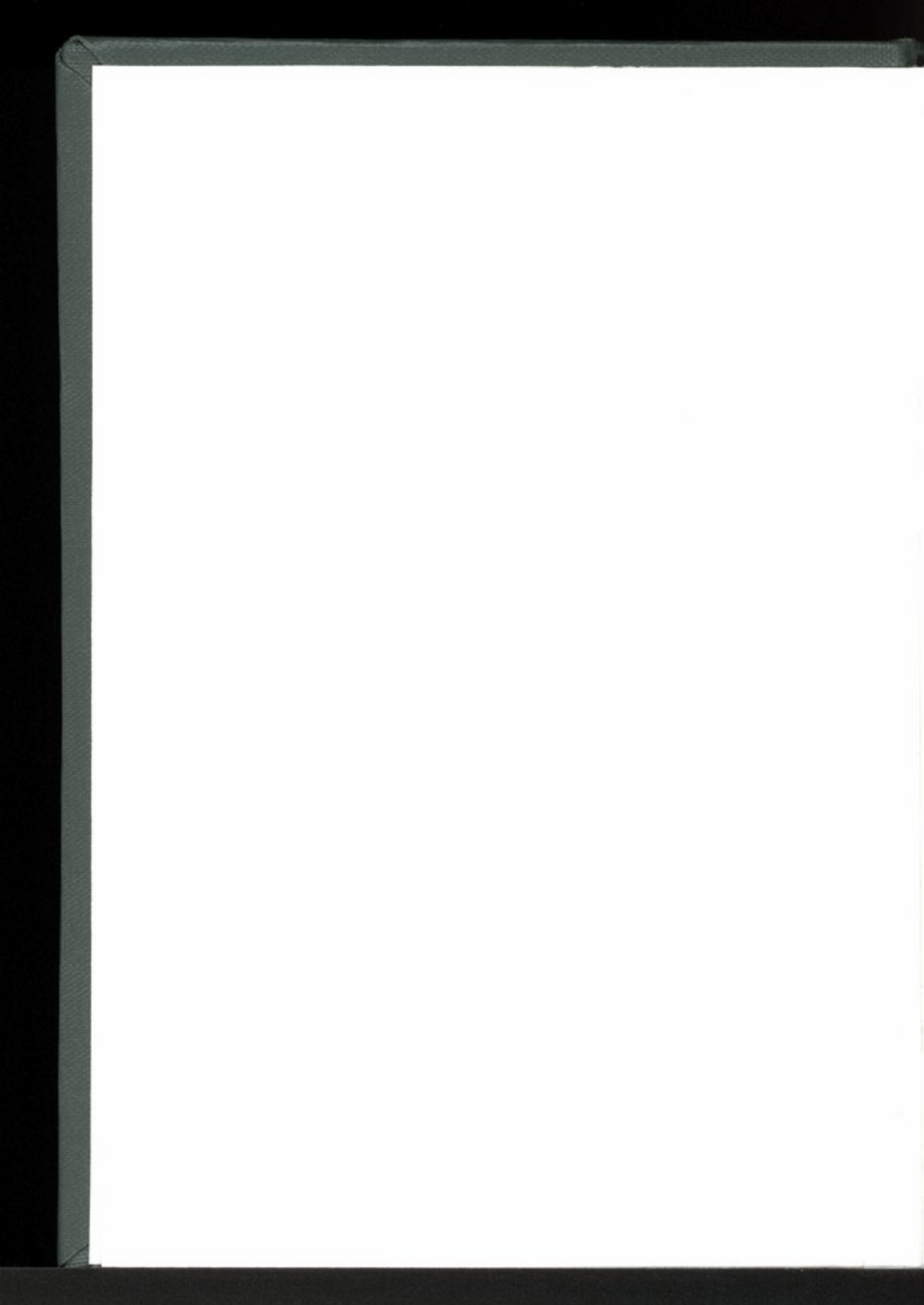


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## EPILEPSY IN BABYLONIA

CUNEIFORM MONOGRAPHS

Edited by

M. J. Geller, S. Maul and F. A. M. Wiggermann

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CUNEIFORM MONOGRAPHS II

# EPILEPSY IN BABYLONIA

By

M. Stol

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## PREFACE

This book intends to give a survey of how the Babylonians viewed and treated epilepsy. The most famous passage is a section in the Code of Hammurabi on epilepsy as a hidden defect in purchased slaves, but there is much more. One has to turn to the medical texts in order to get more specific information. Among these the Diagnostic Handbook is of prime importance: it gives the symptoms of many varieties of epilepsy and related ailments and adds a diagnosis and a prognosis. The diagnosis is "sheer magic" in that the Babylonians only recognized supernatural causes of disease, often named the "hand" of a god or demon. To the student of medicine this can be disappointing but even so a challenge to diagnose those symptoms by modern means. This is what J.V. Kinnier Wilson and E.H. Reynolds did in a recent article. I am not qualified to attempt such an undertaking and am happy that this job has been done already for Tablet XXVI. Another approach of ancient medicine is that of "ethnomedicine": non-Western cultures have their own categorizations of diseases and the cultural anthropologist tries to make the underlying rules explicit. Although an amateur, I will try to follow this method in my own way — certainly too naive — by viewing epilepsy in the context of other diseases as seen by the Babylonians; the Diagnostic Handbook itself already puts one on this track. The attitudes of other ancient cultures of the Mediterranean world will be examined, hoping that they had some traditions in common.

It was the sharp photo of a cuneiform text dealing with epilepsy that was for me the incentive to study this disease more closely. Mr J.V. Kinnier Wilson (Cambridge) had this photo reproduced in one of his articles on Babylonian medicine (1982) but did not discuss it there; only later, in 1990, was he to publish a translation of the text in a non-Assyriological journal. Meanwhile we had discovered our common interest in this topic which led to a lively correspondence on the textual problems. Later on, Dr M.J. Geller (London) became interested and, in his selfless way, made a copy of the text to be incorporated in this publication. I had already studied the original in the British Museum in December 1987. I am grateful to the Trustees of the British Museum for their permission to publish this text in full. Dr I.L. Finkel (London) showed me his provisional transliterations or copies of some related texts which will be summarized here. Many other persons pointed out to me interesting details and additional literature; they will be given credit for their help in the text of this book.

Mr M.J.E. Richardson (University of Manchester) took on the task of correcting the English of the manuscript. He not only removed solecisms and bad idiom but also improved on the style by making it more rigid. I am most grateful for the meticulous work that he has done.

The abbreviations used are those common in Assyriological literature; see the lists of abbreviations in the dictionaries, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (AHw) and *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD).





