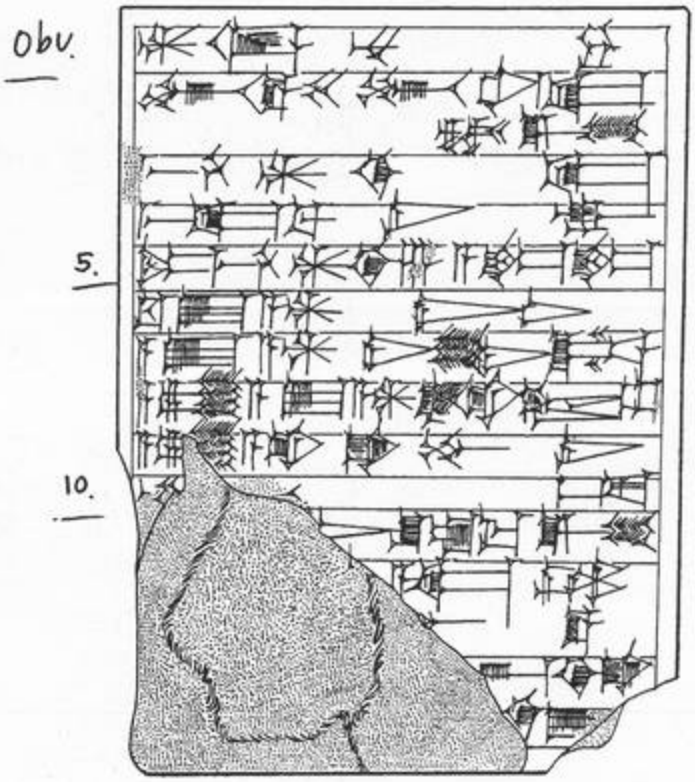


Fig. 9 HS 1526

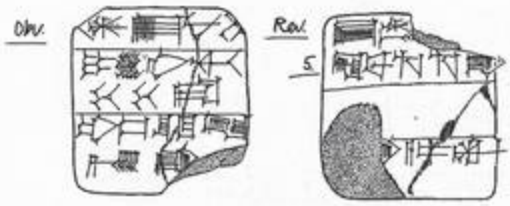


Fig.10 IM 61749

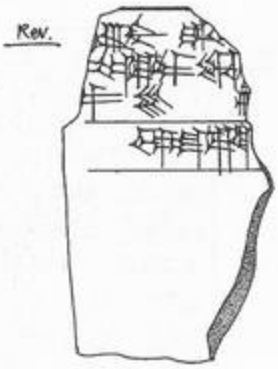
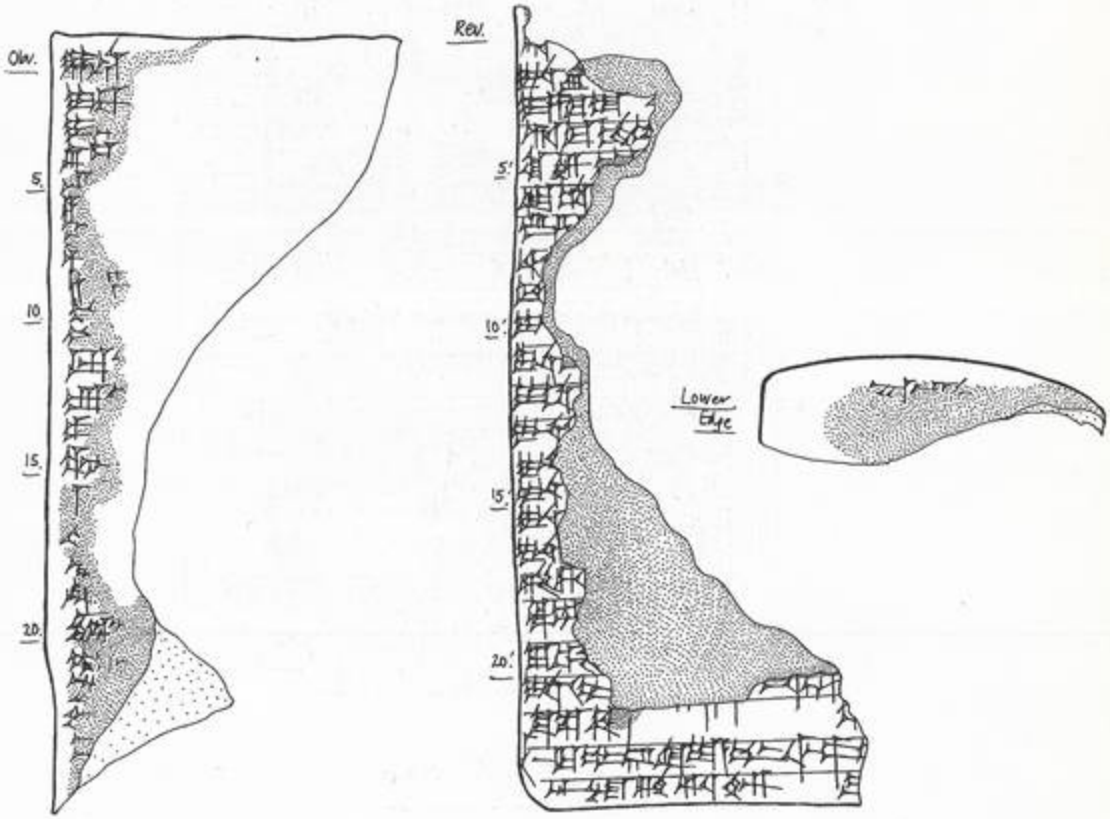


Fig.11 FM 22876



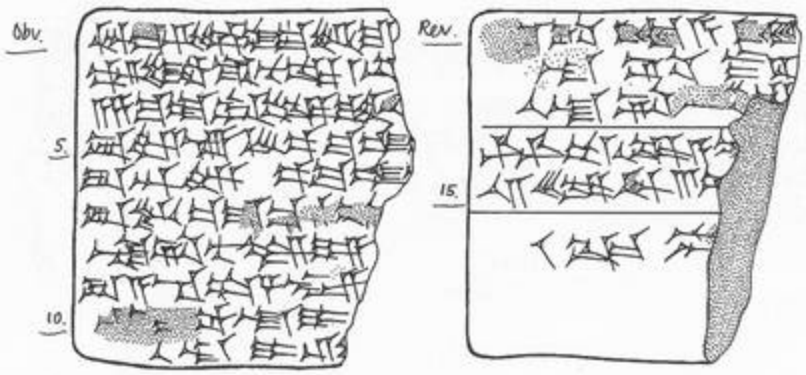


Fig. 13 BM 62883

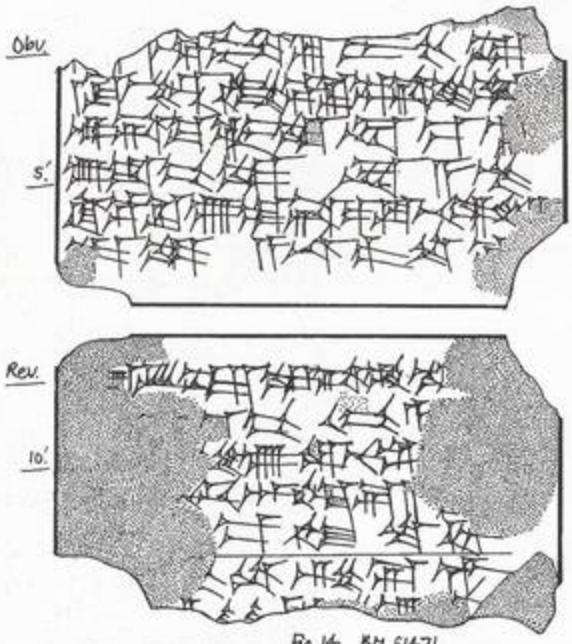


Fig. 14 BM 61471

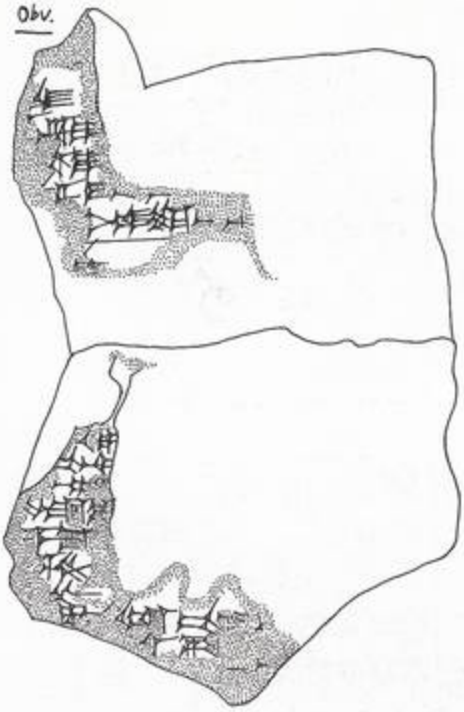


Fig. 15 BM 64354

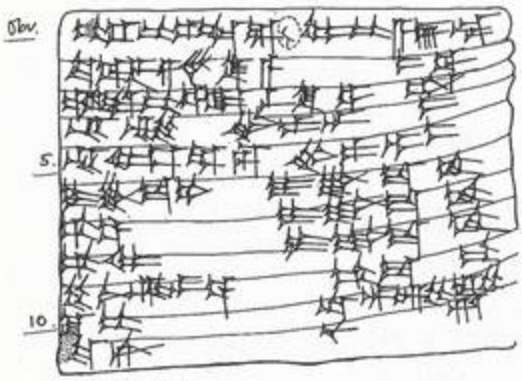


Fig. 16 BM 25415

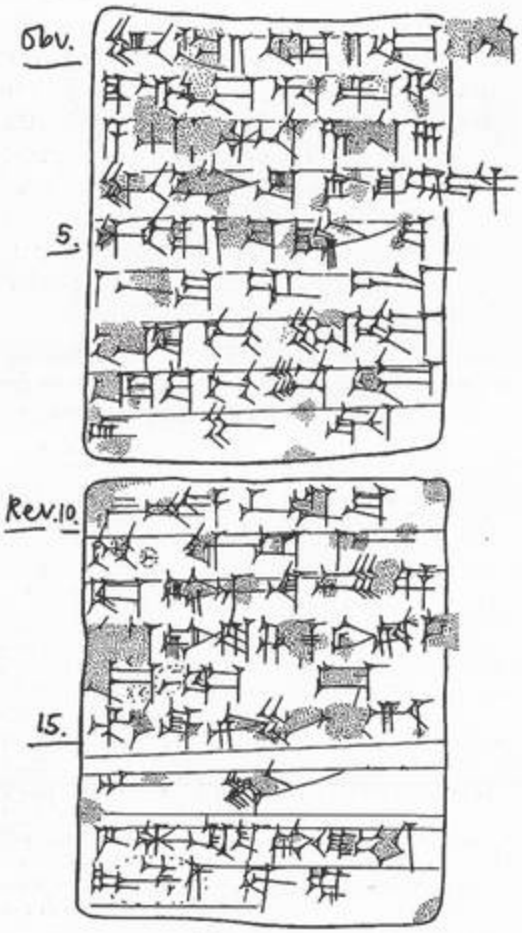


Fig. 17

A Scholar's Library in Meturan? With an edition of the tablet H 72 (Textes de Tell Haddad VII)[1]

Antoine Cavigneaux

Tell Haddād (ancient Meturan/Sirara) lies on the Diyala River, ca 200 km NE of modern Baghdad, on the road to Khanaqin. The once important town belonged in Old Babylonian times to the kingdom of Ešnunna. At the beginning of the eighties an Iraqi expedition worked on the site and discovered, among other things, a great number of tablets from the Old Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian periods.

In the Old Babylonian levels, administrative and private documents as well as lexical texts and school texts appeared on many spots of the site. Sumerian literary texts came from two places, magical texts only from one place: a small unit (Area II), apparently part of a destroyed (private?) house of ca 100m^2.

In Area II, a number of different types of tablets were discovered: in addition to administrative documents, contracts, letters, mathematical texts and schooltexts, there was an important group of Sumerian literary, liturgical and magical texts.[2] Although a general survey of the Sumerian[3] literary texts has already been given,[4] it is not superfluous to come back to it. The magical texts cannot be considered in isolation, also for archaeological and historical reasons. The Meturan find provides us with a unique opportunity to link the magical corpus with other features of the civilization. To limit repetitions, only salient features of interest for our topic will be mentioned here.

The publication of the economic texts of Area II, the only findspot that will concern us here, has not progressed for the last years, so that we still ignore the nature of the

[1] This report is based primarily on unpublished Old Babylonian tablets from Tell Haddad/Meturan which I am in the course of publishing with F.N.H. Al-Rawi. For the bibliography on the site, see F.N.H. Al-Rawi, *Iraq* 56 (1994), 35, n. 1; A work of A.K. Mohammed has appeared since under the title *Old Babylonian Cuneiform Texts from the Hamrin Basin, Tell Haddad*, Edubba 1 (Nabu Publications, 1992). Some of the texts used in this paper that touch more or less directly upon the subject of our conference have already been published; they are: Textes de Tell Haddad I = 'New Sumerian Literary Texts', *Iraq* 55 (1993), 91–105; II = 'Textes Magiques de Tell Haddad', *ZA* 83 (1993), 170–205; *ZA* 85 (1995), 19–46, 169–220; III = 'Nouveaux Fragments des Géorgiques', *AulOr* 9 (Mélanges M. Civil), 1991, 37–46; IV = 'Gilgameš et Taureau de Ciel', *RA* 87 (1993), 97–129; V = 'La Pariade du Scorpion', *ASJ* 17 (1995), 75–99; VI = 'Gilgameš et la Mort' is soon to appear (Styx); two more magical texts are edited in A. Cavigneaux & F. Al-Rawi, 'Charmes de Sippar et de Nippur', in: *Cinquante-deux Réflexions sur le Proche-Orient Ancien* (Mélanges L. De Meyer) (eds. H. Gasche *et al.*; Leuven, 1994), 81 and in: A. Cavigneaux, 'MÁŠ-HUL-DÚB-BA', in: *Beiträge zu Kulturgeschichte Vorderasiens* (FS R.M. Boehmer) (eds. U. Finkbeiner *et al.*; Mainz, 1995), 53–67.

The particuliar situation of Meturan, we feel, allows us to contribute something to the theme of the Wassenaar meeting: the important definition of a conceptual and historical frame for Mesopotamian magic. But, as so often in our field, it has proved very difficult to offer a general view without struggling with the original texts, whose understanding involves a multitude of philological and conceptual difficulties only a small part of which could be dealt with here. For this reason, some important data are concealed in the last and most obscure part of this article.

[2] For these last two categories, the native terms would be *kalûtum* (liturgic corpus) and *wāšipûtum* (magical corpus).

[3] Akkadian literary texts are almost completely lacking in the Old Babylonian levels.

[4] A. Cavigneaux & F. Al-Rawi, *Iraq* 55 (1993), 91–95, note especially the catalogue on p. 95.

connection between the inhabitants of the place and exorcism. That there was in fact a connection is very likely in view of the number of magical texts discovered at the place.

Date and location of the texts

The dated Old Babylonian tablets from the site – including those coming from other findspots – are not earlier than Daduša and not later than Ṣilli-Sîn 2,[5] which means that none should be later than Hammurapi 31 (ca. 1760 BC), around which time the site seems to have been laid waste for several centuries.[6] Fig. 1[7] (page 274) gives a rough idea of the archaeological situation, number and distribution of the texts found in Area II.[8] At the corner of two streets (2 and 7) stood a large building comprising two distinct units: unit A (Rooms 3, 4, 5, 6) and unit B (Rooms 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 30, 31). Private and administrative documents suggest that the division between A and B is moot: the same person may appear on either side of the wall. All the magical texts came from unit B, Rooms 10 and 30.

Apart from magical texts, room 10 (and adjacent Room 8) contained private documents (loans, buyings of house, of fields, adoption, letters, etc.). They show that a certain Belšunu, son of Lu-Lisina was one of the residents of the house; he was married to a lady Beltani. A certain Lisinakam was a relative of some sort of Lu-Lisina, perhaps his cousin. Serious prosopographic research should yield more interesting results: if nothing else, there must be a connection between the proper names containing the divine name Lisin and the three laments of Lisin discovered in Room 30.[9] Among the texts which we may roughly classify as magical, we include two bilingual hemerological tablets that seem to be concerned with the taboos and prohibitions for the VII.7.[10]

Room 30, at the other end of the house, contained a small number of private and administrative documents, wherein the prominent person is apparently a certain Zimri-Addu.[11] The majority of tablets discovered there contain Sumerian literary texts.

---

[5] 'The year Ṣilli-Sîn espoused Hammurabi's daughter' which should roughly correspond to Hammurapi 31, ca 1760 BC, according to the chronology used by J.A. Brinkman *apud* L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago & London, 1977 Rev. Ed.), 335ff.; cf. D. Charpin, 'Données nouvelles sur la chronologie des souverains d'Ešnunna', in: *Miscellanea Babylonica* (*Mélanges M. Birot*) (eds. J.-M. Durand, J.-R. Kupper; Paris, 1985), 51–66.

[6] The year Hammurapi 32 is named after the destruction of Ešnunna! This does not imply automatically that Tell Haddād was destroyed by Hammurapi's own hand, but probably in the wake of that conquest.