## I INTRODUCTION

What actually is epilepsy and by what ways can one heal the person suffering from it? The answers given to these two questions over the centuries must involve the study of the history of medicine. The standard work on the history of epilepsy was written by Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness. A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology*, second edition, revised (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1971). The first edition had appeared in 1945. An older book, on epilepsy in Classical Antiquity, was written much earlier by a village doctor in Oude Wetering (The Netherlands): E.D. Baumann, *De Heilige Ziekte. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der geneeskunde in de Oudheid* (Nijgh & Van Ditmar, Rotterdam 1923).<sup>1</sup>

### Greek sources

Since the earliest times epilepsy was considered a disease of a marked supernatural character, a "sacred disease" that could be driven out only by magical means. It was to Hippocrates' eternal credit that he rejected this belief emphatically and looked for natural causes and a rational therapy. His small book *On the Sacred Disease*, written somewhere between 430 and 400 B.C., was a turning-point in the way man viewed epilepsy. Indeed, this tractate became — and still is — the symbol for a rational way of practising medicine because he rejects magic so vehemently. Elsewhere in his oeuvre, the "father of medicine" is far less polemical; he simply does not deem it worth mentioning supernatural explanations or treatments of disease.

Hippocrates claimed that this disease is as "sacred" as any other. He did not so much object to the "divine" element in epilepsy, but rather attacked "the notion of supernatural intervention in natural phenomena as a whole (...). Even when we have to deal with the divine, the divine is in no sense supernatural", writes Lloyd.<sup>2</sup> So Hippocrates could give the advice "to take the sick into the temples (and) there, by sacrifice and prayer, to make supplication to the gods."<sup>3</sup> Hippocrates criticises the concept "sacred" in an explicit way; more hidden is his avoidance of the traditional word for "disease" in ancient Greek, *noûsos*, with its superstitious overtones: he prefers the scientific term *nôsêma*.<sup>4</sup> We cannot silence the fact that his own interpretation of the disease was based on faulty and purely theoretical premises sounding rather absurd to the modern reader.<sup>5</sup> But let us remain modest: epilepsy still is largely unexplained and it was and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Baumann's summary, written in German, in *Janus* 29 (1925) 7–32. — A list of recent titles on epilepsy will be given in the Short Bibliography at the end of this book.

<sup>2</sup> G.E.R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience* (1976) 26 f., in his discussion of Hippocrates' tractate, p. 15–29, 37–49. Cf. also Heinz-Werner Nörenberg, *Das Göttliche und die Natur in der Schrift "Über die Heilige Krankheit"* (1968); Ph.J. van der Eijk, "The 'Theology' of the Hippocratic Treatise On the Sacred Disease", *Apeiron* 23 (1990) 87–119; id., " 'Airs, waters, places' and 'On the Sacred Disease': two different religiosities?", *Hermes* 119 (1991) 168–176.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Littré VI 362; Grensemann 66; Jones 148.

<sup>4</sup> Gert Preiser, *Allgemeine Krankheitsbezeichnungen im Corpus Hippocraticum* (1976) 72–113; esp. 82–89, "noûsos und nôsêma in Morb. Sacr."

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd, 20–24; Temkin, 54 f.

remains Hippocrates who showed mankind the way out of the realm of magical lore.

We do not know much about the superstitions on epilepsy in ancient Greece before, during and even after Hippocrates; actually, the polemics in his own book are our main source. Already in Classical Antiquity there was a discussion about what the word "sacred" in the name of the disease stands for.<sup>6</sup> More than twenty years ago, Giuliana Lanata wrote a small book trying to find out what exactly Hippocrates was inveighing against; she gave her book the title *Medicina magica e religione popolare in Grecia fino all'età di Ippocrate* (Rome 1967). This title is somewhat misleading in being too general: she predominantly examines the magical notions the Greeks had on epilepsy in Hippocrates' time.

The standard works by Baumann and Temkin do not pay much attention to the dark "prehistory" and "magic" about epilepsy. For these scholars, the history of epilepsy starts with the enlightened Father of Medicine. This book, a chapter on that "prehistory", fills that gap. But beforehand it is perhaps not out of place to say something about the "magic" surrounding epilepsy in the Classical world, which persisted and remained virulent after Hippocrates.

To be sure, ancient scientific medical scholarship after Hippocrates no more reckoned with demonic powers engendering epilepsy and located its causes in the brain, the heart, the stomach, the hands or feet.<sup>7</sup> The therapy, too, was rational but must have been of little avail because the disease remained incurable. Almost as a consequence, we see how in later Greek and Roman authors all kinds of remedies strongly smelling of magic are creeping in; blood plays an important rôle.<sup>8</sup> Even rationally thinking authors cannot help referring seriously to this quack medicine.<sup>9</sup> But there is more: it has been shown that rational science was on the wane at the end of the late Hellenistic age and that we can witness a revival of "credulity" in the first century B.C. A new era of superstition began and was to last for at least five centuries.<sup>10</sup> In the first century A.D. one can observe how medication on the basis of magical sympathy is gaining ground and that the treatment of epilepsy is a good example for this emerging "religious medicine".<sup>11</sup> This also seems to have been the "fashion" of the day, followed by the well known doctor Archigenes but rejected by Aretaeus.<sup>12</sup> Soranus strongly opposes those administering the entire *Dreckapotheke* in an academic garb; for us those polemical pages, preserved by Caelius Aurelianus, are instructive.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Schneble (see the Bibliography at the end of this book), 20–22. According to G. Sticker (see the Bibliography), the ancients named four diseases "sacred": epilepsy, madness (including lunacy), certain skin diseases (including leprosy), *sacer ignis*. What unites them are their divine origin and the fact that those suffering from them are excluded from the community.

<sup>7</sup> A large selection of passages from the medical texts will be found in Walter Müri, *Der Arzt im Altertum. Griechische und lateinische Quellenstücke von Hippokrates bis Galen mit der Übertragung ins Deutsche* (1962) 234–281.

<sup>8</sup> Baumann, 175–187 (esp. Pliny the Elder), 285–7, etc.; Temkin, 12 f.

<sup>9</sup> Baumann, 196 (Dioscorides), 218 f. (Aretaeus), 262 (Galen); Temkin, 79 f. (Dioscorides).

<sup>10</sup> Thus R.M. Grant, *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (1952) 41, 61 ff., summarized in his judicious article "Miracle and Mythology", *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 4 (1952) 123–133.

<sup>11</sup> F. Kudlien, *Untersuchungen zu Aretaios von Kappadokien* (1963) 27 f., adducing the "swallow stones" in Diosc. I 138, 5–10 as an example; see also G.E.R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience* (1979) 41–3.

<sup>12</sup> Kudlien, 28. For Aretaeus on epilepsy, see Max Wellmann, *Die pneumatische Schule* (1895) 54–60 (note that Wellmann does not see any difference between the doctors of the Pneumatic School).

<sup>13</sup> *On Chronic Diseases* I, section 116 and on; ed. I.E. Drabkin, 514–535.



In later centuries the medical handbooks simply gave two kinds of treatment side by side, the first rational, the second magical. So the Latin author Theodorus Priscianus (ca. 380 A.D.) wrote two books on medicine, the one based on rational medicine (*Euporiston*), the other (*Physica*) recommending magical means, in Greek *phusiká*.<sup>14</sup> In both he discusses *epilempsis* and at the end of the pertinent section in the "scientific" book he refers the reader to the magical means "in our book of the *Physica*" where the reader can find "the great and, in a way, the religious remedies".<sup>15</sup> Alexander of Tralles, a compiler living in Rome in the sixth century A.D., but writing in Greek, proceeds in a very similar way in his extensive chapter on epilepsy.<sup>16</sup> After having expounded the rational remedies, he turns to the occult remedies (*phusiká*) and amulets (*perihápta*) about which he had heard from others or read in books.<sup>17</sup> The plant peony plucked during the waning of the moon or the night-shade may help — a prescription stemming from Ostanos, the famous Magus.<sup>18</sup> A strong potion is to be drunk at the waning of the moon.<sup>19</sup> One can also wear on one's finger a ring of jasper "looking like turquoise (*kalláinos*)".<sup>20</sup>

We cannot entirely blame these authors for trying to avoid the inevitable by desperate means.