[7] After a drawing kindly made for me by Mr. B. Šakir.

[8] The drawing is not meant to give information on the vertical and horizontal coordinates of each individual text, which were not always recorded, but rather a statistical overview. The representation is based on a first catalogue of the tablets of the locus made in the Iraq Museum after the excavation. The final publication may result in minor improvements to the number and classification of the texts.

[9] See *Iraq* 55 (1993), 92. Some private documents seem to confuse Lisin and Ninsi'ana.

[10] Edited in *Iraq* 55 (1993), 95–104.

[11] The very presence of administrative texts supposes that the people who kept them with their own private tablets enjoyed a certain amount of social responsibility. From the material known to me, no relation can be ascertained yet between Zimri-Addu and Belšunu, but Zimri-Addu is often mentioned also in the neighbouring house (unit A). This is one of the arguments for assuming a close relation between the two units.

Literary texts

The literary texts can roughly be classified in four genres:

(1) Myths and legends: *Inana and Ebih*; four Gilgameš stories: *Gilgameš and Huwawa* (one copy), *Gilgameš Enkidu and the Netherworld* (two copies of the end of the work), *Gilgameš and the Bull* (two copies: one of the complete work, one extract), *Death of Gilgameš* (two copies of the complete work);[12] the legend of Adapa.[13]

(2) Didactic: Fables, Georgica.

(3) Religious: Liturgical texts, among them Lisin laments; two hymns to Utu; a prayer to the personal god.

(4) Royal hymns, literary letters (correspondence of Ninšatapada, letter to Enki).

There were more works in this collection, but they are too badly preserved to be identified. Still, what remains gives a good sample of the literary pieces represented.

Magical texts

Whatever the relation between the tablets of Room 30 and those of Room 10, the magical texts of both groups are closely related to each other: duplicates and nearly identical collections are found in both rooms.[14] Hence, we feel justified in considering the two groups as a unit.

With the notable exception of H 72, published below, the magical texts are all in Sumerian. The medical prescriptions H 170, published in *Iraq* 55, 104, is purely Akkadian.[15]

Two kinds of tablets are attested: large tablets grouping several rather long texts, and small tablets with only one text, or with several very short texts.

H 103 (and H 74)[16] gives the *legomena* of a long oral rite against the vermin that are destroying the fields.

H 138 and H 147: fragments of large tablets (of two columns per side at least) which contained several texts of consecration and prophylaxis.

H 97, H 179⁺, H 84:[17] three versions of a collection of Sumerian magical texts: one tablet had six texts, the two other ones probably eight texts. Several are against human aggression: evil eye (II), witchcraft (III), evil tongue (IV); one is apotropaic (VI); one is against an undefined aggressor (I); V is a very characteristic piece of magic poetry, which

[12] With the exception of *Gilgameš and Huwawa*, all the poems concerning Gilgameš are represented by two copies. It is sometimes difficult to tell if they are from the same hand.

[13] There were in the same room two copies by different hands and with semantic variants.

[14] For the relation between the scorpion incantations H 60 (Room 10) and H 146 (Room 30), see *ASJ* 17 (1995), 75ff. We may consider that MB = H 179⁺ (Room 30), MA = H 97 (Room 10) and MC = H 84 (Room 8) as three variants of *one* collection of incantations (see *ZA* 83 (1993), 170f.).

[15] It is equally noteworthy that the literary texts discovered in Meturan are also almost exclusively Sumerian. In such a late (ca. Hammurabian) time, in a town so far from Nippur, halfway between Elam and Babylonia, two Sumerian genres are unexpectedly well documented.

[16] Both tablets come from Room 10. H 74 is an extract of H 103, and probably was directly copied from it, s. below.

[17] Published in *ZA* 83 (1993), 170–205; *ZA* 85 (1995), 19–46; 169–220. In this case, we have one tablet in Room 10, one in the neighbouring Room 8 and one in Room 30! H 97 and 179⁺ were baked, an exceptional characteristic in this collection.

may be called the 'im'-charm, as it plays heavily on the repetition of the sound /im/ (which can mean in Sumerian 'storm' and 'clay'); the other texts have more academic overtones, following the classical Sumerian incantation pattern. The more developed incantations contain literary quotations, or rather literary reminiscences. Some seem to retain a much less elaborate and quite archaic character. The two texts added in the longer collections were apotropaic (protection of the patient). The presence of three copies with very similar magic collections in the same place is to be emphasized. The collection must have been some sort of classic in those days.

In the group of small individual tablets we should probably include H 74, mentioned earlier with H 103. The size and other characteristics of these tablets suggest that they are practice pieces, ephemeral copies, by contrast with the larger collection tablets, which would sometimes even be baked. It seems obvious that H 74 was an exercise text; it may have been copied *de visu* from the large tablet H 103. Most of the short texts are dedication or consecration formulae (Weihungstyp). Functionally defined, these formulae belong to the preliminary stages of the exorcist's work:

H 62 + 94 A: a variant of the widely known text praising the tamarisk (šinig) used in the rituals of the exorcist. This text has very archaic forerunners[18] and belonged to the basic lore of the Mesopotamian exorcist.

H 176 + 145: also an incantation starting with an invocation of the tamarisk, but combining this theme with the prophylaxis of the patient.

H 66: was pronounced at the introduction of or for the execution of a mašhulduba goat, typically used in (magical) house-cleaning. The text may originally belong to ceremonies executed for the king. There may be an allusion to Gilgameš (which would agree with its use in the royal cult).[19]

H 144 B: small fragment with magical formulae (mainly Sumerian words repeated seven times) probably directed against ghosts.[20]

H 60 and H 146:[21] collection of short formulae against scorpions. One of them is particularly interesting, as it contains old rhymed phrases going back as far as Fara times. There is an allusion to Inana and Dumuzi, maybe also to Gilgameš and the Bull, where Inana, out of anger at being rejected or opposed in some way by Gilgameš, brings the Bull to Uruk in order to take revenge. In some way the scorpion was associated with that mythic bull; they (Bull and Scorpio) also have in common that they are both constellations in the sky.

H 72:[22] a small, pillow-shaped tablet, with only eighteen short lines. In spite of its brevity, it highlights a central concept of Mesopotamian culture, as it gives us an exceptional occurrence of the verb *wašāpum*, i.e. the typical activity of the *wāšipum*, a

[18] See M. Krebernik, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (Hildesheim, 1984), 226–232.

[19] Published in: FS R.M. Boehmer (eds. U. Finkbeiner *et al.*), 64–67. Additions in *ASJ* 18, (1996), 35–37.

[20] Transcribed in: Mélanges L. De Meyer (eds. H. Gasche *et al.* 81.

[21] Here again, one in Room 10, one in Room 30.

[22] An edition is given below. J.S. Cooper gave an edition of the first section, together with many parallels, in his article 'Magic and M(is)use: poetic promiscuity in Mesopotamian ritual', in: *Mesopotamian poetic language: Sumerian and Akkadian* (eds. M.E. Vogelzang, H.L.J. Vanstiphout; CM 6; Groningen, 1996), 47–57.

profession name we render coventionally as 'exorcist', but about whose etymology and history we know little.

The tablet is divided into three parts separated by rulings. The first section is Akkadian, the following two are written in a particularly difficult kind of syllabic Sumerian, with stenographic writings. For this reason I would like to define this tablet as an aide-mémoire.

The first section (ll. 1–11) is a very interesting variant of an apotropaic formula recited by the *wāšipum* before starting his activity. Pronouncing this formula while probably doing some kind of action, the exorcist aimed at protecting himself against all kinds of hostile forces. The function of this formula is basically apotropaic;[23] it is a self-immunisation formula, a kind of vaccination to which the exorcist submitted himself before starting any treatment, as suggested by the series sa-gig (*TDP*).[24] There are a few other versions, Old Babylonian and later, which we shall quote below. The fact that it is Akkadian – in contrast to the rest of the magical texts of the house – no doubt betrays its popularity and wide use. This can easily be understood: the formula had a great functional importance in the everyday magical praxis.

The Akkadian text is followed by two short sections in very poor Sumerian (5 + 2 lines). They are hardly intelligible, but enough is clear to allow us to understand that they allude to formulae recited over some of the main ingredients (flour, water) the exorcist would need in the course of his treatment of the patient; those require some kind of blessing in order to be efficacious. Once the blessing was pronounced, the exorcist could start. We also have the incipit of a formula against some internal disease.

The presence of such a tablet (and also of all the other consecration formulae on the small tablets of this corpus) could be taken to prove that somebody in that house was a professional exorcist. However, considering the very practical and common character of the texts, it could also be used as a proof to the contrary: a real exorcist would never have felt the need to write down the very basics of the job. Nevertheless, the external form of the tablet (the text was written very sloppily, with many erasures and corrections), and the abbreviations of the Sumerian formulae suggest that the text was for the main part known by heart, and that the written form was used as an aide-mémoire; and this would favour the idea of a practical use and not a literary, amateur-like interest.

The Background of the Meturan Area II Corpus

As far as the contents of the texts are concerned, there seems to be nothing particular or unique to Meturan, Area II. We find duplicates and versions of better linguistic quality of most of the individual texts in Nippur and in other places, but the composition of the corpus as a whole reveals a situation that is, if not unique, interesting at the cultural and historical level. Because of the lack of a complete archaeological and philological publication of the site, we do not yet have all the elements necessary for an overall appreciation, but many interesting questions can already be raised and partially answered.

[23] This is the interpretation already advanced by Cooper, 'Magic and M(is)use', 49 ('the speaker is casting a protective spell on himself') and 52.
[24] See below for justification.

To fully apprehend the problem, we would need to have more information about the *Sitz im Leben* of the tablets. Some questions must be raised: were there one or two libraries (or rather collections)? One or two exorcists? If two, were they relatives? Rivals? Friends? Did he (did they) borrow books from colleagues? These are trivial points, but it would be nice to have clear answers from external testimonies. To the extent that I could examine the documents, I did not find among the many administrative and private matters treated any indication to the effect that Belšunu or any other resident was an exorcist, but this may change with future publications.[25] The least we can do is to try to compare the magical texts with the other genres (practical texts and literary texts), paying attention to graphic criteria and to their contents.

There are several ductus represented in the Haddad texts; the magical texts involve writings (sign-forms) which are also found mostly in administrative/private texts, whereas there are other ductus which are characteristic of the literary texts. As a very general rule, the magical texts are much closer to the daily texts than the literary ones, but the border is not very clear. From a graphic point of view, the magical texts could be classified as something in between.

After a quick glance at the literary and magical corpus, two conclusions seem inescapable: somebody (at least one person) with an interest in exorcism is involved (could it be just some young man trying at any cost to become an exorcist?). Yet one cannot help but discern also some kind of antiquarian, scientific, philological interest.[26] This is perceptible in the fact that we have three versions of an exorcistic text collection, two versions of several literary texts. What is more, it seems possible to discern thematic connections between certain magical and literary texts.

The presence of Adapa among the 'literary' texts points in this direction: Adapa is the paragon of the exorcist,[27] the model of the sage, who, at some point, had a choice between life and death, and came back with some experience useful for his fellow humans.

In the mental universe of the Mesopotamians, Gilgameš is the hero *par excellence*. Very early (at the latest at the end of ED III) associated with the cult of dead kings,[28] he became in literature the 'great man who refused to die', as Bottéro put it. It is probably not by chance that the Sumerian work from which the theme of death is absent (*Gilgameš and Agga*) is missing at Tell Haddad. *Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld* (GEN), *Gilgameš and Huwawa* (GH) and *Death of Gilgameš* (DG) are evidently concerned mainly with that problem; *Gilgameš and the Bull* (GB) is a poem about hubris. In Tell Haddad we find a rather primitive, but very original attempt to connect the two Sumerian stories *Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld* (GEN) and *Gilgameš and Huwawa* (GH) into a coherent literary unit: a short appendix added at the end of GEN[29] suggests

[25] For H 102, I noted 'āšipu'.

[26] Possibly also in part educational, cf. the case of H 103 and 74 above.

[27] Cf. S. Parpola, SAA 10, p. XIX, even though I accept Parpola's interpretations only up to a point.

[28] See G. Selz, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des altsumerischen Stadtstaates von Lagaš* (Philadelphia, 1995), 105f.

[29] In the versions we knew until now, GEN ends quite abruptly, with no conclusion to the litanic dialogue between Gilgameš and Enkidu. An unpublished new copy of UET 6, 60 (kindly communicated to me by A. Westenholz) shows that this Ur version originally may have had a conclusion. The obverse of UET 6, 60, neglected by Gadd, contained the last part of GEN. This renders it very likely that the reverse is a conclusion to the work. B. Alster and A. Westenholz are planning a new edition of the text.

that, after hearing Enkidu's gloomy account of life in the netherworld (GEN last part), Gilgameš starts to search for life (the theme of GH)![30]

In the case of DG, there is a much more concrete connection with magic: there is an allusion in that text[31] to the rites of the *kispu*, the funerary meal offered to dead kin. DG is, in a way, the aetiology of the *kispu*: to console Gilgameš for having to go down to the Netherworld the gods remind him that there will be a few things which will assuage the horror of death for him: first, he will be granted a leading function down there (šagina kur-ra ḫé-ak-e), second, ceremonies will be held in his honour, to his remembrance. Gilgameš reacts with some words which – I think – were the common expression of suffering people in those days: he turns to Utu, and asks him to undo his trouble 'like one plucks a date or undoes a spun rope'. We know from other texts that these formulae or other very similar ones were used in funerary ceremonies, most of the time embedded in prayers to Utu, the Sun god. We mentioned earlier that two prayers to Utu found their way into our collection. Also these prayers then might now receive a new meaning.

I would now like to draw a first tentative conclusion: It seems to me that the people who lived in Meturan Area II, before Hammurapi or the Elamites came and blotted out every sign of life, had developed some kind of metaphysical thinking – this may seem an exaggeration! But they certainly had thought deeply about life and death. Other literary genres attested there may be interpreted in the same sense; for example, the lamentations (Lisin in tears searching for her lost son) and the prayer to soothe the anger of the personal god. Even in the magical texts themselves, additional links and connections, even without straining the data, may occur to anyone looking for them:[32] the Bull-scorpion association (H 60 and 146) may, in one way or another, have been associated with Gilgameš;[33] there might also be a reference to Gilgameš or – at the very least – to Uruk, in the mašhulduba dedication text H 66.[34] The presence of the Sumerian *Georgica* may be also in some way associated with exorcistic activities: we mentioned, among the magic texts, a liturgy against the vermin of the fields, which corresponds to one of the duties prescribed by the *Georgica*.[35]

So there appears to be a rather strong general coherence in what I would now dare to call a 'library': it could well have been part of the professional library of a 'Fachmann', of a man sensitive in the realms of religion and literature; a man we would now like even more to identify and know better, an intellectual with universal and perhaps even historical interests.[36] He may be viewed as a worthy ancestor of the exorcists of the first millennium, whose 'Leitfaden' gives an idea of their intellectual ambitions.[37] This library, with its diversity, bringing together popular and utilitary texts

[30] See for the moment *Iraq* 55 (1993), 93.

[31] In Meturan as well as in the Nippur version.

[32] Even though, admittedly, none may be valued as a proof of the basic coherence of the whole find, the accumulation of indices is – I hope – not in vain.

[33] Cf. *ASJ* 17 (1995), 95 n. 58.

[34] A parallel text from another site, by contrast, has instead associations with Nippur. FS R.M. Boehmer (eds. U. Finkbeiner *et al.*), 62.

[35] siskúr ^{d}nin-kilim-ke$_4$ dug$_4$-ga-ab, zú bir$_5$^{mušen}-ra bal-e-eb 'Perform the rites against mice, Turn away the teeth of small birds/locusts', M. Civil, *The Farmer's Instructions* (Barcelona, 1994), 30: 65–66.

[36] Cf. our fourth literary genre, especially the letter of Ninšatapada. Inana and Ebih may be explained by interest in local history (Meturan lies in the first synclinal of the Hamrin chain, ancient Mount Ebih).

[37] See the beautiful analysis of the catalogue *KAR* 44 (the so called 'Leitfaden der Beschwörungskunst') by J. Bottéro, *Annuaire de l'année 1974/1975 de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (1975), 95–130; to quote

with higher literature, shows very concretely how Mesopotamian 'holism'[38] coexisted with the intellectual production of the 'hegemonic', 'theistic' ideology.

Edition of H 72 (Fig. 3, p. 275)

The text of H 72 is difficult to establish in many places. The script is so full of erasures and corrections, abbreviations and even mistakes, that it is very difficult to determine the right reading, especially for the passages written in syllabic Sumerian. Yet in spite of its very poor epigraphic and linguistic quality, as well as numerous uncertainties in details, the general meaning can be established with a reasonable amount of probability, and H 72 turns out to be one of the most informative magical texts from Meturan. The tablet served as a practical tool for an exorcist. Its first section is a very typical product of the holistic[39] worldview characteristic of the Babylonian magic.

1 APIN$_x$(AK) *er-ṣé-tam i-ra-ḫi*
2 ^{d}*šamkan ra-ma-na-šu uš-ša-ap*
3 *lu-ši-im-ma ra-ma-ni lu-ši-ip ši-ip-tam*
4 *bi-ṣú-ur ka-al-ba-ti-im* KI BI-IT$^{?}$ ⌜KI IB⌝*-ti-im*
5 *bi-ṣú-ur si-ni-iš-ti-im qa$^{?}$-mu-um qa$^{?}$-am-šu$^{?}$*
6 ^{d}*šamkan ra-ma-na-šu uš-ša-ap*
7 *lu-š[i-i]p ra-ma-ni lu-{*IB*}-ši-ip ši-ip-tam*
8 *ki-ma* ^{d}*šamkan uš-ša-pu ra-ma-an-šu*
9 *aḫ-zu$^{?!}$ im-me$^{!}$-ru ka-lu-mu*
10 *aḫ-za ka-lu-ma-tum maḫ$^{?}$-ri-šu*
11 *ši-pa-at ra-ma-ni-ia ia-ti aḫ-zi-ni*
- -
12 zi nam nu-ni ta-re-e ⌜nam⌝ ku uš s[i$^{?}$] / nam-nun ta-re
13 zi nam-nun-ni ku me še te li si si ki ku-ga
14 e-ri id$^{?}$ ri ḫa-šu-ra
15 giš-zu giš ḪA giš-zu še-ki-ni
16 nam-ta-ra a am še ki e-te-te / bar-ši ḫe-em-ta-gub
- -
17 šà ki li-bi ša ki a mi ri ⌜en$^{?}$⌝ / ša ki en li-bi ša ki
many signs erased
18 e gu* bi du e gu* bi du
gu*: *in both cases* GU *seems to be written on an erased* KU.

Bottéro (ibid. 128), 'L'art de l'*āšipu* était une véritable profession 'intellectuelle', qui supposait une longue étude...'.

[38] Cf. the contribution by van Binsbergen and Wiggermann in this volume.

[39] To adopt the terminology of van Binsbergen and Wiggermann.

1 The plow(!) impregnates the earth.
2 Šamkan does ... (*wašāpum*) himself;
3 I am going to do ... (*wašāpum*) myself, to make ... (*šiptam wašāpum*).
4 The vulva of a bitch, like the container of a consigned good, (??)
5 The vulva of a wowan, a burner is its burner (?!)
6 Šamkan does ... (*wašāpum*) his self,
7 I am going to ... (*wašāpum*) myself, to make ... (*šiptam wašāpum*).
8 As Šamkan does ... (*wašāpum*) on his self,
9 and sheep and lambs are 'taken',
10 she-lambs are 'taken' in front of him,
11 ... (*šiptum*) of myself, 'take' me!

- - - - - - - - - - - -

12 Flour whose destiny was magnificently determined (?), whose destiny Ezinam-Kusu (??) magnificently determined,
13 Flour that was magnificently curved?. Basin, the anointing oil ... in a pure place,
14 Fresh? cedar, cypress?,
15 your wood? (is?) the cypress?? wood, your wood? for the šikin-vessel
16 has been determined ... to make go out/up; may ... stand aside!

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

17 Sick heart, sick bowels, ..., sick heart, sick bowels ...,
18 Holy water made it well (?), holy water made it well (?).

Commentary

1–11 This section has been translated and studied by J.S. Cooper. Contrary to him, I do not translate *wašāpum* and the verbal noun *šiptum*, when it does not seem to have the usual meaning 'cast a spell', even though the resulting text hardly deserves to be called a translation. The first section, lines 1–11, can be divided into four smaller units, viz. ll. 1–3; 4–5; 6–7; and 8–11.

1 AK is written in the original, but in view of the later parallels[40] it is certainly to be understood as APIN. At first sight, this writing might be considered a mistake, but it is hard to admit a mistake for the very first grapheme of a text! The cause of the confusion is a formal similarity between both graphemes, which is still perceptible in Neo-Assyrian writing. This can be confirmed in R. Labat's *Manuel* through a comparison of n° 56 (APIN) and n° 97 (AK). APIN precedes AK in Proto-Ea (ll. 518g–528), and the similarity of both signs is most obvious in Old Babylonian cursive script: by that time the scribes may have considered both signs identical as regards their left side, and only distinct as regards their right side.[41] There might have been a semantic association, too, since *epēšum* (AK) may carry the meaning 'till, cultivate' (*erēšu* = URU_4 = APIN), cf. *CAD* E 230a. There is probably even more to it: at least some scribal schools might have fused both signs. As a rule, the non-Nippur witness of Georgica D_3 (BM 80149) also has completely identical

[40] They are quoted *infra*.
[41] Cf. already D.O. Edzard, 'Der Aufbau des Syllabars "Proto-Ea"', in: *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East. FS I.M. Diakonoff* (Warminster, 1982), 51.

forms for APIN and AK.[42] In spite of the fact that their ductus is basically the same as that of most magical texts, the Tell Haddad witnesses of Georgica have clearly distinct forms. In H 126, an administrative text listing ox drivers (engar-gu_4), I have noticed the ENGAR reproduced in fig. 2, which is obviously a graphic construction of AK+DIŠ. So, it is still very difficult to ascertain the semantic and geographic criteria of distribution for the allograph AK of APIN.

H 126

Fig. 2, APIN in H 126

The verb *reḫû* is pregnant with meaning: 'impregnate, penetrate (of a liquid)'. Marduk 'mixes the Seven winds in a tornado'.[43] *Reḫû* is used for a man penetrating a woman, also of certain diseases (*murussu ireḫḫišu, miqtu irteneḫḫišu*), of certains forms of demonic possession and witchcraft,[44] of sleep, numbness overwhelming a man.[45] The river ordeal 'impregnates' the woman who drowned.[46]

2 This passage and the parallels like TIM 9, 73 etc. (see below) are exceptional insofar as they show a very rare occurrence of the G stem of WŠP. Apart from the very common participle *wāšipum*, conventionally rendered by 'exorcist', it occurs as a finite form only in an Old Babylonian personal lament *RB* 59, 246: 9, 6.[47] Our text seems to indicate that *wašāpum* is not originally a *verbum dicendi* but a *verbum faciendi*. A possible cognate is Ugaritic *wpṯ*, which is usually compared to Arabic *nfṯ*.[48] Even though an original meaning is very difficult to ascertain, the most probable reference is to the secretion of some bodily fluid: 'spit, lick' or something similar; Latin *jaculari* 'throw, speak hastily' might suggest the ambiguity involved in the Akkadian word, as it can be used of verbal processes, like *wašāpum*.[49] One might also think of a movement of the lips.

Line 1 has an agricultural simile – it is about fertilization of earth by the seed plow –

[42] Civil, *The Farmer's Instructions*, 56. As far as one can judge from the photograph, only l. 121, the last one of the composition, uses the classical form for APIN, with a final vertical, to write engar; in all other occurrences, only the grapheme AK is used: l. 41 is most characteristic, with three occurrences of AK for apin, ak, uru_4.

[43] *muštarḫi mehê* 7 *šārī*, *RA* 86 (1992), 79:4.

[44] This may entail an ambiguity for *rāḫû*, 'genitor', but also 'warlock'.

[45] Cf. B. Landsberger, *WO* 3 (1964), 60.

[46] *sinništam šaluštam* ^{d}ID *irtaḫi* 'The river-god "impregnated" the third woman' J.M. Durand, ARM 26/1, 249:11. Bottéro's interpretation is better than the one proposed by Durand in his commentary *ad. loc.* G. Cardascia, *Revue d'Histoire du Droit* 71 (1993), 181, renders 'le Fleuve l'a "possédée"'.

[47] Lastly, W.G. Lambert, in: *Language, Literature and History* (*Studies E. Reiner*) (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton); American Oriental Series 67; New Haven, 1987), 192: 64 and 200. Theoretically, *ša uš*-BU-*ma* could be derived from WŠB, but Lambert's interpretation 'cast sorceries' seems to give more sense and fits the meaning of the following line.

[48] UT 51 (=*KTU*^{2} 1.4) iii 13, vi 13; A. Caquot, M. Sznycer, A. Herdner, LAPO 7, 200, 212. It is not my intention to evaluate here how certain the translation of the Ugaritic text is.

[49] B. Foster, *Before the Muses* (Bethesda, 1993), Vol. I, 129 'I spew over myself', but *ibid.* 145 'I make myself moist'. One speaks in French of an 'oraison jaculatoire', a fast, short prayer.

in contrast to l. 2, which is about husbandry. It is plausible that the notion of fertility is somehow the *tertium comparationis* underlying the metaphor using the action *wašāpum* performed by Šamkan.[50] Apart from the frequent mention of *būl* ^{d}*Šamkan* 'Šamkan's herd', which occurs in magic contexts, but is not restricted to them, the same god appears in another simile in one of the bilingual texts from Mari:[51] *kīma būlu eli ša-am-ka-ni habrat* '(may my *charm* [*tiwīti*] be louder than your *charm*), as the herd's (lowing) covers Šamkan's (voice)'.[52] The deep, loud noise of the herd is here compared to the voice of the exorcist casting his spells. The Mari text uses, in the acoustic realm, the same concept of 'overwhelming, overcoming', which is one of the shades of meaning of the verb *reḫû* and its cognates.

Excursus: The god Šamkan/Sumuqan

Let us make here a disgression on the god Šamkan/Sumuqan, who appears in the Meturan as well as in the Mari text. As W.G. Lambert (and already Thureau-Dangin) saw, there must be a particuliar relation between the attested writings for the god of the wild life *ša-am-ka-an*, *ša-ma-gan*, ^{d}ANŠE, on the one hand, and AMA-GAN, AMA-GAN.ŠA, a qualification of female equids, on the other. The basis for this assumption is the remarkable seal inscription of the 'doctor' Ur-lugal-edina, who was contemporary with the ensi of Lagaš Ur-ningirsu: ^{d}edin-mu-sig$_{17}$(GI), sukkal, ^{d}ANŠE, AMA-GAN-ŠA DU, ur-^{d}lugal-edin-na, a-zu ìr-zu, 'Edinmusig, messenger of Šamkan, who ... the pregnant mothers, Urlugaledina, the 'doctor', your servant'. As Lambert felt, AMA-GAN-ŠA DU must be an epithet that has undergone development; it may even be a kind of midrashic explanation of the god's name,[53] in the same vein as e.g. ^{d}nin-tin-ug$_5$-ga nin-ti-la-ug$_5$-ga 'Nin-tin-uga, Lady reviving the dead'.[54]

The reading ama-gan – or, if one wishes, eme$_4$-gan[55] – is unexceptionable, not only

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[50] 'The idea of insemination inherent in *reḫû*', in Cooper's words, ('Magic and M(is)use').

[51] Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 36 (1939), 10:9.

[52] It is W.G. Lambert, *OrNS* 55 (1986), 153, who first suggested, I believe, the interpretation of *ša-am-ka-ni* = *Šamkan/Šakkan*. It is not inflected, but without divine determinative in the Emar text Msk 731030 = D. Arnaud, *Emar* VI.4, 737 (p. 345), l. 4 *ša-am-ka-an i-na-zí-i*[*q*] 'Šamkan is worried'. *AHw* (just for once) may be wrong in separating *ḫabārum* I 'lärmen' from II 'dick sein'.

[53] On the reading and interpretation of the group AMA.GAN.ŠA and its relation to the god's name Šamagan/Šakkan/Sumuqan, a scholarly discussion has been going on for some years. The main contributions were made by W.G. Lambert and F. Pomponio, but other scholars added occasional comments; with his own remarks J. Bauer, *AfO* 36/37 (1989/90), 82b, gives most of the relevant literature, to which may be added P. Steinkeller, *ZA* 77 (1987), 163, n. 10; J. Krecher, *WO* 18 (1987), 11; and M. Stol, *Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture* 8 (1995), 175 (discussing a doubtful occurrence of áb-Šagan). Basing myself on these reflections, I present here my own view but in brief so as not to excessively duplicate earlier work, but do not pretend to reach a definitive solution. As a compromise I adopt here the form Šamkan (the usual OB form) for the name of the god.

[54] J. Krecher, *Sumerische Kultlyrik* (Wiesbaden, 1966), 121; M. Cohen, *JCS* 28 (1976), 82.

[55] It is possible that the female ass (SAL.ANŠE=ème, SAL.ḪÚB=eme$_5$) is originally the same word as ama/eme$_4$ the human mother, or, as Krecher (*WO* 18 (1987), 11) wishes, 'female', but certainly with the undertone 'apt for reproduction' or 'having borne'. Why such a generic term for equids? Possibly because of the breeding practices of the IIIrd millennium, which gave rise to the possibility that an equid could have a mother from a different species than its own, see J.N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia* (London & New York, 1992), 165–166. The regular proportion u$_8$/udu, ùz/maš, áb/amar hardly appears in Sumerian literature for the equid. The nearest to it would be, in the complaint of Lisin about her foal, SAL.ḪÚB(eme$_5$)/ANŠE.NÍTA(dùr)^{ùr}

because of *imikanu* (*imīkanu, imīkānu, imīkannu*?), but also because of the variants for *Home of the Fish*, 78: šáḫ ama-gan (A) // šáḫ má-gan LÁ? (E) // UMxME-tu (D, to be read /emetu/), confirming as well the reading as the rough meaning 'female bearing (or having born, apt to bear) kids' (ama-gan is occasionally applied to pigs in Ur III texts too; apart from the examples adduced by J. Krecher, *WO* 18 (1987), 11, n. 19, see F. Yıldız & T. Gomi, *Die Umma-Texte aus den archäologischen Museen zu Istanbul* (Bethesda, 1993), no. 2014, where šáḫ ama-[g]an is contrasted with šáḫ-níta); as a last proof one could quote the syllabic writing e-mi-ga-zi (M. Cohen, *Canonical Lamentations* (Potomac, 1988), 547 col. ii 3) for ama-gan-zi.[56] Notable is the genitive ama-gan numun-zi-da '(Ninsumuna), die mit dem rechten Samen schwanger geht', as C. Wilcke[57] rendered it. Originally gan may have been an independant lexeme, but its meaning is difficult to establish.[58]

The problem is: what is ŠA in AMA.GAN.ŠA? Theoretically there are three possibilities: ŠA.ama-gan, ama.ŠA.gan, ama-gan.ŠA. The most likely seems Ša.ama-gan, i.e. a reading similar or identical to Šamkan's name. That the ancient scribes had this god in mind is suggested by the comparison of the presargonic writings: sipa-AMA-AN-ŠE-ŠA-GAN-me (M.I. Hussey, *Sumerian Tablets in the Harvard Semitic Museum* (Cambridge, 1912), 1, 8 v), sipa-AMA-AN-ŠA-GAN-me (11 v), sipa-AMA-GAN-ŠA-na-me (12 v).[59] A Lagaš scribe once registered one 'gur-ra sheep of the Abzu of riverbank', the day the ensi went to the 'thing of Šam(a)kan'.[60]. It is very tempting to identify the god with an equid species, but it would be too simple. When not in connection with sipa, AMA.GAN.ŠA seems always to be used for female equids.[61]

I have no obvious solution. It is possible that anše ama-gan, pronounced *anš(e)am(a) gan, was secondarily reinterpreted as *an+šam(a)gan. The sipa-ama-gan.ŠA may have owed his name to his speciality in cattle breeding. Though the precise linguistic reality concealed by writings is largely uncertain, one thing seems sure: some association between the god – and the wild(?) equid whose image he took over – and pregnant females must exist. It may even be that the name Šamkan was reinterpreted by a Semitic *Volksetymologie* as **šu/ša amaganī* 'the one of the pregnant females'.[62] As for Šamkan himself, the name might be of Semitic origin (root ŠMḪ/ŠMK of the akk. *šamḫu*

(UET 6, 144:46).

[56] So to be read, instead of *ama-ad-mu, ibid. 543, l. 85.

[57] *Das Lugalbandaepos* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 51, 166.

[58] It may occur also in tu-gan 'turtledove' and in šà-gan, for which see below. There is also an element GAN in some human (GAN-ki, GAN-^{d}ba-ú, GAN-gírid^{ki}, GAN-LAGABxTIL-sag) or divine names (like ^{d}GAN-gír-nun-na, ^{d}GAN-šà-ga), also of uncertain interpretation. Parallelism with amar-ki, amar-gírid, ur-LAGABxTIL-sag suggests an animal as a possible meaning; GAN-gír-nun-na suggests some association with equids (GÍR-NUN-NA = *kūdanu*). The references to the proper names are taken from J. Bauer, *Altsumerische Wirtschaftstexte* (Rome, 1972), Verzeichnis der Personennamen (GAN = hé). Recently G. Selz, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des altsumerischen Stadtstaates von Lagaš*, 140–142, with nn. 578 and 582, has interpreted GAN as an allograph for géme 'female servant', but does not give his argumentation.

[59] Quoted by J. Bauer, *Altsumerische Wirtschaftstexte*, 72. One might read sipa-anše-šam(a)gan or sipa-ama-^{d}šam(a)gan. In the first quotation, ŠE.ŠA may be interpreted as a variant of ŠA, as e.g. in W.W. Hallo, *JAOS* 83 (1963), 172, 32a, 43.

[60] énsi, níg ^{d}AMA.GAN.ŠA-na-šè e-gen-na-a, *Documents Présargoniques* 61.

[61] It is also the most obvious way to understand the passage Gudea St. F iv 9–10, where the pair ANŠE.AMA.GAN-dùr-kas$_4$ follows áb-amar, u$_8$-sila$_4$.