#### Babylonian sources

Returning now to the "prehistory" of epilepsy, we will present the treatment of epilepsy as practised by the Babylonians and Assyrians, the subject-matter of this book. We base ourselves on the clay tablets used by them as writing material, inscribed with their cuneiform scripts. Their experts in medicine were primarily theologians and ritualists, something like "exorcists", because at that time medicine and magic were one and no distinction between religion and magic can be seen.

It is somewhat shocking that the latest full article written on epilepsy in the world of the Babylonians and Assyrians was written as early as in 1911, and by an outsider at that, though a famous scholar in medical history: Karl Sudhoff. This was the only article Temkin could use for his book of 1971 and even the Assyriologist Erich Ebeling had nothing more to say when contributing his nine-line article "Epilepsie" to the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* in 1938. When we see that in recent fascicles of this same excellent encyclopaedia of Assyriological learning those writing on the demons Lugal-amašpa'e and Lugal-urra (1987) did not realise that they were talking of the demons of epilepsy, time seems to have come to say something more on all this.

<sup>14</sup> *Phusiká*, lit. "belonging to Nature", acquired the meaning "occult, magical"; see Max Wellmann in *Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Jahrgang 1928, philosophisch-hist. Klasse, Nr. 7 p. 1 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Valentine Rose (1894) p. 147-9, *Eup.* II, "Logicus", cap. XV section 47-48, and p. 253-5 *Phys.* II sections 5-7.

<sup>16</sup> Ed. Th. Puschmann, Band I (1878) 534-574, cf. the introductory remarks by the editor, p. 138-144.

<sup>17</sup> From p. 556 and on.

<sup>18</sup> P. 566; also 564. Cf. J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* II (1938) 302.

<sup>19</sup> P. 572, above the middle; cf. p. 570.

<sup>20</sup> P. 566, bottom; also p. 570, bottom. We will return to remedies like these in Chapter VI, "Leather bags", and "Amulets".

## INTRODUCTION

The only Assyriologist to look from time to time into epilepsy among the Babylonians was J.V. Kinnier Wilson who made a number of valuable remarks in various articles and gave a translation of an important text that we will discuss here.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> His most coherent survey will be found in Don Brothwell, A.T. Sandison, *Diseases in Antiquity* (1967) 201–203.

## II BABYLONIAN TERMINOLOGY

Every student beginning Assyriology will soon learn that the Akkadian word *bennu* means "epilepsy" because in his first introductory courses he will come across this word in § 278 of the Old Babylonian Code of Hammurabi: a slave, just bought but appearing to suffer from an attack of epilepsy, can be returned to the seller. This word was indeed used for the disease in everyday language; in present-day Iraq *šara'* or *ra'ayša*.<sup>1</sup> An advanced student, learning the medical texts, will probably meet the very learned Sumerian word *a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a*, lit. "fallen from heaven", again denoting epilepsy. Very rarely he will get acquainted with the god Lugal-urra and he probably will not be aware of the identity of this god as the demon of epilepsy. He will meet in those contexts other evil or divine powers threatening human health; are they related to epilepsy?

We propose to study the various types of epilepsy first, then to view them in their contexts, together with other "diseases", clearly related, from which we will single out a few for further study.

### *bennu*

The most common word, used in every day life, was *bennu*, written *be-en-nu-(um)* in the Old Babylonian syllabic cuneiform script, but a few times *be-e-nu*.<sup>2</sup> We have no idea of the etymology of this word.<sup>3</sup> An unpublished Neo-Assyrian slave sale contract offers the variant *bi-bi-it* in a causula where one normally finds *bennu*.<sup>4</sup> This late form — unexplained — enables us to identify the demonic disease *bibitu*, associated with "shivering" and "cold" in the lexical tradition, as a form of epilepsy. We find the word *bennu* in texts about the sale of slaves, to be discussed later (Chapter X), in a letter, in medical texts, and in "literary" contexts: a myth, omens and curses. The letter, found in the Old Babylonian city of Mari, concerns a woman: "she mutilates (?) her fingers and *bennu* 'falls' on her time and again"; the reason, it is alleged, is "the god of my lord" who has "reached" (*kašādu*) her because she had calumniated "my lord".<sup>5</sup> What is new in this letter is the idea that epilepsy can be a divine punishment. We already knew, mainly from omen texts, that this disease can "fall" on a patient;<sup>6</sup> on the other hand, it can also "get up" (*tebū*), i.e., go away, leave.<sup>7</sup> Very threatening is a *bennu* that

<sup>1</sup> R.J. MacCarthy, F. Raffouli, *Spoken Arabic of Baghdad II-A* (1965) 195, sub 42.

<sup>2</sup> In liver omens, Ulla Jeyes, *Old Babylonian Extispicy. Omen Texts in the British Museum* (1989) 107.

<sup>3</sup> Note the forms of a verb *banū*, *i-be-en-ni*, A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (1986) 172:5 (= ZA 6 241:17); [*u*]b-te-en-ni li-gi-m[a-a ..], W.G. Lambert, *BWL* 76 Theodicy 128; *mubennū*, in *CAD* M/2 159b.

<sup>4</sup> ND 2327:23, brought to my attention by Remko Jas (Amsterdam): *MÁŠ-tú bi-bi-it <a-na I me> u<sub>4</sub>-me*. — The combination *bennu bibum* in B. Alster, ed., *Death in Mesopotamia* (1980) 117, sub D, is not attested. The comma between the two words fell out. The source for *bibum* is YOS 10 56 I 6-7 (communication by U. Jeyes).

<sup>5</sup> D. Charpin, *ARMT* 26 (= *AEM* 1/2) 71 no. 312:36-39.

<sup>6</sup> J. Nougayrol, *RA* 67 (1973) 49 f.; U. Jeyes, *Old Babylonian Extispicy* (1989) 107 f.

<sup>7</sup> YOS 10 41:54.



does not "get up" (*la tebû*).<sup>8</sup> The patient is in this letter a woman,<sup>9</sup> but the disease can equally affect men.

Turning now to the medical texts, one finds some of the initial symptoms of *bennu* described in a prescription from Assur about how to make a leather bundle, filled with *materia magica*, to be hung around the neck: "If a man is quivering all the time when lying down, shouts like the shouting of a goat, roars, is apprehensive, shouts a lot all the time (variant: "talks a lot"), (then it is) the Hand of *bennu*, the demon (*šēdu*), deputy of *Sîn*. In order to cure him, you shall ..." (etc.).<sup>10</sup> Clearly, the symptoms of an approaching fit are described here and named "the Hand" of epilepsy, identified as "the demon, deputy of (the moon-god) *Sîn*". One of the symptoms, the quivering (*galātu*) when lying down, is often a symptom, mentioned next to epilepsy, in lists of amulet stones used against them.<sup>11</sup> Other medical texts closely associate *bennu* with "shivering" (*šuruppû*); one and the same amulet stone can be used "in order that *bennu* and *šuruppû* do not come near to a man".<sup>12</sup> "Shivering" seems to be concomitant with the *bennu* form of epilepsy. A diagnostic text tells us that *bennu* can "begin with cold fever (*hurbāšu*)".<sup>13</sup>

What does "deputy of (the moon-god) *Sîn*" exactly mean? The expression "demon, deputy (*šanû*)" of a god is not very frequent, attested in a few key texts<sup>14</sup> and in scattered passages. The gods whose "hand" is the cause, are nameless and indicated by adjectives sounding as epithets, like *munnišu* "debilitating", *ezzu* "fierce",<sup>15</sup> *muttaklu* "devouring", *nadru* "raging"; an example is: "Hand of the Fierce god, the demon, deputy of Nergal" (*qāt ilī gašri šēdu šanê Nergal*).<sup>16</sup> Sometimes, we find no epithet but the name of a disease, as in *qāt ra ībi* "Hand of Trembling (deputy of Anum);<sup>17</sup> or one finds "Hand of the Spirit (of the dead)" (always the deputy of *Ištar*).<sup>18</sup> Very often the epithet or name of the disease is preceded by the sign for "god",<sup>19</sup> but this demonic power is no real god; it is just a demon — Akkadian *šēdu* must have this meaning here, foreshadowing its common use in Aramaic *šidā*, a loanword taken from Akkadian. This power, although divine, is still lacking in "personality" and for that reason the "deputy" of a higher god, so we assume. Seeking for redress the patient has to approach the real god who is the ultimate sender of his ailment. Turning to *bennu*, we now realize that this demonic disease acts as deputy of the moon-god *Sîn*.<sup>20</sup> In a

<sup>8</sup> Nougayrol, p. 44 f., lines 67–70.

<sup>9</sup> As in the fragmentary medical texts *BAM* 3 245:6 and 249:5.

<sup>10</sup> *BAM* 3 311:51–55, with dupl. 202 rev. 5–11. Cf. F. Köcher, *ibid.* p. XXIII, and S. Dunham, *ZA* 75 (1985) 253.

<sup>11</sup> *BAM* 2 183:31; 4 356 I 21; 364 I 5; 5 376 II 30; 377 III 4.

<sup>12</sup> *CT* 51 89 III 13–14, 26; cf. *BAM* 2 183:32; 4 377 III 7; *STT* 2 273 III 7. — More on this in Chapter VI, 5., Amulets.

<sup>13</sup> *STT* I 89:196 (Chapter V).

<sup>14</sup> The key texts are: J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *Iraq* 19 (1957) 41 ND 4368, col. VI (and II); *BAM* 4 407; *CT* 14 38 K. 14081. For *šēdu* we find two Sumerograms, ALĀD and A.RĀ.

<sup>15</sup> *STT* I 93:60.

<sup>16</sup> *BAM* 4 407:10.

<sup>17</sup> *STT* I 93:106 f.

<sup>18</sup> *BAM* 1 3 III 8 f.; 5 482 II 62, IV 47; *SpTU* III no. 88 I 10 f. (= *TDP* 36:31 f.); *TDP* 32:10, with an astrological explanation in the commentary *CT* 51 136:14.

<sup>19</sup> Note the obscure <sup>d</sup>AŠ-di in *Iraq* 19 41 VI 15 (so ! for AŠ.DU = di'û or *šuruppû*?) and <sup>d</sup>NIN-ri in *KUB* 4 56 II 3, 4.

<sup>20</sup> See also p. 130. — Another ref. is *STT* I 93:41, where — as always in this text — A.RĀ stands for *šēdu*.



separate chapter we will study the relationship between epilepsy and the moon. In this section we will soon meet with *bennu* deified as the obscure god Lugal-amašpae who demonstrably has lunar features.

In the chapter on the diagnostic texts there will be a fuller discussion about *bennu*. Here, additional information from the lexical texts, the "dictionaries" that the Babylonians made for their own use, will be provided. They show that almost all forms of epilepsy to be discussed on the following pages are equated with *bennu*, so it follows that this is the most general expression. One equation, however, offers something new: one Sumerian word for the disease, *s a a d n i m*, is both *bennu* and *šaššaṭu* in Akkadian. The latter disease is a muscular one according to its Sumerogram "heavy muscle" (SA.DUGUD).<sup>21</sup> If *s a a d n i m* means "muscle", the word obliquely points to the muscular convulsions during an epileptic fit. Another, late, lexical text has *bennu* and "Hand of the God" after various fevers (*humtu*)<sup>22</sup> — which does not necessarily mean that *bennu* is feverish.

How is the form of epilepsy called *bennu* distinguished from the other forms? Not at all, one is inclined to say, because it is the general word for "epilepsy". However, *periodicity* may be its special characteristic. The clausula about the possibility of *bennu* in slave sale contracts, to be studied later, points to a chronic disease with recurrent manifestations and the iterative form in the letter from Mari has the same implication: *bennu* falls on the woman "time and again". The title of a literary work preserved in a catalogue also suggests periodicity: "*Bennu* was renewed"; the same verb was used for the moon "renewing" every month.<sup>23</sup> The Akkadian word *ittu*, attested only once in the diagnostic texts,<sup>24</sup> seems to indicate the expected moment of an epileptic fit.<sup>25</sup>

# *miqit šamê* (a n t a š u b b a)

The Sumerian word *a n t a š u b b a* is a learned expression for epilepsy and only attested in the "scientific literature" of the Babylonians, primarily in their medical and magical texts. In Sumerian the word means "what has fallen from heaven"<sup>26</sup> and is very similar to the word *a n t a š u b b a*, "meteorite". Its equivalent in Akkadian is not known well, but a broken passage in a lexical text allows for *miqit šamê*, literally "what has fallen from heaven".<sup>27</sup> We find this Akkadian expression a few times in context: in a ritual<sup>28</sup> and in a damaged passage in the diagnostic handbook, "(the patient — a baby) was touched by *miqit šamê*; the Hand of his God; he will die".<sup>29</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>21</sup> An unpublished ref. is DT 87:6, commentary on TDP 80:10.

<sup>22</sup> CT 18 24 K. 4219 rev. I 10–14; dupl. LTBA 2 2:317–321; cf. B. Meissner, BAW I 71:39–43 (series An, IX).

<sup>23</sup> W.G. Lambert, JCS 16 (1962) 64, IV Sm. 669:7: *ú-te-ed-di-iš be-en-ni*: TILA [...].

<sup>24</sup> Tablet XXVI:7 (Chapter IV). In other contexts, not recognized by R. Labat: TDP 232:19, 234:33 (ana IGI.DUB GIG GAM).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. "his hour has come", originally said of an epileptic, in Palestine Arabic: S.H. Stephan, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 5 (1925) 14 no. 69, with note.

<sup>26</sup> Note syllabic a.[a n t] a. š u b b a in the late lex. text Igituh, AfO 18 (1957–58) 83:168 f., MS. E.