[62] This could account for the writings of the Šuruppak proper name AN.ŠU.AMA.GAN, ur-AN.ANŠE.ŠU.AMA.GAN, ur-AN.ANŠE.AMA.GAN, ur-AN.ANŠE.ŠU.AMA.GA quoted and discussed at length by Pomponio and Lambert, *loc. cit.*

'opulent'?). It has been suggested that the military governor šagina is to be associated with the equid šamkan ('the one who may drive/ride? the donkey stallion'?), but this is very uncertain.[63]

In Ninmeshara 48, šà-gan, is a variant of á-tuku 'vigorous'. I recall here also the lexical equivalences:

lugal šà aš-ša$_4$(DU)	: *gitmālum*
lugal aš-ša$_4$	: *gitmālum*
lugal šà-gan	: *gitmālum*
lugal ní-ḫuš	: *gitmālum*
lugal ní-ḫuš ak-a	: *gitmālum*

Lú I 67 ff. (MSL 12, p. 95)

These are metaphoric descriptions of the king, arranged according to the Akkadian meaning (*gitmālum* 'accomplished'). On the other hand, the equid *akkan(n)um* has the logogram dùr-aš-ša$_4$.[64] One is reminded of Šulgi comparing himself to a running donkey colt, to a horse.[65]

For the form Šakkan, which seems to have been preferred to Šamkan in later times, the influence of that other Akkadian wild equid, *akkan(n)um*, may also have played a role. As far as I know, *akkan(n)um* appears for the first time in Old Babylonian times, as a loanword in Sumerian.[66] It symbolized indomitable nature, swiftness, also sexual potency.[67]

Šamkan, as god of the wild animals, particularly of the equids, could refer to the stallion of the herd, whose superiority gave him the right to copulate with all females. The interpretation that supposes a relation between Šamkan and ama-gan seems to have survived in the gloss of An : *anum* quoted by W.G. Lambert:

> $^{d\ min}$ GÌR ama-a-ni gan-d[ù] ^{gán} Šamkan, who made pregnant his own mother'.[68]

As Th. Jacobsen (The Harab myth, SANE 2/3, 24) showed, it is almost identical with the writing under which Šamkan appears in the 'Harab myth': AMA-GAN-DÙ, 'the one who makes mother(s) pregnant', precisely what Šamkan does in the myth.

Though I cannot cite here a text that would bridge the gap of several centuries, the aforementioned seems to me very close to the theme expressed in Ur-lugal-edina's seal legend, which is replete with 'ecologic' ideology: the owner, 'Dog of the king of the steppe', a veterinarian (azu) by profession, proclaims his loyalty to 'He-made-

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[63] This is suggested, among other places, in *CAD* Š/1, 175b *s.v. šakkanakku*, but šagina is written in fact not ANŠE.NÍTA, but KIŠ.NÍTA. Was ANŠE considered too tame? What differentiates graphically KIŠ from ANŠE is the absence of bridles on mouth and shoulders. Cf. J. Zarins, *JCS* 30 (1978), 3; P. Steinkeller, *ZA* 77 (1987), 162. Note also the UD.GAL.NUN value KIŠ = en, see J. Krecher, *BiOr* 35 (1978), 159, n. 22.

[64] Literally 'the unique (solitary?) colt'. Only in lexical lists, see the dictionaries.

[65] Šulgi A 16ff.

[66] In the already mentioned Lisin lament UET 6/2, 144:12.25.

[67] See the dictionaries, for the last point especially *ak-k[a-an-nu* : ...] *ana muḫḫi* GAN : *alādu* (*BWL* 72, 305).

[68] In *SBTU* 3, nr. 107, 174f., the line appears as: ^{d}ANŠE ama-ni gan-du $^{gá\text{-}ne\text{-}du}$ or $^{d\ min}$ ama-gan $^{du\text{-}ga}$ dù ak-ku.

the-steppe-green', the minister of Šamkan, the god who leads (assists?) his pregnant mares.[69]

The mythical background of Šamkan's presence in the Netherworld escapes me. Can he be there because of the murder attested in the 'Harab myth' (CT 46, 43), or because of his typical association with Lisin weeping over her vanished donkey colt?[70] D.O. Edzard[71] understands it to be a consequence of the god's association with the steppe, a metaphorical designation for the Underworld. Obviously Šamkan is a marginal god, but one who is not without importance. He represents the luscious, indomitable animality, and is basically a positive, friendly figure. J. Cooper[72] may be right in suggesting a comparison with the satyrs. In any case, he is more natural than godly, and this character fits well the non-theistic magical world.

4–5 In l. 4 we translate **kī bīt qīptim*, no more than a guess! In l. 5 *qamû* 'burn' or 'grind'? Very obscure!

9 The third key-verb of this text, after *reḫûm* and *wašāpum*, is *aḫāzum*, also a verb expressing possession in its own register. The reading is epigraphically uncertain in l. 9, where *zu*[?] is in fact MA, but the correction seems permissible in view of l. 10 and 11. *aḫāzum* means nothing but 'seize, take hold of'. The specialized meaning 'marry' has no sexual connotation. It can be said of an illness 'taking hold' of somebody. Like *reḫû* or *ṣabātu*, it may 'though exceptionally' be said of sleep.[73]

Parallels to lines 1–11

There exist several parallels to this part of the tablet.[74] I begin with the Old Babylonian ones, which should be roughly contemporary with the Meturan text.

(a) TIM 9, 73, rev. 4–10 (cf. C. Wilcke, *ZA* 75, 208).

4 ⌜*uš-ša*⌝*-ap-ka ra-ma-ni*
5 *a-*[*ra-a*]*ḫ-ḫi-ka pa-ag-ri*
6 *ki-ma a-sa-lu-uḫ uš*[?]*-p*[*u*[?] (*pagaršu*)]
7 *ir-ḫu-ú ra-ma-a*[*n-šu*]

[69] This, it should be underlined, is nothing but a rewording of Thureau-Dangin's interpretation, the first editor of the inscription. For the interpretation 'veterinarian', cf. I. Fuhr, 'Ein sumerischer Tierartz', *ArOr* 34 (1966), 570–574, who identifies the leashes hanging from the pole as 'Geburtsketten', almost identical to those used by contemporary veterinarians.

[70] In the text UET 6, 144, alluded to above, and in its parallels. It revives in the late incantation formula *AMT* 52/1:10–14 and parallels: 'Šamkan in the steppe, his heart is "bound", his hands are full of deadly dust, with no mother to 'open' his face, no sister to raise his head ... carrying a knife'.

[71] *WbMyth*, 118.

[72] Cooper, 'Magic and M(is)use', 51, n. 14.

[73] One occurrence only: *ištar bītim ul ihhaz šittum* 'Sleep cannot take the goddess of the house' (W. Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf!* (Winona Lake, 1989), 36: 13–14). Here it is the usual sense, but there may be a discrete allusion to the meaning 'marry', as the male god just 'cannot sleep' (*ul iṣallal*).

[74] Most of them have already been adduced by Cooper. I try here to give a complete list of all the texts with brief comments. I do not repeat all the secondary literature quoted by Cooper and do not attempt to justify my translations in all cases of divergency; they are to be taken as one more attempt to understand texts that are obscure.

8 *tu en-ne-nu-ri*
9 *ri-iš ši-ip-ti i-nu-ma*
10 [*x*] *ša ba*ʾ *ni*ʾ *i*ʾ *x bu*

I ... (*wašāpum*) you, my self,
I impregnate you, my body.
As Asalluhi(?) ... (*wašāpum*?) [his body],
as he impregnated his self.
Enenur-formula.
Beginning of the spell, when ....[75]

This text follows a short Akkadian formula against dogbite (on the obverse) and (on the top of the reverse) three lines of text that could be the conclusion of another short formula: [*x*] ⌜*x*⌝ *bu-ul* ᵈ*šam*[*kan*ʾ], *ma-aḫ*(*ḫi*ʾ)*-ra-am ú-ul i-šu, tu-en-ne-nu-ri*, '...Šamkan's herd has no rivalʾ. Enenur-formula'.

(b) Isin incantation, C. Wilcke, *ZA* 75, 1985, 204:114–116.

114 ⌜*ki*⌝*-ma na-ru-um ir-ḫu-ú ki-ib-ri-i-ša*
115 [*a*]*-ra-aḫ-ḫi ra-ma-ni-ma*
116 *a-ra-aḫ-ḫi pa-ag-ri.*

As the river inseminates its banks,
I inseminate my self,
I inseminate my body

(c) YOS 11, 2 (cf. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 129).

1 *a-ra-aḫ-ḫi ra-ma-ni a-ra-a*ʾ*-ḫi pa-ag-ri*
2 *ki-ma na-ru-um ir-ḫu-ú ki-ib-ri-šu*
3 *ki-ir-ba-an sú-qí-im*
4 *e-pe-er šu-li-im*
5 *še-er-ḫa-an ši-ki-im*
6 *sú-um ki-ri-im*
7/8 ⌜*ša*⌝*-a-nu-ú-ma zu-qí-qí-pu-um i-la-ku-ú-ma*
9 *i-na-du-ú-ma*
10 *la i-na-mu-šu-ú*

1 I impregnate my self, I impregnate my body.
2 As the river impregnates its banks.
3 A clod from the street,

[75] I have been able to collate the text on a photograph kindly provided by the authorities of the Iraq Museum. Unfortunately, the edges are not visible on the photograph. The subscript on the lower edge deserves new examination too, as it seems to give the circumstances in which the formula was used. In l. 6, a form of *wašāpum* is plausible; if the restoration is correct, the chiastic arrangement of the substantives would contrast with the alternation of the verbs.

4 dust of the lane,
5 a mongoose sinew,
6 a dove of the garden (?).
7 (I swear you), this runner of a scorpion,
8 he will walk,
9 throw,
10 and not move any more.

Remarks: 1–2 may be an abbreviated formula; 3–6 seem to enumerate objects used in a healing ritual; but other interpretations are possible.[76] 7–9: instead of 'runner' (*šānûm*), one might think of *šanûm*, 'strange, bizarre'[77] or even 'crazy'. 'He will throw', viz. his tail. Terse and obscure as it is, this text is a complete unit and leaves no ambiguity about its *Sitz im Leben*.

Later versions

Variants of the formula are inserted in magical or medical rituals of later times. The longest version is found in *Maqlû*:

(d) *Maqlû* VII 23–30

23 ÉN *a-ra-(aḫ)-ḫi-ka/ki ra-ma-ni* MIN *pag-ri*
24 *ki-ma* ^{d}*šamkan ir-ḫu-ú bu-ul-šú*
25 *laḫru im-mer-šá ṣabītu ar-ma-šá atānu mu-ur-šá/šú*
26 ^{ŠÈ}*epinnu erṣeta* (KI-*tim*) *ir-ḫu-ú erṣetu* (KI-*tim*) *im-ḫu-ru zēr-šá*
27 *ad-di šipta a-na ra-ma-ni-ia*
28 *li-ir-ḫi ra-ma-ni-ma li-še-ṣi lum-nu*
29 *ù kiš-pi ša zu-um-ri-ia*$_5$ *li-is-su-ḫu*
30 DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ

Incantation: I impregnate you, my self, ditto my body.
As Šamkan impregnates his herd,
the ewe her lamb, the gazelle her young, the jenny her donkey foal,
as the plow impregnates the earth, and the earth receives its seed,
I cast the spell on my self,
let it impregnate my self, let it expel evil
and let the Great Gods
extirpate the witchcrafts that are in my body.

I take the female animals as subjects of the verb *reḫûm* (contra Cooper and *CAD* M/2, 229b s.v. *mūru* and passim), in accordance with the incantation MAD 5, 8 and our text (h) (see below). This version is particularly interesting, as it definitely proves the apotropaic

[76] Instead of *sum kirîm* read *sūm kīrim* 'red spot of a kiln'?
[77] Or, with Foster, 'The scorpion is different'.

character of the formula. It is an adaptation of an old formula against witchcraft,[78] the appeal to the gods at the end aiding, *mutatis mutandis* (like a cross on a menhir), the new faith to absorb the strength of the old belief.[79]

(e) CT 23, 10–11:26–28//4:9–11 (SA.GAL.LA)

ÉN *araḫḫi ramani araḫḫi pagri*
kīma kalbu (*u*) *kalbatu šaḫû š*[*aḫītu*] *littabkū* (// [*l*]*ittakpū*)*ina ṣērišu*
kīma epinnu erṣeta irḫû erṣetu imḫuru [*zēr*]*šu*
limḫur ramani lirḫi ramani (//*ir-ḫi ra-ma-ni l*[*i-...*]) T[U_6 (ÉN)]

Spell. I impregnate my self, I impregnate my body,
like dog (and) bitch, boar and sow. Let them (= ?) be poured (var: butt one another) on him.
As the plow impregnates the earth, the earth takes in its seed,
may my self take in, may it impregnate my self...

littabkū seems an incorrect variant, attracted by the confusion with 'pouring'. There is some ambiguity attached to *maḫārum*, as *ramani* may be subject as well as object. As J. Cooper[80] noticed, the theme of mating dominates here; in this text, obviously, the male is the subject of *reḫûm*.

(f) *SBTU* 2, 9 rev.

1′ ÉN x [...], 2′ ÉN *a-ra*-[...], 3′ TÚG.KIN [...], 4′ *ad-di* ÉN [...], *u kiš-pi* [...]

This apparently very short version is part of a larger collection of texts, certainly also with an apotropaic function.

(g) W.G. Lambert, AS 16, 285 (MA).

10 ŠUB-*di* TU_6 *ana ra-ma-ni-ia u su-um-ri-ia lu-ur-ḫi* KU? x[...]
11 *lu-bi-il-ka pa-ag-ri* TU_6 ÉN!-É-N[U-RÙ]

Let me cast a spell on my self and my body, let me (or: let it) impregnate ... Let it carry you, my body (or: let my body carry you). Enenur-formula.

The particularity of these two lines is that they conclude an obscure Akkadian text, in which I would tentatively see an aetiology for some potion the exorcist would take, as a vaccine, to immunise himself.[81]

[78] Cooper ('Magic and M(is)use', 53) understands the 'logic' of the representation as follows: the spell inseminates (*reḫû*) the body, producing inside of it something that will extirpate (*nasāḫu*) the evil. The 'logic' – as far as 'logic' can be applied to a series of analogic representations – is that of insemination and birth. The image I first thought of as a connecting link is that of a purge or an emetic.
[79] The theistic worldview overlaying the holistic one. Cf. van Binsbergen and Wiggermann in this volume.
[80] Cooper, 'Magic and M(is)use', 51.
[81] Cf. e.g. l.1 *itti kakkab šamê* '...with a star of the sky...', l.2 *mišil imte ša zuqaqīpi ilqi*, 'he took half of the

We have an important indication of how the Babylonians themselves classified these formulae in the treatise sa-gig, which, at the beginning of its first purely medical section (tablet III), gives the following prescription:

> *šumma ana marṣi ina ṭeḫêka (...) adi šipta ana ramanika tanaddû ana bulluṭišu la teṭeḫḫi*
>
> If, when you approach a sick man (...), as long as you have not cast the spell on your self, do not approach him.[82]

Obviously the texts just listed are 'self-incantations', spells which the exorcist casts on himself.[83] One text – *AMT* 67 – even gives a collection of protective formulae of this type.

(h) *AMT* 67, 3[84]

1′ [...*it-t*]*a-*⌜*ṣi*?*-ma*⌝ *l*[*i*]-⌜*x*⌝[...]
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
2′ ka-inim-ma ní-gá šid-⌜e⌝-[da-kam]
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
3′ ÈN *uš-ša-ap*[!]*-ka ra-ma-ni a-ra-aḫ-ḫi-k*[*a pag-ri*]
4′ *ki-ma* ᵈ*šamkan ir-ḫu-ú bu-ul-šú enzu* (ÙZ) *k*[*a-zi-is-sa*]
5′ *laḫru*(U_8) *im*[!]*-mi-ra-ša atānu*(SAL.ANŠE) *mu-ra-ša* AM TU_6 ÉN
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
6′ ka-inim-ma ní-gá šid-e-da-k[am]
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
7′ [k]ìd-kìd-da-bi *ana šamni*(ÌxGIŠ) *tanaddi*(ŠUB)*-ma tapaššaš*($ŠEŠ_4$)
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
8′ A: [*kiš-p*]*u ze-ru-tum i-ta-ṣi-a ana ki-di-im*
B: [*kiš*]*-pu ze-ru-tum it-ta-ṣu-u ana ki-di*
C: [*kiš-pu ze-r*]*u-tum it-ta-ṣu-ú ana ki-di*
9′ A: [xx(x)] ⌜x⌝ *šim-ma-tum a-na lib-bi* U_4 *mi-lim*
B: [xx]⌜x⌝ *šim-ma-tum ana libbi*(ŠÀ) *amēli*
10′ A: [xxx] ⌜x⌝ *ar-da-tú ina su-un mu-ti-šá*
B: [xxx KI.]SIKIL *ina sūn*(ÚR) *mūti*(DAM)*-šá*
11′ A: [xxxx]⌜x⌝ GURUŠ [xxx]⌜x⌝[x]⌜x⌝[x]

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scorpion's poison'.

[82] *TDP*, 16 (catchline of Tabl. II); cf. E.K. Ritter, AS 16 (1965), 300 and n. 8. There seems to be an anacoluthon in this phrase: instead of the expected observation, there is an injunction. Ritter prefers to restore between the parentheses: (you have not yet done so), which does not change the meaning.