<sup>27</sup> With W. von Soden, AHW 658a; accepted by R. Borger in his ABZ, p. 60, 303. Cf. k a t a š u b b a = *miqit pi*. CAD M/2 103 f. gives the passages under *miqtu*. The lexical source is Antagal VII 160; copy in CT 19 22 II 10. The restoration in MSL 17 (1985) 166, MIN [šá GIG], is unlikely.

<sup>28</sup> STT 2 126:2, incorporated by F.A.M. Wiggermann in a ritual; see his *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits. The Ritual Texts* (1992) 18, line 278, and p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> TDP 234:25.

in a long list of diseases are listed, after incubus and succubus: "what has fallen from heaven" – "fiery glow (*širhu*) of a star (var. the stars)" – "fall of the *bennu*".<sup>30</sup>

A description of a n.t.a.š u b b a, more than once quoted in modern popular essays on Babylonian epilepsy, is found in the diagnostic handbook, but at an unexpected juncture: not in the chapters on epilepsy, but at the beginning of that detailing the ailments in the neck, shoulders, etc. We give a translation:<sup>31</sup>

- If a sick man's neck turns to the right, time and again, while his hands and feet are paralysed (*amšā*), his eyes are now closed, now rolling, saliva flows in/from his mouth, he makes ... sounds (*harāru*): (it is) a n.t.a.š u b b a.
- If his heart is awake (= he is conscious) when it seizes him, it will be eradicated (*nasāhu*).<sup>32</sup>
- If he does not know himself (= he is unconscious) when it seizes him, it will not be eradicated.
- If he turns his neck to the left, time and again, while his hands and feet are stretched, his eyes are wide open, (turned) to the sky, saliva flows in/from his mouth, he makes ... sounds; he does not know himself (= he is unconscious); in the end of [...] it (= the disease) overwhelms (*hiātu*) him time and again: (it is) a n.t.a.š u b b a; the Hand of Šin.

In the chapters in the diagnostic handbook on epilepsy proper a n.t.a.š u b b a occurs more often and can be compared with other forms of epilepsy. Saliva in the mouth seems to be an important characteristic. A late commentary on a medical text gives the following explanation: "a n.t.a.š u b b a: the sick person is choking and discharges his saliva all the time".<sup>33</sup>

The word "saliva" in medical texts deserves attention. When speaking of epilepsy, one expects "foam" rather than "saliva". The Akkadian word *ru'tu* (Sumerogram *ÚĤ*) is a cognate of Syriac *rūtā* "foam". The Syriac version of the New Testament uses this root (*rw*<sup>c</sup>) when describing the foaming of the epileptic boy in Mark 9:18, Greek *aphrōzō*. However, in Akkadian, "saliva" seems to be the most objective rendering of the word. *Ru'tu* is the normal word for "spittle"; one spits by throwing it (*nadū, šalū*). A few times, the plural form *ru'ātu* (also *ÚĤ.MEŠ*) occurs.<sup>34</sup> There is a second word for saliva in Akkadian, *illatu*, only attested in a few Old Babylonian incantations (in the form *elliātum*) and in later medical texts. This word always goes with the verb *alāku*, "to flow", lit. "to go". But this does not mean that everywhere when *ÚĤ* is said to "flow" we have to read this Sumerogram as *illatu*.<sup>35</sup> *Illatu* often is construed as feminine plural (*illakā*) but not always: singular and masculine plural forms also are attested.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> STT 2 138:19, dupl. BAM 4 338:20. — As to *šī-ri-iḫ MUL(.MEŠ)*, W. Farber, *BID* (1977) 145:81, translates in another ritual the passage GIM SUR MUL (...) *limqut* as "wie eine Sternschnuppe möge es auf die [weite] Erde fallen" (SUR = *širhu*).

<sup>31</sup> TDP 80:1–6.

<sup>32</sup> The manuscripts offer *ZI-nu* (Labat, Pl. XIX:3) and *ZI-<sup>l</sup>x<sup>l</sup>-ma* (Labat, Pl. XXI:3). The similar passage in the new text BM. 47753 rev. 3, Tablet XXVI of the Diagnostic Handbook, offers *ZI-aḫ (innassah)*; see Chapter IV.

<sup>33</sup> BRM 4 32:1 (*mar-ša uḫ-tan-naq à ÚĤ-su ŠUB.ŠUB-a AN.TA.ŠUB.BA*).

<sup>34</sup> CT 51 147:22; note *ru-ga-tim* and *ru-ḫa-tim* in Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian incantations; C. Wilcke, *ZA* 75 (1985) 198:18 with p. 206.

<sup>35</sup> Compare TDP 192:36 (*ÚĤ*) with the related passage BAM 5 471 II 22 (*ru-'u-tū*). Note *il-la-at* ANŠE (BAM 3 248 IV 40) and *ÚĤ ANŠE* in a duplicate (183:8).

<sup>36</sup> TDP 88:9, BAM 2 190:44 (sing.), BAM 2 145:8, 192:3 (masc. plural).



Although some medical texts seem to differentiate between  $\dot{U}\dot{H}$  (*ru'tu*, plural *ru'ātu*) and *illatu*,<sup>37</sup> it seems impossible to discover any basic difference (but note that only *ru'tu* plays a rôle in black magic). Perhaps *illatu* means "water in the mouth" and *ru'tu* "spittle", according to these texts. One passage uses both words: "If the saliva (*ellātu*) of a man flows when he is talking (and) he throws his spittle (*ru'tu*) to (another) man".<sup>38</sup> The pair reminds one of Hebrew *rîr* "descending" in David's beard (1 Samuel 21:14 [13]), and the *roq* that one swallows or spits (Job 7:19, 30:10). *Illatu* can be the saliva of animals.<sup>39</sup> The Akkadian word for "foam" is probably *rupuštu*.

On the mythological level we can suggest an explanation for saliva being characteristic of a n.t a.š u b.b a : for the Babylonian it was "falling down from heaven", a n.t a.š u b.b a. A very similar idea can be found in an Old Babylonian incantation against jaundice: its cause is "the spittle" (*elliatum*) of the god Nergal, "raining like a shower".<sup>40</sup> See further, in the section on diseases from heaven.

A n.t a.š u b.b a has some peculiar characteristics. First: this is the only form of epilepsy that must be "torn out", "eradicated" (*nasāhu*); this is not said of *bennu*, etc.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, one prescription tells us that a patient suffering from it must eat the flesh of the bird *eššebû* (an owl?) — the same prescription is used to "eradicate and loosen" the Hand of a Spirit (of the dead), which suggests a connection between the two.<sup>42</sup>

#### miqtu

A late lexical text equates the theological expression a n.t a.š u b.b a "fallen from heaven" with two words from daily life, namely *miqtu* and *bennu*.<sup>43</sup> The word *miqtu* means "something that has fallen down", see above, and sounds like an ordinary word, less sophisticated than a n.t a.š u b.b a = *miqit šamê*. In fact *miqtu* often stands for "epilepsy". We will give the evidence now.

The first chapter (tablet) on epilepsy in the diagnostic handbook starts with "If *miqtu* has fallen upon him and ..." (Tablet XXVI:1) and the whole section on epilepsy in the handbook bears the general title "symptoms and a n.t a.š u b.b a".<sup>44</sup> It looks as if *miqtu* can be here identified with a n.t a.š u b.b a. One example for *miqtu* is from another diagnostic text dealing with epilepsy:

- If *miqtu* has fallen upon him and he roars like an ox, his lips [...]: a n.t a.š u b.b a has seized him. If [...] he will quickly stop crying; if [...].<sup>45</sup>

Other texts mention *miqtu* and *bennu* in one breath. Examples in later lexical texts mentioned earlier are found together in an incantation: "An evil storm demon came forth towards the land and brought the people of the land, north and south, in con-

<sup>37</sup> E. Ebeling, *Afo* 1 (1923) 23–5, lines 1, 5 and 7; *AMT* 31,4 lines 18, 20, 21 and 11, 14.

<sup>38</sup> *BAM* 2 161 II 16, dupl. *AMT* 29,5:12–3 and *BAM* 5 436 VI 12–3. Cf. R. Labat, *Syria* 33 (1956) 121:6 (MB).

<sup>39</sup> Wilcke, *ZA* 75 198:9 (dog); *BAM* 3 248 IV 40 (dupl. 183:8  $\dot{U}\dot{H}$ ) (donkey).

<sup>40</sup> *UET* 5 85:1–3; see E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal* (1971) 34.

<sup>41</sup> See *CAD* N/2 8a; also *STT* 1 57:14, 24; 93:16; 2 286 II 2 f. with dupl. *BAM* 2 166:11; 5 478 rev. 7; *STT* 1 91:59 with dupl. BM. 47753 rev. 3 (= Tablet XXVI). But note "Day 28 (for) eradicating a n.t a.š u b.b a, *bennu*, Lugal-girra", *STT* 2 300:15.

<sup>42</sup> *BAM* 5 487 rev. 7, compared with 471 III 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Afo* 18 83:168 f., copy in *Afo* 28 100–104 (the series Igituh).

<sup>44</sup> See below, in Chapter IV.

<sup>45</sup> *STT* 1 89:148–151; Chapter V.

fusion. *Bennu* – *miqtu*, who do not rest in the land, bring gloom; (the demons) *šēdu*, *utukku*, *rābišu*, the great ones, who chase the people in the streets ...”; and the text continues in the same mood.<sup>46</sup> This is a translation of the Akkadian version of this bilingual Sumero-Akkadian text; interestingly, the Sumerian and original version has the name of a demon, <sup>d</sup>Lugal – nam.e.n.na.dugud.da, instead of the two forms of epilepsy. This is the name of the demon of epilepsy *Bennu*, followed by the epithet “heavy” (dugud.da). We conclude that the Akkadian version with its *bennu* – *miqtu* is an attempt to render this name. The lexical tradition had the same idea and went so far as to explain Sumerian “heavy” (dugud)<sup>47</sup> and even Akkadian “to be heavy” (*kabātu*)<sup>48</sup> as “*miqtu*”.

In the next section we will see that *miqtu* can have more meanings than “epilepsy” alone, but we may assume that the use of the word within the diagnostic handbook is consistent: we saw that there it denotes a form of epilepsy — most probably a n.t.a.š.u.b.ba — and we will now study the other passages on *miqtu* in the same handbook. A translation of Tablet XXVI will be found in Chapter IV. This tablet starts with a section on *miqtu*, translated as “fall”, and we refer the reader to that chapter. To our surprise, we find it outside the chapters on epilepsy only in the chapter on newborn babies (XLI):<sup>49</sup>

- If the baby, two, three days having passed<sup>50</sup> after it is born, does not accept the milk, (and) *mi-iq-tu* (var. *šUB-tum*) is falling upon him, time and again, like the Hand of the God: its (= the disease’s) name is Hand of the Goddess, the Snatcher (*Ekkēmtu*) — he will die.
- If *miqtu* has fallen upon a baby and he recovers: his sickness (*LÍL-šú*) will last long and he will die.
- If the baby is sucking the breast and *miqtu* falls upon him: Hand of [Ištar, or: Šin].<sup>51</sup>
- If the baby has been given to suck during one or two months and *miqtu* falls upon him, his hands and his feet are paralyzed (*amšā*), the Hand of the God [an obscure passage follows] — he will die”.

The reader will first of all think of spasms — whether epileptic or not. This may be correct but can be only a part of the truth, because a closer inspection shows that three out of the four passages connect *miqtu* with breast-feeding. The baby stops drinking after *miqtu* has fallen upon him, so it seems, and, indeed, death is the consequence of this behaviour — not of spasms. An Old Babylonian omen of the liver has the forecast: “*Miqtum* will fall on the foot of the man and the foot of the man will ‘become dry’”.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> CT 17 4:1–12; dupl. STT 2 192:1–6.

<sup>47</sup> MSL 17 (1985) 166, Antagal VII (= H) 159.

<sup>48</sup> VAT 9718 I 31 = TCS IV 212, cited in AHw 658a; see CAD M/2 100a, comm. on BAD in Izbu I 64. — This line of interpretation is followed in ACh Sin XIX:10, cited in CAD M/2 103a: commenting on “there will be [BAD] in the country”, it says “because you do not recognise (the explanation) *kab-tum* (= BAD = IDIM): BAD (also is) *miqtum* (and) *miqtum* (is) *bennu*”. Cf. also CT 20 23:4. — Note that in Neo-Assyrian contracts *be* (= BAD!) can be an abbreviation of *bennu*.

<sup>49</sup> TDP 216–231, “Tablette no. 40”. We translate lines 26 f., 49, 60 and 110 f.

<sup>50</sup> Read GIN-ku (= *illakū*), line 26.

<sup>51</sup> End of line 60 supplied with help of K. 3628+ obv. 9.

<sup>52</sup> YOS 10 18:54, *i-ba-al*. Cf. U. Jeyes, *Old Babylonian Extispicy* (1989) 107.



Lameness of the foot might be meant,<sup>53</sup> but what interests us here is the connection between *miqtu* and dryness, because the passages in the diagnostic handbook on the baby no more drinking milk suggest a similar line of thought.

Above, speaking of *miqit šamê* "what has fallen down from heaven", we suggested that this could have been evil fluids pouring down upon the patient, the cause of his ever flowing saliva. Do the same poisonous fluids pour down here upon the baby, replacing the healthy mother-milk?

*Miqtu* does not always refer to epilepsy. It is perfectly possible that *miqtu*, as a general name for a type of disease, must be dissociated from the meaning "what has fallen down", used up till now. The verb "to fall", Akkadian *maqātu*, is often used to indicate the suddenness of an attack. Any disease, calamity, or demon, for that matter, can "fall upon" a human being<sup>54</sup> and it does not necessarily fall down from heaven. *Miqtu* could very well stand for a disease suddenly coming over a person. In a long, bilingual, list of diseases from the Old Babylonian period fever is described as "fall of fire", where "fire" stands for fever.<sup>55</sup> A sudden fever is meant; the forms of epilepsy come seven lines later and belong to another category.