[83] R. Labat, *TDP*, 18, n. 27, thought that *KAR* 31 might be the text alluded to in sa-gig. *KAR* 31 is a hybrid of 'Legitimationstyp' and 'prophylaktischer Typ' (in the terminology of A. Falkenstein's *Die Haupttypen der sumerischen Beschwörung* (Leipzig, 1931)); together with the accompanying ritual (anointing oneself with a magic cream) it had approximately the same function as the 'self-incantation', but it lacks the characteristic term *šipat ramani*.

[84] For the restoration of l. 4′ cf. MSL VIII/1, 31 ad 218. For ll. 8′ sqq., *AHw* 1521 mentions the following parallels: *BAM* 128, 33 sqq. (B), 124 iv 34 sqq. (C), *AfO* 21, 16:13 (incipit only); by contrast to them *AMT* is designated below as A.

B: [XXXX GURUŠ] *ina sūn*(ÚR) *ardati*(KI.SIKIL)

3′ Spell. I ... (wašāpum) you, my self, I impregnate you, my body,
4′ as Šamkan impregnates his herd, the goat her kid,
5′ the ewe her lamb, the jenny her foal ... Magic formula. Spell.

The *AMT* text may be partly corrupted, but it makes better sense than B and C.[85] The Meturan exorcist recited the formula before the consecration of the flour; this late text associates the 'formulae to be recited on my self' with the use of the oil, a substance that penetrates the body by unction. The brief ritual ('thou shalt cast (the spell) on oil and anoint') suggests that the exorcist told these very words while anointing himself.

The number of written attestations of the *uššap ramani*-formula is probably not in direct relation to the frequency of its use in everyday life. A little like the *basmala* among the Muslims, it seems to have been applied even to rather harmless enterprises. One could imagine that each exorcistic school had its own version of this 'starting formula', but it was so short and so common, they knew it so well by heart that it was unnecessary to write it down.

What strikes one as the most characteristic aspect of these formulae is the strength of their animal images. Rarely do the texts degenerate into a sort of didacticism. Another characteristic is the intermingling of themes, a topic which J. Cooper has discussed. Animal and human sexuality, agriculture, animal love, liquidity, all these themes penetrate each other, modify each other, manifesting in their very interaction, so to speak, what the exorcist wants to achieve, his total impregnation with the protecting fluid. To Cooper's considerations one might add that the theme of lasting attachment, irresistible nostalgia, alluded to by the metaphor of the love of the mother for her young one, is one of the themes of our 'corpus'. It appears first in the Old Akkadian charm MAD 5, 8, studied by J. and A. Westenholz, *Or* 46 (1977), 198–219:

dūrinni it-taskarīnī,
ki rāʿium yidurru ṣaʾnam,
ʿenzum kalūmaśa,
laḫrum puḫāśśa,
atānum mūraś

go around me among the boxwoods,
as the shepherd goes around his flock,
the goat around her kid,
the ewe around her lamb,
the jenny around her foal

(*Or* 46 (1977), 202, l. 21–24).

[85] In 3′–5′, A may have preserved ancient *st. cstr.* We have not translated here ll. 8′–11′, for they do not seem to belong strictly to our topic. It seems that B and C represent a total distortion of the text of A. In l. 8′ *itaṣṣiā* '(evil sorceries), get out!' is better than *ittaṣû* 'they went out' of B and C. In l. 9′ U_4 *mi-lim* is difficult. Are we to understand: '[get out], *šimmatum* disease, into a day of flood (scil. to be absorbed and disappear into the water)'?

This topic of animal love (mother to young and vice versa) is universal: it occurs also in Egyptian and Ugaritic literature,[86] where it may also be applied to erotic texts.

Cooper might object that it is nonsensical to make the female the subject of *reḫûm* (see above texts d and h), but the fusional relationship between the mother and the newborn animal seems quite apt to evoke boundless love as well as protection, absolute security. The image of the cow licking her newborn calf, protecting him and strengthening him, may have seemed to the Babylonians to be an apt metaphor for the protection against evil spirits, and was apparently used in this sense by the exorcist.

One can also note the metaphorical association between saliva and sperm, obvious in magical formulae against dog bites. Sigrist, 'On the Bite of a Dog', 86:

ina šinnīšu e'il nīlšu (*ina pīšu naši nīlšu*)
ašar iššukū marašu īzib

his sperm is attached to his teeth (it carries his sperm in the mouth),
where he bites he leaves a son,[87]

or, ibid. 85, '6–7':

nišik kalbim mērānē a(*y*) *ibni*,

may the dog bite make no young!.

12–16 From line 12 on H 72 is in Sumerian. But shorthand writings, erasures and overwritings make its understanding very difficult. Fortunately, lines 12–16 have a late parallel in a text from *mīs pî* studied by G. Meier, *AfO* 11, 366f. and *AfO* 12, 41. A new fragment has since been added by C. Walker.[88] The preserved text reads as following:

1	ÉN zíd nam-nun-na s[ur-ra ...]	*qé-mu šá ina ru-bu-ti eṣ-ru*
3	^{d}ezinam(AŠNAN) an-na ^{d}kù-sù n[am-nun-n]a sur-ra	*áš-na-an ^{d}kù-sù ina [ru-bu-ti i-ṣ]i-ru*
5	zíd nam-nun-na GAM ⌜x⌝ [...]	*qé-mu šá ina ru-bu-t*[*i ...*]
7	mu$_7$-mu$_7$ kù-ga [...]	*ina šip-ti ul-*[*lu-ul-ti ...*]
9	zíd-še zíd-gum kù-ga [...]	*tap-pi-in-nu is-qu-qu* ⌜*x*⌝ [...]
11	zíd-zu giš-ḫur-àm [...]	*qé-mu-ka giš-ḫu-ru qé-*[*mu-ka ...*]
13	sig$_4$ é-a-ta nam-⌜x⌝ [...]	*li-bit-ti bi-i-ti lu-ú*[...]

[86] See the parallels adduced by J. and A. Westenholz, art. cit., especially 214f. In Mesopotamian magico-erotic poetry, cf. YOS 11, 87:22 and my 'Notes Sumérologiques nr. 4', *ASJ* 18 (1996), 35–37.

[87] Perhaps the first lines of the text edited by M. Sigrist, 'On the Bite of a Dog', in: *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (eds. J.H. Marks and R.M. Good; Guilford Ct., 1987), 85–88 had an identical formula: at the end of l. 04? (the first one before Sigrist's count), one discerns *i-zi-ib*. In l. '1' read perhaps [*pu*]-*ri-id ur*^{1}-*di-im-me*^{1}-*im ù pa-ra-aḫ-ši-im*, 'the one who has the legs of a moloss [*uridimmu*? One might think too of *al*^{1}-*ṭi-im-me*^{1}-*im*, 'of an elamite (dog)'] and of (a dog of) Marhaši'. In l. '4' sq. I first wanted to emend ana *šārim* into *ana šarrim*, 'to the king'; but *ana šārim ālikim qibiā*, 'say to the blowing wind' (as translated by Sigrist) seems indeed a very nice formula, maybe pronounced while blowing on the wound, as we do to children. In l. 8: *šu-ri-ib*, 'make enter'.

[88] C. Walker had the kindness to communicate to me the text of an unpublished joining piece (K1787) and the precise arrangement of the fragments.

15 eme-hul-gál bar-šè [...] *li-šá-an le-mut-ti ina a-ḫ[a-ti lizziz]*
17 [ka]-inim-ma zíd-sur-ra [...]
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
18 [dù-dù-bi DUG] a-gúb-ba *šá* ^{d}*kù-sù* [...]
19 [...]⌜x⌝ MUL^{meš} *lem-nu a-*[...]
20 [...] MUL^{meš} *el-lu qud-du-šú* [...]
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
21 [...]⌜x⌝ DUG a-gúb-ba [...]
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
[...] x x [...]

Flour that was magnificently drawn,
that Ašnan-Kusu magnificently drew.
Flour, that ... magnificently.
Through the pure spell,
tappinnu-flour, pure *isqūqu*-flour...
Your flour is the Circle, your flour...
From the brick built house may it not [...].
May the evil tongue stand aside.
Formula of the strewn flour.

Remarks: in the late text, l. 3, an-na may be due to the attraction of tir-an-na = *manziat*, 'rainbow'.

For the reading /ezinam/ and the pair ezinam-kusu cf. ZA 83 (1993), 187. ku-me = gurum-me? še te li = šen-dílim (a vessel, usually of copper)? si-si = šéš-e? If šéš is really involved, the text may allude to oil. In fact l. 14 seems to belong to another formula, apparently a consecrating formula recited over cedar or cedar oil; e-ri-id-ri for erin-duru$_5$?
In l. 15 it seems difficult to read anything but giš-zu, 'your wood', but the analogy of the late text (l. 11: zíd-zu) is puzzling. giš-ḪA might be an abbreviation for giš ḫa-<šu-úr>. še-ki-ni may be for the vessel šíkin (DUG) šikinnu.[89] In l. 16 še-ki e-te-te = sig$_4$ <é-a-ta> e$_{11}$-dè-dè (*èd-ed-e; sig$_4$ is a guess inspired by the late text)?

17–18 These two lines are probably incipits of two different incantations. In traditional writing they might correspond to: šà-gig lipiš-gig a-mir én šà-gig lipiš-gig, a-gúb ì-du$_{10}$, a-gúb ì-du$_{10}$.

[89] še-gín *šimtu*, 'mark', seems less likely.

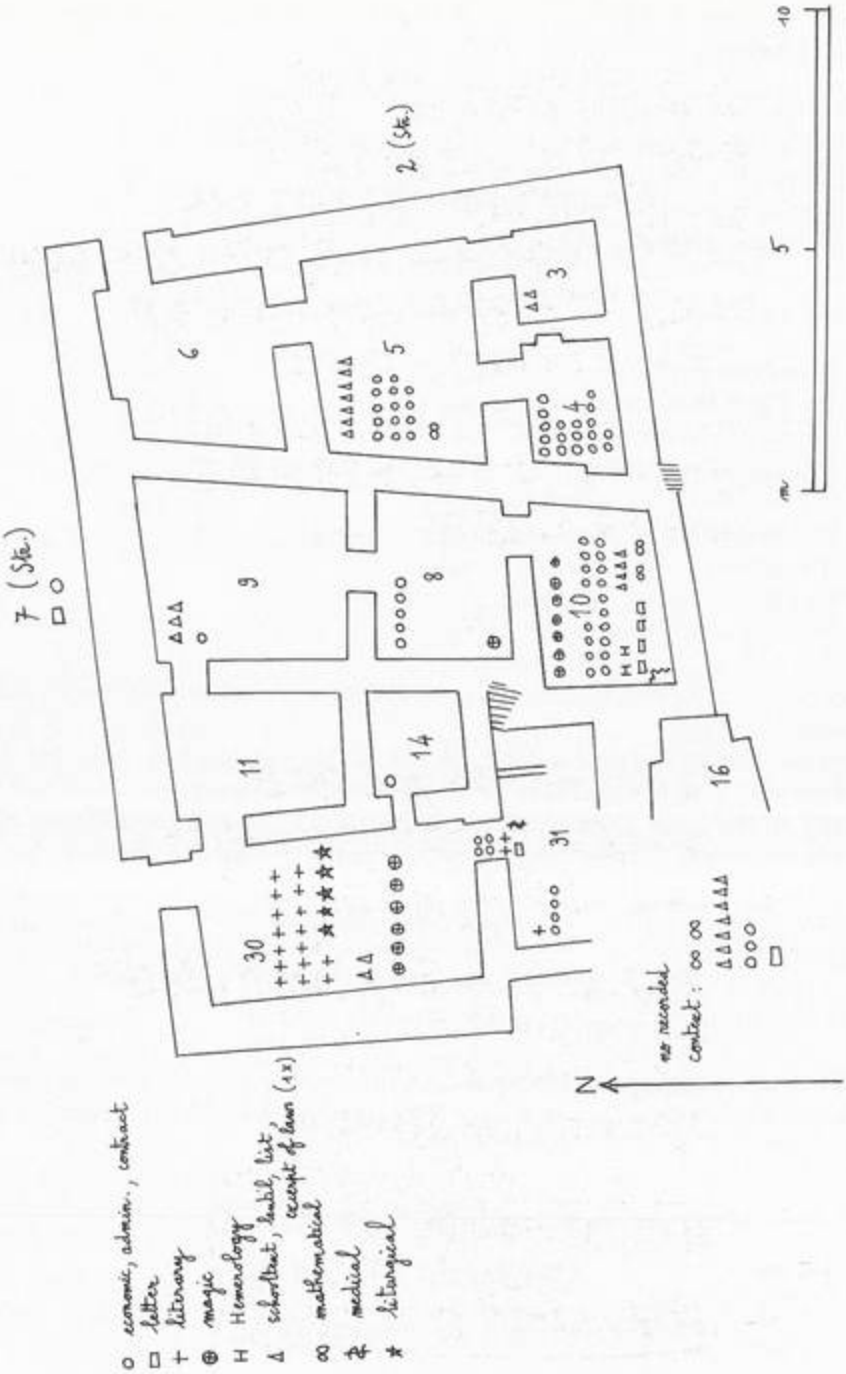

7 (Ste.)
2 (Ste.)
6
9
11
30
14
8
5
4
3
10
16
31
N
not recorded
context: ∞ ∞
0 5 10 m
o economic, admin., contract
□ letter
+ literary
⊕ magic
H Hemerology
Δ schoolbook, bilingual list, receipt of loan (+x)
∞ mathematical
medical
literary/religious

Fig. 1

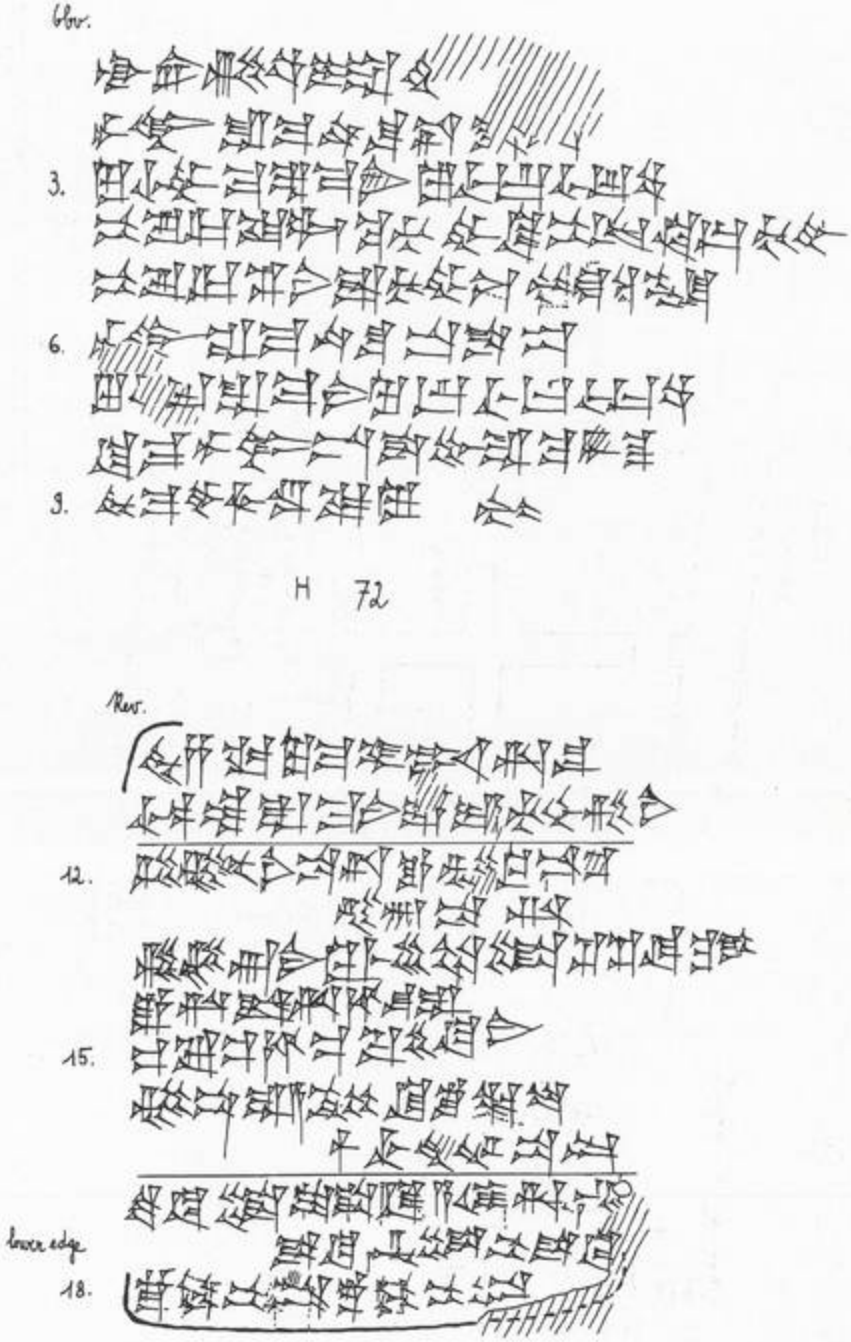


Fig. 3, copy of H 72

More Incantations and Rituals from the Yale Babylonian Collection[1]

William W. Hallo

In 1985, the Yale Babylonian Collection published Yale Oriental Series – Babylonian Texts (YOS) 11 under the title *Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals*. The work represented the collective efforts of four scholars, three of them now deceased. Of the 96 texts on 83 plates included in the volume, 29 texts on 49 plates had been copied during the 1920's by Mary Inda Hussey (1876–1952),[2] while the remaining 67 texts on 34 plates were copied during the 1960's and 1970's by Jan van Dijk (1915–1996). Van Dijk provided extensive notes on most of the texts, in many cases incorporating an earlier set of notes by Albrecht Goetze (1897–1971).[3] In addition, Walter Farber furnished collations of the Hussey copies.