A number of clay tablets of later date, duplicates, give three lists of diseases that are to be "eradicated" (*nasāhu*).<sup>56</sup> *Miqtu* occurs in the second and third lists and has nothing to do with epilepsy (*bennu*), or is mentioned in a completely different place.<sup>57</sup> In an Old Babylonian letter a woman writes that *miqtu* has "fallen upon" her and that she has nothing to give to a doctor.<sup>58</sup> Epilepsy would have required a "conjurer" (*āšipum*), not a doctor (*asūm*). A curse formula against the evildoer on a boundary stone inscription says: "May (the goddess of healing) Gula, the great physician, let come forth from his body a ... wound that does not cease, a *miqtu* that does not leave".<sup>59</sup> In another curse by Gula on boundary stones *miqtu* is omitted and there we read of "a wound that does not leave".<sup>60</sup> Epilepsy is hardly meant here.<sup>61</sup>

The rather general concept "wound", also translated "disease", seems to be a disease with immediately visible symptoms, Akkadian *simmu*. An incantation says "I do not know the names (*šumu*) of the numerous *simmu*'s, I do not know the terms (*nību*)

<sup>53</sup> Not this meaning in CAD A/1 30b, d). It fits also *muttatašu ibbalā*, lit. "his halves will dry", quoted there: two-sided paralysis? Cf. *muttutu ammašid* in Ludlul III, m (BWL 54). Remember the "dry (*xēra*) hand" in the New Testament, Matthew 12:10 (Mark 3:1, Luke 6:6).

<sup>54</sup> CAD M/1 248 gives many passages; add YOS 11 7:3 (*sikkatum* on cattle), TDP 160:43 (perhaps GIG-su ŠUB-šum-ma?), Ulla Jeyes, *Old Babylonian Extispicy* (1989) 97 no. 1:18 (*bē-e-nu UGU LÚ imaqqut*), ARMT 26/2 71 no. 312:39 (Gtn; *bennu*).

<sup>55</sup> CT 4 3:14, with MSL 9 (1967) 106 and the corrections made by C.B.F. Walker, *BiOr* 26 (1969) 77: IZI.ŠUB. BA = *mi-iq-tu i-šā-tu* (CT 51 182:6 f.). Cf. line 16 with the Akkadian version in TIM 9 56:11 f. (in a context of skin diseases).

<sup>56</sup> The published texts are BAM 4 338 (= KAR 233), STT 2 138; cf. K. 6335 in the *Catalogue* of C. Bezold. See B. Landsberger, *MSL* 9 (1967) 105 f., for a first transliteration of the three "groups", a-c.

<sup>57</sup> BAM 4 338:24 and rev. 6; STT 2 138:22 and rev. 21; K. 6335 (*Catalogue* II 781).

<sup>58</sup> AbB 10 55:15-17.

<sup>59</sup> MDP 6 Plate 11, IV 5-9, with R. Borger, *Afo* 23 (1970) 15: *mi-iq-ta la te-ba-a*. Cf. K. Watanabe, *Baghdader Mitt.*, Beiheft 3 (1987) 38 sub 5.

<sup>60</sup> MDP 2 111, VII 14-25, and C. Wilcke, *F. Reschid*, ZA 65 (1975) 58:72-75. Cf. Watanabe, 38 sub 3 and 13.

<sup>61</sup> Two more passages for *miqtu* are CT 51 142:17, dupl. JCS 31 (1979) 218:17 with the Old Babylonian version YOS 11 10:4 (incantation), and BAM 4 379 IV 10, "herb against *himitu* and *miqtu*: you anoint the patient with it, in oil".

of the numerous *miqtu*'s".<sup>62</sup> A *miqtum* "emerges" (*ašûm*) on the body<sup>63</sup> and a (red) exudation on the wall of a house is also described as *miqtu*.<sup>64</sup>

Finally a word on the European popular expression — now archaic — *The Falling Sickness* might be appropriate. It refers to the patient falling down and not in any way to the "falling" character of the disease itself, as was the case with the Babylonians. The Latin word *caducus* "falling", with this special meaning, is attested for the first time in a slave sale contract from Transsylvania, 142 A.D. (see p. 133). Gregory of Tours (sixth cent. A.D.) wrote that "farmers" use the word *cadivus*, and doctors prefer *ephilenticus*. Isidore of Sevilla, writing in the seventh century, gives *epilepsia* and *caduca passio* as the normal names for the disease and adds that common people call those suffering from it *lunatici*.<sup>65</sup> Later Hebrew and Syriac took over the word "falling (sickness)"<sup>66</sup> and Arabic *šar'un* derives from a verb meaning "to throw down".

There has always been a tendency to connect the word "falling" when it occurs in the Bible with the Falling Sickness. Of the three Wise Men it is said that they "fell down and worshipped" the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:11). Medieval legend took this to be an epileptic fit and the three "Kings" could help against this disease, it was believed.<sup>67</sup> This is nonsense, of course. Harder to judge is a passage in the story of Bileam in the Old Testament. This prophet says of himself "The man having his eye *š'etûm* (=?) who hears the word of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down (*nōfel*) and having his eyes uncovered (*g'elūj 'enājim*)", Numbers 24: 3b-4 (also in vs. 15 f.). One has to compare this passage with 2 Samuel 23:1-3 and then the strange words that interest us appear to be peculiar for the description of Bileam.<sup>68</sup> Jewish tradition (in the Septuagint and the Targum) take it to point to a divine revelation during the night or during sleep. Others assume it to be a status of extasy or trance: King Saul, in such a status, "lay (lit. "fell") naked all day and all night" (1 Samuel 19:24). Although one can read in many books that Bileam is described here as suffering from an epileptic fit, there is nothing to prove this.

#### Diseases from heaven

Following the discussion of a n.t a.š u b.b a and *miqtum*, "what has fallen (from heaven)", more needs to be said about the idea, prevalent with the Babylonians, of diseases originating in "heaven" and "falling down" on a patient.

Old Babylonian and later incantations inform us about a long, standard, list of diseases that they "have descended" from heaven;<sup>69</sup> specifically from "the tower (?) of

<sup>62</sup> K. 6057, after C. Bezold, *Catalogue* II 759.

<sup>63</sup> YOS 11 29:1, [...z]u-mu-ur LÚ mi-iq-tum it-ta-ši-a-[a]m (cf. 3, *simmu*).

<sup>64</sup> CAD M/2 105b; also in CT 38 28:21, a light "red like *miqtu* biti".

<sup>65</sup> F.J. Dölger in *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934) 103 and 105.

<sup>66</sup> Post-Talmudic Hebrew *holi nēfel* = morbus caducus; Syriac *mappūlā* (C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* 437a).

<sup>67</sup> Leo Kanner, *Human Biology* 2 (1930) 122; Schneble, 72-4.