The title of the volume reflected the fact that the texts were largely of Old Babylonian date (87 out of 96),[4] that they were written in Sumerian (48), Akkadian (31), or both (9), apart from others in Subarian (4), Elamite (1), and an unidentified language (3), and that they included both rituals (19) and incantations (67), or both (6). The balance featured, notably, the three collections of recipes which have since been fully edited by Jean Bottéro.[5]

Since the publication of YOS 11, the Yale Babylonian Collection has been systematically catalogued under a succession of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (1988–92, 1993–96). The cataloguing project is likewise a collaborative project, with Gary Beckman and Ulla Kasten as successive Project Coordinators, and with numerous individual collaborators. It will permit instant world-wide access to a computerized data base describing each of our 40,000 holdings, with descriptions capable of eventual expansion to include complete transliterations and translations of tablets and other inscribed and uninscribed objects. Shorter descriptions are contained in the printed catalogue volumes, of which two have so far appeared, under the series title of *Catalogue of the Babylonian Collections at Yale* (CBCY), one by Paul-Alain Beaulieu[6]

[1] The substance of this paper was presented to the 207th Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Miami, March 25, 1997. It is substituted here for the paper I originally presented to the conference on Mesopotamian Magic held at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Wassenaar, June 6–8, 1995, in order to make the new material available, at least in preliminary fashion.

[2] R. Borger, *RLA* 4 (1972–75), 523, s.v. Hussey.

[3] R. Borger, *RLA* 3 (1957–71), 500, s.v. Goetze.

[4] Four (Nos. 37, 58, 73, 81) are in neo-Sumerian script, one (No. 74) in Middle Assyrian, and four (75, 94, 95, 96) in Neo-Babylonian or Late Babylonian.

[5] *Textes Culinaires Mésopotamiens: Mesopotamian Culinary Texts* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 6; Winona Lake, 1995). For earlier studies see Hallo, *Origins* (Leiden, 1996), 108f.; for a more recent summary, *id.*, 98–108.

[6] P.-A. Beaulieu, *Late Babylonian Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection* (CBCY 1; Bethesda, 1994).

and one by Beckman.[7] Others are in an advanced stage of preparation.

Even before its final completion, the cataloguing project has proved its worth, as I will try to illustrate here by the example of rituals and incantations. Although YOS 11 was intended to include all the examples of these genres then remaining unpublished in the Collection, the systematic item-by-item study of all our textual holdings turned up 18 more candidates, at least tentatively. Their identifications were principally the work of Beckman, to whom I am indebted for sharing them with me. One of them is a six-column list of different kinds of stones in nine groups associated with certain deities and at least in part connected with the recitation of spells. I may note especially the conclusion of group 3: 'These eight stones extracted(?) from an X of lapis lazuli you shall place in its breast(?) and above it (and) below it with the anointing priest the sacrifice/prayer and its incantation you shall recite. The spell 'My god is favorable' you shall recite 7 times'.[8] This text deserves study in its own right. Another of the texts has recently been published jointly by Beckman and Foster;[9] as it is addressed to Enki, it may be part of the library of the Enki-priesthood which Christian Dyckhoff has identified as the source of a number of our Old Babylonian literary tablets.[10] Others have been copied by various scholars and remain to be published by them[11] or from their Nachlass.[12] Still others are too fragmentary or too brief to permit certainty of identification.[13] That leaves three of sufficient interest or intelligibility to present at this time. Two are Old Babylonian in date, the third is Neo-Babylonian. Because of the difficulties posed by all of them, I have sought out the help of those more experienced than I am with these genres, and I am happy to acknowledge them here, as follows: Niek Veldhuis (Groningen) with No. 1, Walter Farber (Chicago) with Nos. 1 and 2, and Izabela Zbikowska (Yale) and Francesca Rochberg (University of California at Riverside) with No. 3.

Herewith I offer transliterations of the two OB texts and a transcription of the NB one, and I will attempt to provide translations of two of them, with minimum comment. No translation is attempted for the second which, like the first, includes incantations to Lamashtu (^{d}DÌM.ME).

No. 1 YBC 8041 (52 × 38 mm)

1) [ ] x
2) [ ]-*ma*?
3) *ki-k*[*i-ṭa-šu*]-x
4) *tu-*⌜*ú - e - ni*⌝*-in-nu-ri*
5) *ši-pa-at* ^{d}DÍM.ME
6) *ki-ki-ṭa-šu ki-ir-ba-an* MUN (*ṭābtim*)

---

[7] G. Beckman, *Old Babylonian Archival Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection* (CBCY 2; Bethesda, 1995).

[8] NBC 7688 ii 8–13: 8 NA_4.ME *an-nu-tu* / *ina* X ZA.GÌN.NA E 3(?) / *ina* Y-*šú* GAR-*ma* / AN-*šú* KI-*šú ta-man-ni* / ÉN DINGIR.MU ŠE.GA 7 Z-KAM.MA ŠÍD(?).

[9] G. Beckman and B.R. Foster, 'An Old Babylonian Plaint against Black Magic', *ASJ* 18 (1996), 19–21.

[10] Christian Dyckhoff, Oral communication at the 43rd RAI (see the forthcoming compte rendu).

[11] YBC 6706, an incantation against 'little worms', was copied by Bendt Alster.

[12] YBC 5443, an incantation similar to udug-hul, was copied by the late R. Kutscher; MLC 1963 and YBC 9891, unidentified incantations, were copied by van Dijk but not included in YOS 11.

[13] Notably MLC 485, 923; NBC 10217, 10339, 11111 (= 6NT 544), 11118 (= 6NT 997), 10339; NCBT 1049; YBC 9877, 9902.

7) *i-na lu-ba-ri-im ta-ra-ak-ka-as*[!]
8) *i-na ki-ša-di-šu ta-ra-ak-ka-a*[*s*]
9) *ba-li-iṭ*
10) *ri-ú-ta-am-ma ḫu-bi-e-ta*
11) *ri-ú-ta-am i-ni-im ši-p*[*a-at ...*]

Rev.

12) šu-pu ^{d}DÍM.ME
13) *ki-ki-ṭa-ša* NUMUN ⌜UḪ⌝
14) *ni-iš-ki i-na zu-mu-u*[*r-ša/šu*]
15) *ta-na-ad-du-ma*
16) A.BA UR É.AŠ *ta-man-nu*
17) *te-le-ek-ma* Ì.GIŠ
18) *mu-uḫ-ḫi ni-iš-ki-im*
19) *te-sé-e-er te-te-eḫ-ḫi*
20) *ta-ra-ak-ka-as-ša*
21) *ba-li-iṭ*
22) *ši-pa-at ur-ši*

1–2) (Largely lost)
3) Its procedure: ....
4) Conjuration.
5) Incantation against Lamashtu.
6) Its procedure: a lump of salt
7) in a garment you tie up,
8) on his neck you tie (it)
9) he (will be) well.
10) ????
11) ????
12) ??? Lamashtu.
13) Its procedure: the seed and/of the spittle
14) of the bite on his body
15) you apply and (the incantation)
16) 'Who is the dog of the single house?' which you recite
17) you lick away and oil
18) over the bite
19) you smear. You approach (and)
20) you bind her.
21) He (will be) well.
22) Incantation of the bedchambers.

Notes

4) This spelling is restored here on the basis of YOS 11:16:11, for which see the remarks by van Dijk, *ibid.*, p. 5.
5) The translation of *šipat Lamašti* follows van Dijk, YOS 11, p. 6.

6) For lumps of salt wrapped in a tuft of wool as a poultice, and others as a suppository, see *CAD* K, 403:2a, s.v. *kirbānu*.
7) In another Lamashtu incantation, *lubārū* (plural) occurs as the '(menstrual) rags of an unclean (i.e., menstruating) woman'; cf. *CAD* L 230d; Falkenstein, *LKU* p. 12, line 11. Note also the possible association with the Roman *labarum* suggested by M.H. Pope, 'The saltier of Atargatis reconsidered', *Essays ... Glueck* (Garden City, 1970), 178–196, esp. p. 193; the lexical reference there is to the entry published in the meantime as MSL 13, 115:16.
17) The verb appears to be from the relatively rare root *lêku*, cognate with Hebrew LḤK. The Sumerian equivalent is UR.(BI)...KÚ (or TEŠ.(BI)...KÚ; though not attested as such in lexical or bilingual texts, it occurs in such unilingual passages as Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta, 255 and 257, where it has been compared by Sol Cohen to Numbers 22:4; cf. Hallo, 'Proverbs quoted in epic', *Studies ... Moran* (Atlanta, 1990), 215 and n. 116.

Commentary

This brief text of 22 lines is so far unparalleled among the Lamashtu incantations, whether canonical or non-canonical.[14] It seems to consist of three separate incantations. The first (lines 1–5) presumably begins with a 2-line dicenda (ll. 1–2, now lost), a one-line agenda (l.3) and a 2-line rubric (ll. 4–5). The second (ll. 6–11) begins with a 3-line agenda (ll. 6–8), a one-line prognosis (l. 9), and what appears to be a 2-line rubric (ll. 10–11). The third (ll. 12-end) begins with a one-line heading (l. 12), an 8-line agenda which includes allusion to the recitation of an incantation (l. 16), a one-line prognosis (l. 21) and a one-line rubric (l. 22).

No. 2 MLC 1614 (78 × 48 mm)
Obv.?

1) [KA.AḪ].MUD.[DA / KA.K]A.AḪ.MUD.D[A]

---

2) KA.AḪ.MUD.DA / KA.KA.AḪ.MU[D.D]A
3) KA.A[Ḫ.MUD.DA] / KA.K[A.A]Ḫ.MUD.DA

---

4) LUGAL.GI[Š].GI.UR / [*te-e-ni*]-*in-nu-ri-e*!

---

5) *ši-pa-at* ^{d} x DÌM.ME

Rev.?

1) NIR.GÁL NIR. NIR.GÁL
2) NIR.NIR.GÁL

---

[14] Cf. R. Borger, *HKL* III (1975), 86 s.v. *Lamaštu*. Add: Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* II, 222ff.; Wiggerman *apud* Stol, *Zwangerschap en Geboorte bij de Babyloniërs en in de Bijbel* (Leiden, 1983). OB forerunners: BIN 2:72; OECT 1:WB 169, etc. For the latest survey see C. Michel, "Une incantation paléoassyrienne contra Lamaštum," *Or.* 66 (1997), 58–64, with earlier literature.

3) EN.KA NIR.GÁL
4) ABZU N[UN.KI.(GA?)]
5) *ši-taš-ši ki-ma ...*
6) ^{d}*É-a* ^{d}LÚ.ASAR.ḪI
7) *li-taš-ši-ra an-ni*
8) *te-e*^{1}*-en-nu*^{1}*-ri-e*
9) [*ši*]*-pa-at ka-ta-ar-ri*

The tablet contains two incantations, one on each side. The one on the obverse(?) is described as an 'incantation against Lamashtu', while the one on the reverse(?) is described, if correctly restored, as an 'incantation against fungus'. The fear of fungus is widely attested in Mesopotamia; it was inspired not by hygienic or medical considerations, but by the ominous significance attributed to the fungus. Thus the indicated therapy was designed to treat, not so much the symptom, but the evil consequence it portended.[15] It is attested in numerous rituals, incantations and prayers.[16]

No. 3 (with Izabela Zbikowska) YBC 9863 (84 × 73 mm)

A further text of considerable interest among those identified as incantations and related texts at Yale which remain to be published is YBC 9863, a collection of astronomical omens and associated incantations. As far as preserved, it is divided into eight sections, of which the first, third, and fifth are followed by rubrics, all set off from each other by dividing lines. After preparing a preliminary transliteration of the text, I showed it to Izabela Zbikowska on the occasion of her visit to the Babylonian Collection to work with my colleague Asger Aaboe. Ms. Zbikowska, then a research assistant at the Institute for the History of Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, has a special interest in astronomical texts. She improved greatly on my transliteration, added a transcription, and copied the text.

Ms. Zbikowska also identified the text as partially parallelled by STT 73, a composition extensively commented on by Erica Reiner.[17] A further parallel had been drawn between *STT* 73 (line 77) and YBC 9884 (line 2), now published as YOS 11 75,[18] but the two Yale texts neither join nor appear to come from a single tablet, or even from parallel tablets. According to Reiner, *STT* 73

> deserves a particular interest, and its importance and informativeness can be evaluated as follows: first, the omens expected are impetrated omens, a rather rare type of Mesopotamian divination; second, we find in it the text of the prayers and the directions for the rituals designed to dispose the deity favorably for giving an answer through a stipulated signal; and third, we obtain evidence of private divination techniques not found in the canonical omen literature.[19]

---

15 W.W. Hallo, *The Book of the People* (Brown Judaic Studies 225; Atlanta, 1991), 66f.
16 *Ibid.*, 145f., with references; CAD K s.v. *katarru*.
17 Erica Reiner, 'Fortune-Telling in Mesopotamia', *JNES* 19 (1960), 23-35.
18 *CAD* K 518c.
19 *JNES* 19 (1959), 24.

More recently, the Sultan-Tepe text has been described as 'an unusual first millennium text referring to impetrated practices' by Ann Guinan,[20] who argues that

> As the tradition (of divination) developed, scholars increasingly turned to the investigation of unsolicited omens and, except for extispicy, impetrated omens ceased to be part of the standard repertoire.[21]

All of the above could likewise be said of YBC 9863 (and *LKA* 137f.). Because of its heavy reliance on logographic orthography, it is in addition presented in transcription except for the strictly astronomical passages. Commentary is limited to pointing out parallels to *STT* 73.

YBC 9863

Transliteration
Obverse
(beginning lost)
A
1′ [...] X [...]
2′ [... S]I-*at* DI.A.X [...]
3′ [...] X-*ú* TA 15-MU
4′ [... TA I]GI.MU *ana* IGI.MU DIB-*iq*

5′ [KA.AŠ.B]AR MUL IGI.DU$_8$

B
6′ [*še-am šá sh*]*ar-bi* TI-*qí* GURUŠ.TUR *šá* MUNUS NU ZU-*ú* ŠE *i-bi-ir*
7′ [...] *e-nu-ma ina* GI$_6$ UN.MEŠ *ṣal-lu-ma qul-tum* GAR-*at* GÌR.2 TAR-*sat*
8′ [...] *ana* IGI MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA GAR-*an* KAŠ.SAG BAL-*qí e-diš-ši-ka*
9′ [... É]N AN.UŠ *ana* IGI MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA ŠID-*nu* MUL TA 15-*ka*
10′ [*šum-ma* MU]L TA 150-*ka* DÍB-*iq* NU SIG$_5$
11′ [*šum-ma an*]*a* IGI-*ka* DÍB-*iq* SIG$_5$ *šum-ma* MUL.ŠUḪ MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA DÍB-*iq* SIG$_5$
12′ [*šum-ma* MU]L.MAR.GÍD.DA NU DÍB-*iq* NU SIG$_5$ MUL.ŠUḪ *ana* ŠÀ-*bi* MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA
13′ [KU$_4$] BE-*ma* MUL.MUL *ul-te-ez-zib*

C
14′ [MUL.ŠU.PA ŠE].GA MUL.ŠU.PA ŠE.GA MUL.ŠU.PA ZI.ZI
15′ [MUL.ŠU.PA ZI.Z]I MUL.ŠU.PA GUB.GUB MUL.ŠU.PA GUB.GUB
16′ [MUL.ŠU.PA GIN].NA MUL.ŠU.PA.GIN.NA (eras.)

---

[20] A.K. Guinan, 'Divination', in: *The Context of Scripture I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (W.W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (eds.); Leiden/New York/Köln, 1997), 421-426, esp. p. 422, n. 9.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 422. For the distinction between impetration (or induction) and oblation (or intuition) in divination see also Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: a History* (New York, 1971; second edition, Fort Worth, 1998), 160.

17′ [MUL.ŠU.PA]SÌG.SÌG MUL.ŠU.PA SÌG.SÌG MUL.ŠU.PA DU_8.DU_8
18′ [MUL.ŠU].PA DU_8.DU_8 DINGIR MU.UN.SI.SÁ DINGIR MU.UN.SI.SÁ
19′ [DI]NGIR MU.UN.DU_{11}.GA SI.SÁ DINGIR MU.UN.DU_{11}.GA SI.SÁ DINGIR MU.UN.SI.SÁ GIŠ.TUG
20′ DINGIR MU.UN.SI.SÁ GIŠ.TUG DINGIR.MU A.RA.ZU GIŠ.TUG DINGIR.MU A.RA.ZU GIŠ.TUG TE.ÉN

[I]NIM.INIM.MA KA.AŠ.BAR BAR.RE

Reverse

D

1 [...] XXX *ú-tal-lal ina* A.MEŠ NAGA.SI-*li u* KI.A.^{d}ÍD
2 [...] ŠU.2-*šú* LUḪ-*si ina* GI_6 ÙR SAR A.MEŠ KÙ.MEŠ SÙ ZÍD.MAD.GÁ *šá* ŠE.GAL *u* ŠIM.LI
3 [...] X NÍG.NA GAR-*an* A.MEŠ KÙ.MEŠ BAL-*qí* ÉN 3-*šú ana* IGI MUL.ŠU.PA ŠID-*ma* EŠ.BAR *tam-mar*

E

4 [MU]L.MUL SI.SÁ MUL.MUL SI.SÁ MUL.MUL GIN.NA MUL.MUL GIN.NA
5 [MUL].MUL GUB.GUB MUL.MUL GUB.GUB MUL.MUL TUG.TUG MUL.MUL TUG.TUG
6 [MUL.MU]L DU_8.DU_8 MUL.MUL DU_8.DU_8 MUL.MUL SIG_5.GA MUL.MUL SIG_5.GA
7 [MUL.MU]L GIŠ.TUG MUL.MUL GIŠ.TUG TE.ÉN

---

8 [INIM.INIM].MA KA.AŠ.BAR BAR.RE

F

9 [...] X ŠE.GA *ina* GI_6 ÙR SAR A.MEŠ KÙ.MEŠ SU ZÍD.MAD.GÁ *šá* ŠE.GAL *u* ŠIM.LI *kul-lat i*[*na* ...]
10 [...] *ina* IZI GIŠ.Ú.GÍR *ina* UGU NÍG.NA GAR-*an* ŠE.GAL KI.A.^{d}ÍD DIŠ-*nis* I *tam-mar* ÉN
11 [...]-*šú* LI.KA.TA.NA ŠID(?)-*ma* GIŠ.ŠINIG *ina* ŠU-2 15-*ka* ÍL-*si*
12.2 [*ina* GÌ]R(?)-2 150-*ka ta*-TUK NA.IK(?).KIR-*ma* A.MEŠ KÙ.MEŠ BAL-*qí ana* IGI MUL.MUL.SI.SÁ
13 [...]-*šú* ŠID-*ma šu-kin-ma* EŠ.BAR Á.MAḪ SI-*ma*

G

14 [... MUL].GIN.GIN.NA KI.MIN MUL.BAN.DU_{11}.GA.ŠE.GA KI.MIN LÚ.DU_{11}.GA.ŠE.GA KI.MIN
15 [... Š]E.GA KI.MIN LÚ.MUL.BAN.DU_{11}.GA.ŠE.GA KI.MIN LÚ.MUL.BAN.ŠI.SÁ.TUG.TUG KI.MIN
16 [...] GIŠ.TUG KI.MIN Ì.ERIN Ì.IR.ERIN ^{d}NIN.LÍL *ra-mat*
17 [NIN?] GAL AN-*e at-ti-ma* ^{d}EN.LÍL ŠUB-*di* GIŠ.GU.ZA-*ka*
18 [...*at*]-*ti-ma di-par* AN-*e na-mir-tu lu-mur* TE.ÉN

H

19 [... *ina* G]I_6 *ana* ÙR DUL.DU-*ma* NÍG.NA LI *u* ZÍD.MAD.GÁ *ana* IGI MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA
20 [...] (traces) MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA
(rest lost)

Transcription

Obverse

(Beginning lost)

A

3′ [...]... *ištu imittiya*

4′ [... *ištu p*]*āniya ana pāniya ētiq*

5′ [... *pur*]*ussû kakkabi tammar*

B

6′ [*še'am ša ḫ*]*ar-bi teleqqî eṭlu ṣeḫru ša sinništa la idû še'am ibîr*

7′ [...] *enūma ina mūši nišē ṣallūma qūltu šaknat šēpē parsat*

8′ [...] *ana pāni kakkab eriqqi tašakkan šikaru rēštû*(?) *tanaqqi ediššika*

9′ [*šipt*]*u* AN.UŠ *ana pāni kakkab eriqqi tamanni kakkabu ištu imittika*

10′ [... *šumma kakka*]*bu ištu šumēlika ana imittika ētiq la damqu*

11′ [*an*]*a pānika ētiq damqu šumma kakkab Tišpak kakkab eriqqi ētiq damqu*

12′ [*šumma kakkab*] *eriqqi la ētiq la damqu kakkab Tišpak ana libbi kakkab eriqqi*

13′ [*īrub*] *šumma zappu ultezzib*

C

14′ [*níru mu*]*gur níru mugur usuḫ*

15′ [*níru usu*]*ḫ níru iziz níru iziz*

16′ [*níru al*]*ka níru alka* (eras.)

17′ [*níru*]*maḫaṣ níru maḫaṣ níru puṭur*

18′ [*níru*] *puṭur ilu ša uštēširu ilu ša uštēširu*

19′ [*i*]*lu ša iqbû šutēšir ilu ša iqbû šutēšir ilu ša uštēširu šeme*

20′ *ilu ša uštēširu šeme ili teslīti šeme ili teslīti šeme tê šipti*

21′ [*t*]*uduqqû purussâ parāsu*

Reverse

D

1 [...] XXX *utallal ina mê uḫūli qarnān(/t)i ellūti u kibrīti*

2 [...] *qātēšu temessi ina mūši ūra tašabbiṭ mê ellūti tasallaḫ masḫata tašakkan*(?) ŠE.GAL *u burāši*

3 [...] XXX *niqnakki tašakkan mê ellūti tanaqqi šipta šalāšišu ana pāni* MUL.^{d}ŠU.PA *tamannima purussâ tammar*

E

4 *zappu šutēšir zappu šutēšir zappu alka zappu alka*

5 [*zap*]*pu iziz zappu iziz zappu riši zappu riši*

6 [*zapp*]*u puṭur zappu puṭur zappu dummiq zappu dummiq*

7 [*zapp*]*u šeme zappu šeme tê šipti*

---

8 [INIM.INIM.]MA KA.AŠ.BAR BAR.RE

F

9 [...] XXX ŠE.GA *ina mūši ūra tašabbiṭ mê ellūti tasallaḫ masḫati ša* ŠE.GAL *u burāšu kul-lat* X *kibrītu ištēniš šamni tammar šipta*
11 [...]-*šu li-ka-ta-na tamannima bīnu ina qātē imittika tanašši*
12 [...*šē*]*pē*(?) *šumēlika tarašši*(?) XXX-*ma mê ellūti tanaqqima ana pāni* MUL.MUL SI.SÁ
13 [...]-*šu tamannima šukēma purussû* Á.MAḪ *damiqma*

G

14 [... MUL].GIN.GIN.NA KI.MIN MUL.BAN.DU$_{11}$.GA.ŠE.GA KI.MIN LÚ.DU$_{11}$.GA.ŠE.GA KI.MIN
15 [... Š]E.GA KI.MIN LÚ.MUL.BAN.DU$_{11}$.GA.ŠE.GA LÚ.MUL.BAN.SI.SÁ TUG.TUG KI.MIN
16 [...] GIŠ.TUG KI.MIN *šaman erinni šaman ereši erinni* ^{d}*Ninlil ramat*(?)
17 [...] *rabīt šamê attīma* ^{d}*Enlil addî kussâka*
18 [... *at*]*tīma dipār šamê namirtu lūmur tê šipti.*

H

19 [... *ina*] *mūši ana ūri telēma*(?) *niqnakku burāši u masḫati ina pāni kakkab eriqqi*
20 [...] *kakkab eriqqi*
(rest lost)

Translation

(A)

3′ [...] ... from my right (side)
4′ [... from (in) f]ront of me (and) passes to (in) front of me.

5′ [... a sign (deci]sion) (from) a star you will see.

(B)

6′ [barley of the early har]vest you take, a young man who has not known a woman selects the barley,
7′ [...] when at night the people are sleeping and silence has settled in, access is blocked,
8′ [...] you shall place in front of the wagon-star (i.e. Ursa Maior), first-quality wine (or: new wine) you shall libate by yourself.
9′ [The incantat]ion "AN.UŠ" in front of the wagon-star you shall recite. A star from your right
10′ [.... If a (shooting) sta]r passes from your left to your right: it is not propitious.
11′ [(If it) passes (from behind you) t]o (in) front of you: it is propitious. If the Northern Cross(?)-star passes the wagon-star: it is propitious.
12′ [If] it does not pass the wagon-star: it is not propitious. The Northern Cross(?)-star into the wagon-star
13′ [enters ?] and verily the Pleiades are left behind.

Translation

(C)

14′ Boötes accept (my prayer)! Boötes accept! Boötes drive out (the sorceress)!
15′ [Boötes drive ou]t! Boötes be present! Boötes be present!

16′ Boötes come! Boötes come!
17′ [Boötes] strike (the sorceress)! Boötes strike! Boötes undo (the sorcery)!
18′ [Boöt]es undo! The deity who proceeded, the deity who proceeded,
19′ The deity who spoke – proceed! the deity who spoke – proceed! the deity who proceeded – hear!
20′ The deity who proceeded – hear! My god – hear (my) prayer!
My god – hear (my) prayer! Formula of incantation.

(D)

1 [...] shall be purified in pure waters of sprouted alkali and sulphur
2 [...] you wash his hands, at night you sweep the roof, you sprinkle pure water, scented flour of(?) large barley and juniper sap
3 you place [in] a censer, you libate pure water, you recite an incantation three times in front of Arcturus (Boötes) and you will see a sign (decision).

(E)

4 [P]leiades proceed! Pleiades proceed! Pleiades come! Pleiades come!
5 [Plei]ades be present! Pleiades be present! Pleiades take possession! Pleiades take posession!
6 [Pleiad]es undo (the sorcery)! Pleiades undo! Pleiades be gracious! Pleiades be gracious!
7 [Pleiad]es hear! Pleiades hear! Formula of incantation.

(F)

9 [...] at night you sweep the roof, you sprinkle pure water, scented flour of(?) large barley and juniper sap you gather(?) ...
10 [...] in the fire you place bramble(?) on top of the censer, large barley (and) sulphur you will see together (with) oil(?). An incantation(?)
11 [...] ... and a tamarisk in your right hand you carry,
12 [...] in your left hand(?) you ... and pure water you libate to (in) front of the 'regular stars'.
13 [...] times you recite and prostate yourself and the decision will indeed be powerfully auspicious(??).

(G)

14 The wandering star; ditto; the bow-star (Canis Maior) of the favorable utterance; ditto; the man of favorable utterance; ditto.
15 [The man of the wandering(?) star of favorable utterance; ditto; the man of the bow-star of favorable utterance; ditto; the man who always receives the regular bow-star; ditto.
16 [The man ...]who listens; ditto. Oil of cedar, oil of incense of cedar. Oh Ninlil, exalted
17 [...], great one of heaven you (fem.) verily are. Oh Enlil, I have set up your throne.
18 [...] you (fem.) verily are. 'I will surely see the shining torch of heaven' (is) the formula of the incantation.

(H)

19 At night you go up(?) to the roof and a censer of juniper and scented flour in front of the wagon-star

(Rest lost)

What we have in this text, as in *STT* 73, is a combination of omens and rituals, the omens here taken exclusively from the observation of the stars. Many of the phrases of the ritual prescriptions recur in other contexts, including therapeutic texts.[22] The largest number of parallels involve *STT* 73, as follows:

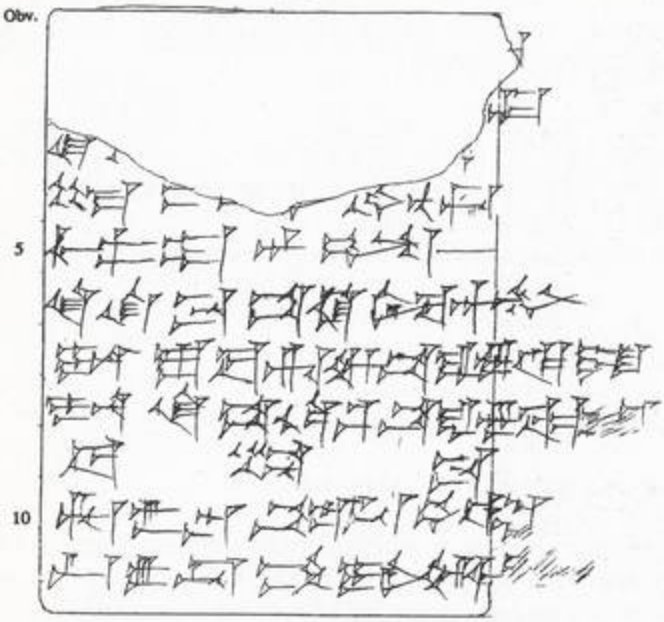
YBC 9863	*STT* 73	Subject
obv. 6′	65f., 100f. (119)	taking barley of *ḫarbu* and a virgin boy selecting it
7′	82	'the dead of night'
10′	105	shooting star passing from your left to your right (unpropitious)
11′	107f.	ditto from your back to your front (propitious)
12′	109	ditto entering Ursa Maior
rev. 2f.	67	cleaning roof, sprinkling water, and placing incense in censer
3	68	repeating incantation three times

I cannot pretend to have solved all the problems inherent in the three texts. But they may serve to ilustrate the riches remaining unpublished in the Yale Babylonian Collection, and to invite inquiries even before the catalogue is fully completed and on line.

[22] Cf. also *Maqlû* I 29, where the gods of the night (i.e., the stars and planets) are invoked to strike the sorceress (on the check). (Reference courtesy Francesca Rochberg, who also provided crucial help with sections C and E.) For parallels to the *Maqlû* passage, see I. Tzvi Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature* (Atlanta, 1987), 89–94.

YBC 8041
52 x 38 mm.

Obv.

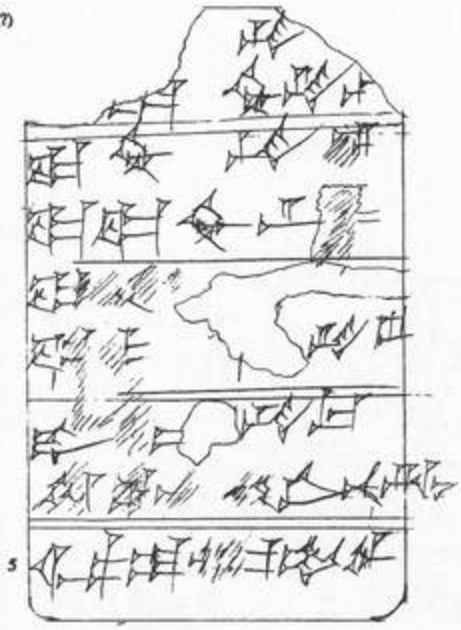


YBC 8041

Rev.

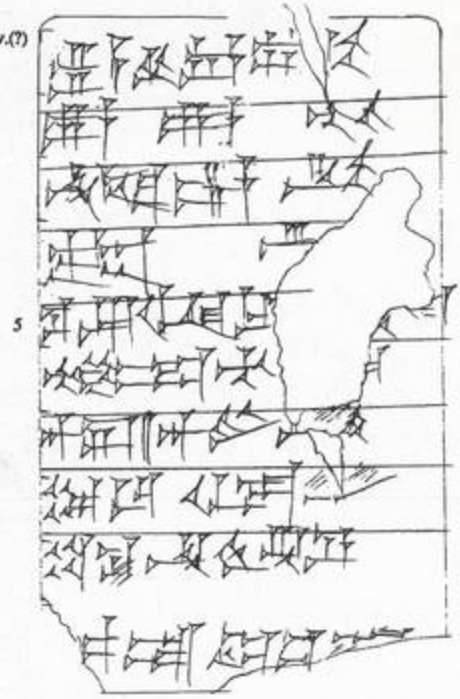
MLC 1614
48 x 78 mm.

Obv.(?)



MLC 1614

Rev.(?)



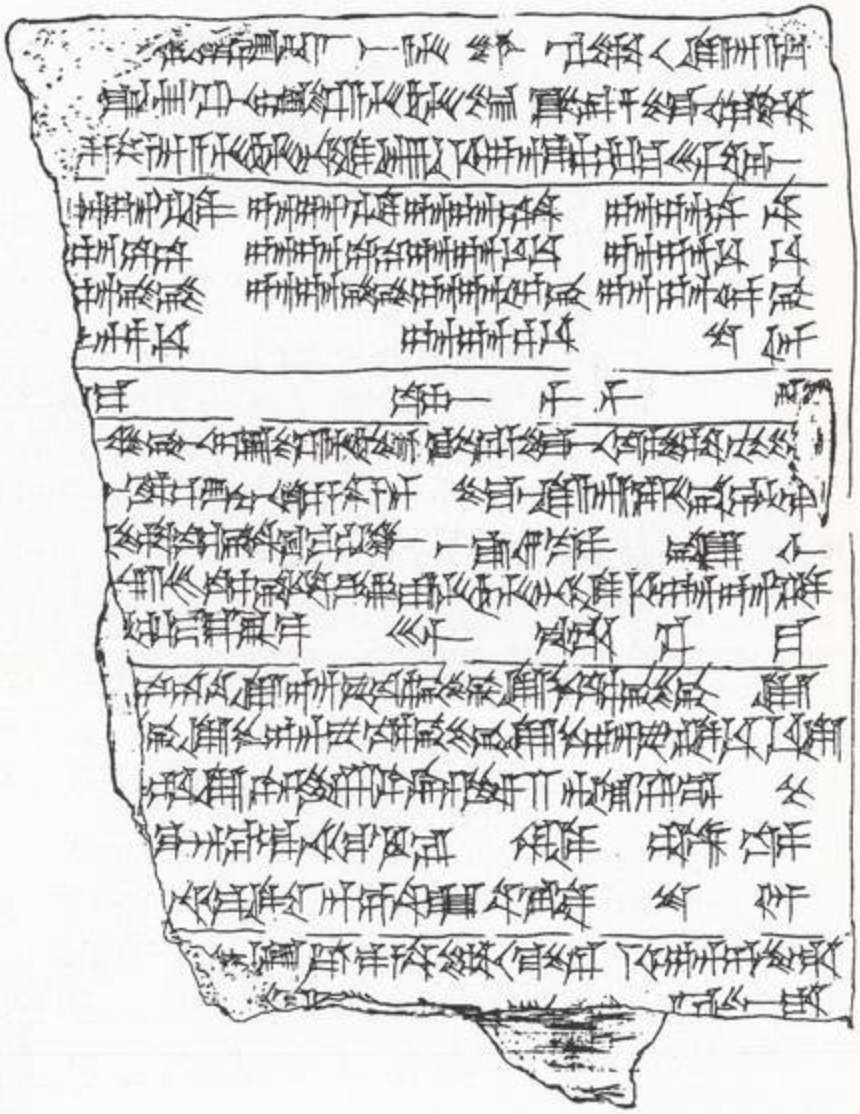
YBC 9863

81 x 73 mm.

Obv.

YBC 9863

Rev.



5

10

15

20

Marduk's Address to the Demons

W.G. Lambert

'Marduk's Address to the Demons' is the title given by the present writer to a Babylonian exorcistic text now known to be some 260 lines long. The history of its recovery and publication is as follows: E. Ebeling, in his *Tod und Leben* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1931) gave as no. 5, under the title 'Hymne auf Marduk' (pp. iii, 24–26), an edition of a Neo-Assyrian Assur tablet known to him only from the Photo Assur 4125. He took it as a hymn 'die Namen und Prädikationen des Gottes aufzählt, ungefähr in der Art der 7. Tafel des *Enûma-eliš*-Mythus', stressing the provisional character of his edition because of the difficulty of reading the very small-scale photograph. Under the circumstances his readings were commendable, but he had failed to discern that the tablet offered a commentary on a kind of Marduk hymn, not the hymn itself. The matter was corrected by G. Meier, in *ZA* 47 (1942), 241–246, who was able to refer to 10 pieces of the text itself in the collection of K tablets of the British Museum (one already published, the others known to him from copies of Dr. F.W. Geers). However, he only re-edited the commentary, using Photo K 554 in addition to Photo Assur 4125. Meier disappeared in the war, and so never had the opportunity to publish what he knew of the text; thus the present writer took up the task and published the results in *AfO* 17 (1954/6), 310–321, with additions in *AfO* 19 (1960), 114–119. Seven more K pieces had been identified and eight joins made. Also R. Frankena had found the original of the Assur commentary in Istanbul and had copied it, along with a further piece of the same tablet not on the two photographs.

This represented progress, but the text remained fragmentary and disjointed. The writer persisted with further researches, both in the Geers copies and in the original tablets in the British Museum, aided there for the Babylonian tablets by I.L. Finkel; as a result he has now assembled the following: two pieces of one tablet of the text from Assur (both in Berlin), 36 K pieces, 27 tablets and fragments apparently from Sippar, and 47 Babylonian tablets and fragments apparently from Babylon or Borsippa. Quite a few of the pieces in Babylonian script are extracts on exercise tablets, attesting to the popularity of this work in Late Babylonian times. In addition to the published Assur commentary, there is also a small oblong tablet from the very same scribe commenting on two lines from this text, part of a quite different K commentary, and a section from a Late Babylonian commentary expounding every line, but entirely differently from the other commentaries. By now the whole text is recovered save for a short gap of perhaps five lines in the middle. Its organization is also now altogether clear, since Ebeling, Meier, Lambert and Frankena had all misjudged obverse and reverse of the big piece of the Assur commentary, and in consequence all the publications had organized the K pieces to express this misunderstanding. As now revealed, this is a unique Babylonian exorcistic text and the present article is a preliminary report in advance of a forthcoming edition.

Like other exorcistic texts, its general purpose was to protect humans from the

malevolent attentions of sundry demons. Though this is a very common Sumerian and Babylonian genre, this particular example is unique for its overall structure and for most of its material. Normally, it seems, human exorcists spoke the incantations, and made their humanity clear while professing to have received their magic spells from a god. Thus a common ending is: 'the incantation is not mine, it is the incantation of....', naming one of the several gods who were claimed as authors. But in Marduk's Address the greater part emphatically claims to be spoken by Marduk himself, under his name Asalluḫi, a name commonly found in Sumerian incantations.

As now preserved in Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian tablets, the Address begins with a short complete incantation of the conventional type, indeed it also occurs in the Late Babylonian *Qutāru* series. It speaks of Asalluḫi in the third person, and hopes with his spell to drive demons away. Next comes a long section in which each line begins 'I am Asalluḫi' and is then followed by a full poetic line of epithets. The first ten or so epithets deal largely with Marduk's exorcistic prowess, but thereafter they range over a large variety of his (and other gods') attributes. Our reconstructed text offers 98 lines in this section, and one copy has a scribal note '97' (or perhaps '98') written within the last line. However, one textual witness has an extra line, making 99, and it is possible that the author compiled 100, but scribes occasionally dropped out single lines by accident. Probably not one of these lines following on 'I am Asalluḫi' was composed by the compiler, for the following reasons. (i) A number of lines, including pairs of adjacent lines, appear in other contexts, mostly, but not exclusively, in Marduk hymns, prayers and exorcistic texts. (ii) Apart from the emphasis on exorcism at the beginning, there is no development of ideas in the section; here the author reveals his lack of literary sense. Note that lines 56–57 both begin (after 'I am Asalluḫi') 'who lives in Esagil', as does line 52; and line 16 is almost the same as line 44. The section is more disorderly than most Babylonian hymnography.

The next section begins with a brief myth: 'Asalluḫi..... saw them.....' Saw whom? The immediately preceding lines, the end of the 'I am Asalluḫi' section, make no allusion to demons, who obviously are meant. Within the text, the first, short traditional incantation best provides the background for the phrase 'Asalluḫi ..... saw them', but that incantation is now so far back that one hesitates to offer this suggestion. But to continue: Marduk, after seeing 'them' addresses his vizier (not son!) Nabû, 'Who is this ...?' as if he did not know who 'them' were, and continues to express his ignorance: 'Should you be evil demons ...', at which point the gap in the text occurs. When the text resumes, after one line apparently beginning 'I exorcise', all the lines begin 'or who' (*lū ša*) and the vast majority end with a second personal plural verb, so Marduk is listing demonic activities as he addresses the demons in question. There are again 98 lines beginning 'or who', so again one may suspect the author compiled 100 but two have dropped out in scribal transmission. But in this case the organization is systematic, rather like the organization of the best edited omen series. Thus a group of 37 are specifically concerned with actions against a sick person, while most of the last 24 allude to the shades of those who died in circumstances which precluded their entry into the netherworld, or who were similarly excluded by lack of funerary offerings.

It seems that the 'or who' section is an original literary creation, though using some traditional material, of course. New grammatical and lexical material attests to the author's learning. After 'or who' the work is, as now known, rounded off with two short

sections: these sections are very traditional and spoken by a human exorcist who invokes Asalluḫi to drive away demons, but also calls on other gods for the same purpose. Some of the lines are known in other incantations.

The following summary based on the reconstructed line numbers, along with selected lines in the reconstructed text, and translations, may help to give the flavour of the whole:

(a) Lines 1–9: traditional short incantation invoking Marduk:

8 [*ina pā*]*n te-e šá* ^{d}*asal-lú-ḫi maš-maš ilāni*^{meš} *mār* ^{d}*ea*(idim) *apkalli*
9 *dup-pir pu-ṭur lem-nu šá pāni-iá uk-kiš a-a-bi šá arki-iá*

8 Before the spell of Asalluḫi, the magician of the gods, son of Ea, the sage,
9 begone, depart, Evil that is in front of me, make off Enemy that is behind me!

(b) Lines 10–107: 'I am Asalluḫi' section:

17 *ana-ku* ^{d}*asal-lú-ḫi na-si-iḫ mur-ṣi mu-ab-bit šadê*^{meš} *e-lu-ti*
I am Asalluḫi, who removes diseases, who destroys high mountains

106 [*ana-ku* ^{d}*asal-lú-ḫi*] *šá ina te-ni-še-e-ti reme-nu-ú* ^{d}*marduk*
[I am Asalluḫi], who is merciful among mankind, Marduk

(c) Lines 108–122 and Section II 1–99: short narrative myth leading on to 'or who' section:

108 *i-mur-šu-nu-ti-ma* ^{d}*asal-lú-ḫi ušumgal šamê u erṣetim*^{tim} ^{d}*marduk*
109 *a-na* ^{d}*nabû*(nà) *sukkalli-šú a-ma-ta i-za-kar*
110 *man-nu an-nu-ú šá a-na pî a-'-i-ru* [...]

---

108 Asalluḫi, unique one in heaven and netherworld, Marduk, saw them,
109 to Nabû, his vizier, he addressed a word,
110 Who is this who at the command of an aggressor [...]?
II 7 *lu-ú šá ki-ma barbari te-te-nek-ki-ka*
II 8 [*lu-ú šá k*]*īma birqi t*[*a-at*]*-ta-nab-ri-q*[*u*]

II 7 Or who constantly scratch like a wolf,
II 8 Or who constantly flash like lightning,

II 91 *lu-u šá ina ṣil-le-e de-šá-tu-nu*
II 92 *lu-u šá ina ga-ši-ši pu-ut-tu-ḫa-tu-nu*

II 91 Or who were threshed with spikes,
II 92 Or who were impaled on poles,

(d) Lines II 100–109: 100–104 all begin *lissuḫkunūši Asalluḫi*, 'May Asalluḫi extirpate you', each time followed by stock epithets. 105–109 all begin *utammīkunūši Asalluḫi nīš* ...., 'Asalluḫi has exorcised you by ...', bringing in other gods to assist in the process.

(e) Lines II 110–127 ask for the removal of troublesome demons and shades to the netherworld, by the powers of the netherworld:

II 110 *lid-din-ku-nu-ši* ^{d}*mes-lam-ta-è-a i-na bāb kur.nu.gi$_4$.a*
May Meslamta'e'a hand you over at the gate of the netherworld

II 117 ^{d}*a-nun-na-ki ilāni*^{meš} *rabûti*^{meš} *lik-mu-ku-nu-ši*
May the Anunnaki, the great gods, overcome you

* * * * * * * * * * *

Further analysis and conclusions will depend on a grasp of the functions and context of the composition. One Late Babylonian tablet has a catch-line which is the incipit of a bilingual incantation, the first in Tablet **XII** of the series Udug-ḫul, as M.J. Geller has established. So in this edition Marduk's Address was Tablet **XI** of Udug-ḫul. However, things were different elsewhere. The oldest copies are no doubt those from Assur, and the big Assur commentary also has a catch-line, in this case with the explicit Assur formula for fixed sequences of tablets:

[x x (x)] x ZAB *ana ka-ra-ši arkī-šú iš-šaṭ-ṭ*[*ar*]
'[...].. to annihilation' will be written after it.

This alludes to an Akkadian text, not Tablet **XII** of Udug-ḫul. Also there is no reason to doubt that the Assur commentary is based on the whole text of Marduk's Address as known to us. It cites for comment only 18 lines from section (b) and 5 lines from section (c), but it quotes the incipit as én *dup-pir lem-nu* 'Incantation. Begone, evil one!', which is the first phrase in section (a). Thus its failure to comment on lines in sections (d) and (e) is no evidence that those sections were lacking from the Assur text. (The surviving pieces of the Assur text do not extend to either section (d) or (e).) The K commentary, which is more text-critical notes than a normal commentary, is known from two pieces which seem to overlap, but certainly belong to the same type of text. First, a Sumerian line is quoted with variant reading, no doubt from an exorcistic text. Then a variant form of line 9 of Marduk's Address is cited:

pu-ṭur dup-pir lem-nu šá pa-ni-ia
Depart, begone, Evil that is in front of me

(No other known witness has this transposed pair of verbs.) After this it skips over section (b), but cites lines from sections (c), (d) and (e), concluding with the final line of (e). Then a line is drawn across the column, and of the following line of script only the end remains (the last preserved line on the fragment):

[x x x (x) ḫ]ul.a.kam

It would be possible to restore this [én udug.ḫ]ul.a.kam as a rubric to what preceded, but at the beginning no rubric was used when the textual notes changed from a Sumerian or bilingual incantation to Marduk's Address, so more probably it is a line from the composition following on Marduk's Address in the series used by the compiler of the commentary. It is not the same as the first line known from the catch-line in the Late Babylonian copy, but it is from either a Sumerian or bilingual exorcistic text.

The conclusion to be drawn is that Marduk's Address existed as a whole before it was drawn into a series. In a Late Babylonian form of Udug.ḫul it had a place, and in two different series in Assur and Nineveh in Late Assyrian times. In any case, Udug.ḫul was not a series of tablets for use in sequence in a single ritual cycle. Thus there is no larger whole within which Marduk's Address can be placed and understood. All questions have to be asked of that text by itself.

As already noted, section (a), (d) and (e) are typical of exorcistic incantations from the late libraries, though only (a) is so far known in another compilation. However, groups of lines in (a), (d) and (e) occur in other related texts, so even if we wish to assert that the author/compiler was responsible for these sections and did not take them over *in toto* from an existing source, we will still have to conclude that the 'author's' contribution was chiefly in the field of compilation. With section (b) and (c) things are very different and their 'author' manifested much more originality, even if in the first case most, or even all, of the literary lines were borrowed. That this was never a general hymn of praise to Marduk is clear from the exorcistic emphasis at the beginning, and the prefixing of 'I am Asalluḫi' to every line, Asalluḫi being the name of Marduk in exorcism especially. One might argue that 'I am Asalluḫi' was meant to explain that a human priest was playing the part of Marduk, but here two things must be carefully distinguished. First, if Marduk's Address was ever performed, a human must have recited it. He would then be providing Marduk's voice. But that is different from, secondly, a priest claiming to act with the powers and attributes of Marduk, in short becoming Marduk by repeatedly stating 'I am Asalluḫi'. It is so characteristic of incantations to stress that the human performer is acting in the power of divine patrons, and is not relying on his own resources, that the second alternative is untenable. But then we have to accept that section (b) is something very extraordinary not only for its literary structure and content but also for its ideology. Self-praise by a deity is not unique to Marduk's Address. In the Sumerian, and later bilingual, lamentations the various deities can speak, and in Uru amairabi there is a long speech of self-praise by Inanna.[1] However, no incantation can rival Marduk's Address in this respect.

Section (c) already starts with a problem. 'Asalluḫi saw them' reads like an Akkadian version of the middle of a traditional Sumerian incantation of the 'Marduk-Ea-Typ'.[2] In this genre first some demonic activity is described, then Asalluḫi 'sees' what is going on and reports it to his father Enki, and after some conferring between them the matter is cleared up. In Marduk's Address the conference is between Marduk and his son Nabû,

[1] M.E. Cohen, *The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Potomac, Maryland, 1988), 573ff. and 594ff.

[2] A. Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der sumerischen Beschwörung* (Leipziger Semitische Studien, Neue Folge 1: Leipzig, 1931), 44ff.

here described as his vizier. With an all-powerful Marduk a discussion on equal terms with his father would be demeaning, so Nabû replaces Enki. But the similarity is not a coincidence. But, as explained above, no description of demonic activity is given in this text, so the conclusion is forced upon us that the compiler has inserted at this point some lines from the middle of a post-Old Babylonian Akkadian incantation. However, the long and carefully constructed *lū ša* section, though paralleled in shorter such listings in bilingual incantations,[3] is clearly an original construction of merit.

So while sections (b) and (c) are highly original as literary compositions, one is left with the problem that the composite nature of the whole is less successful as literature. Nothing fundamentally new is offered for exorcism: it is assumed that demons and shades of the dead exist and trouble the living, and that Marduk with the help of other gods in sections (d) and (e) can overcome them. However, the *Sitz im Leben* is the outstanding question. No doubt the author/compiler had some specific purpose in view when he composed this text. Its 260 lines were too formidable for recitation whenever demonic activity required the services of an exorcist. Also the appearing of Marduk in person within the major part of the text surely presumes a very special occasion. But here there is no shred of evidence to suggest an answer. No rubric gives instructions on when and how to perform the text. Of course, even if we knew what the author/compiler intended, that would not necessarily give us the truth. The author/compiler may have had a particularly important occasion in mind, but others may have prevented its being so used, and it might have been employed on occasions to which its content was not specially suited. One can only hope that future discoveries will give us at least some information of this kind.

[3] See W.G. Lambert, *AfO* 17 (1954/6), 310.

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