<sup>68</sup> Hedwige Rouillard, *La Péricope de Balaam* (Nombres 22-24). *La prose et les "oracles"* (1985) 347-353, 385.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. W. Farber, *JNES* 49 (1990) 307, 311 (OB), 316 f. (SB).



heaven",<sup>70</sup> "from the star(s) of heaven",<sup>71</sup> or "from the udder of heaven".<sup>72</sup> Little children and sheep are here the victims. Fever, lit. "fire", came down from heaven, attacking beast, man and baby.<sup>73</sup> We learn something more from an incantation against the demonic disease *maškadu*:

"From a star of heaven he has descended, from a star of heaven he took (with him) half the venom of a snake, half the venom of a scorpion", and a frightening description of this demon's features follows.<sup>74</sup>

It has already been shown how jaundice has its origin in the "spittle" of the god Nergal that is "raining"<sup>75</sup> and another incantation has the more or less obscure line "the dark clouds (?) (*a-PI-a-at*) of (the god of rain) Adad which have descended from heaven, the dark clouds (?) of Nergal which are in the land".<sup>76</sup> Nergal, god of pestilence and other severe diseases, was identified with the planet Mars and especially the cattle suffered from him.<sup>77</sup> The "evil dew (*našū*) of the stars" was feared by the Babylonian.<sup>78</sup> Even the god of the sky himself, Anu, is invoked in a curse formula directed against those not abiding by a treaty with the king of Assyria, in these words: "May Anu, king of the gods, rain upon all your houses disease, exhaustion, malaria (?), sleeplessness, worries, ill health".<sup>79</sup> The wide heavens indeed summon (*dekā*) sickness.<sup>80</sup> The "Daughter of Anu", the demon Lamaštu, is mentioned together with forms of epilepsy.<sup>81</sup> Demons often were called "spawn of heaven" or "spawn of Anu": that was the place of their origin.<sup>82</sup> Later on, we will see that "the spawn" of the star-god Šulpaea is a severe form of epilepsy. And we now can better appreciate the passage, quoted above, under a n.t a.š u b a: "what has fallen from heaven — the fiery glow of a star (var. stars) — fall of *bennu*".<sup>83</sup> During day-time, the stars are in the Netherworld and when they rise, at sunset, the demons are coming up together with them, right from the Netherworld. Some stars are even identified with demons. This means that the Babylonian had to fear their evil emanations during the night.<sup>84</sup> We have to add that according to Tablet VII of *Šurpu* not only heaven but also earth could be a source of diseases.

<sup>70</sup> *iš-tu ZI-KU-ra-at ša-me-e ur-du-ni*, A.Goetze, *JCS* 9 (1955) 8 f., line 10. R. Borger, *JCS* 18 (1964) 55b, sees behind the word "tower (?)" a misunderstood *serretu*, "udder" (of the Cow of Heaven). Others thought of *sikkāru*, the "bolts" of the doors of heaven; see *CAD* S 259a and Farber, 307 note 48.

<sup>71</sup> *YOS* 11 8:5 (= Goetze, *JCS* 9 11 (C)); *STT* 2 136 rev. III 34.

<sup>72</sup> Goetze, 10 *HTS* 2:10; *BAM* 6 543 IV 26 (= Goetze, 11 (D)). Farber, 307: "the Milky Way".

<sup>73</sup> *Ugaritica* 5 (1968) 32 no. 17 rev. 20, with W.G. Lambert, *Afo* 23 (1970) 44, Commentary, line 20.

<sup>74</sup> *BAM* 2 124 IV 12–14 and duplicates; cf. *CAD* s.v., or P. Herréro, *RA* 69 (1975) 52 f.

<sup>75</sup> *UET* 5 85; see note 40.

<sup>76</sup> *CT* 51 142:9 f.

<sup>77</sup> E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal* (1971) 34 f., 76–85.

<sup>78</sup> W. Farber, *Schlaf* ..., 63 f.

<sup>79</sup> Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon, line 418, after Erica Reiner, *ANET*<sup>3</sup> (1969) 538.

<sup>80</sup> M.J. Geller, *Iraq* 42 (1980) 31:163.

<sup>81</sup> *LBAT* 1597:7 (*šaššānu, šidānu, maškadu, šū*, AN.TA.ŠUB.BA, DUMU.SAL <sup>d</sup>A-nim); *CT* 14 16:19 (AN.TA.ŠUB.BA, DUMU.SAL <sup>d</sup>A-nim, <sup>d</sup>LUGAL-ŪR.RA).

<sup>82</sup> A.L. Oppenheim in *Dictionary of Scientific Bibliography* XV (1978) 640b with 657, note 77. Cf. *CT* 16 22:266 f., demons "released from heaven", and 276–9, "ascending, returning to their abode".

<sup>83</sup> *BAM* 4 338:20, dupl. *STT* 2 138:19 (*miqit šamē širih MUL(MEŠ) miqit benni*).

<sup>84</sup> R. Caplice, *Or.* NS 42 (1973) 302–5. — See already M. Leibovici, *Journal asiatique* 244 (1956) 275 f.



Diseases "descend" from heaven and one of them is *miqtu* according to the standard lists.<sup>85</sup> An Akkadian incantation from Ugarit indeed tells us that *miqtu*, being "created" in heaven, "fell" down on earth, causing disease.<sup>86</sup> But one cannot say that this is a form of epilepsy, judging from its obscure description. An astrological text forecasts all kinds of mishap, when a planet approaches the planet SAG.ME.GAR; one possibility is that "there will be a strong *miqtu* in the land".<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere we read that this will happen when Mars comes near to SAG.ME.GAR.<sup>88</sup> If in this case the planet Jupiter is meant by SAG.ME.GAR.<sup>89</sup> one could think of the epilepsy called "spawn of Šulpaea (= Jupiter)", but nothing is certain here.

#### "Spawn of Šulpaea"

In medical and magical texts we sometimes meet with "the spawn (*riḥūtu*) of (the god) Šulpaea", always in a context of epilepsy. This seems to be a further specification, following *bennu*,<sup>90</sup> Lugal-urra, the demon of epilepsy,<sup>91</sup> or Hand of the God,<sup>92</sup> but in this last case "Spawn of Šulpaea" might have been used independently, as "Hand of the God" is not necessarily a form of epilepsy.

Before attempting to find an explanation for this strangely sounding name of a disease, we will give translations of its symptoms according to the Babylonian medical handbooks. First, among the diseases of a small child:

- If a baby has been put on his feet(?)<sup>93</sup> (in his) first, second, third (and) fourth year and he cannot stand up or remain standing; he can eat bread, his mouth is "seized" and he cannot speak: "Spawn of Šulpaea"; he will not fare well.<sup>94</sup>

This looks like a severe malfunctioning. Indeed, a child "born with Šulpaea" was thrown into the river, alive (Tablet XXIX; see p. 89). Not only the disease, also the child himself can be called "Spawn of Šulpaea", as the Babylonian handbook on malformed babies shows: "If a woman gives birth to 'Spawn of Šulpaea', (the god of rain) Adad will wash away that house".<sup>95</sup>

Turning now to other texts mentioning this "Spawn", there is a section in a diagnostic-therapeutic text that first gives its symptoms and then tells what one should do about it.<sup>96</sup> Its first entry is badly broken; paresis (*rimūtu*) and problems in speaking are among the symptoms of being "seized" by this first form of "Spawn of Šulpaea" and two alternative prescriptions, dependent on the patient's behaviour, promise that he will

<sup>85</sup> Goetze, *JCS* 9 8:3, etc.; Farber, *JNES* 49 (1990) 316.

<sup>86</sup> J. Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* V (1968) 32 no. 17 rev. 12-15 (RS 17.155), *ina šamē ibbani miqtu* (RI.RI.GA) ištū šamē ina qaqqari intaqta.

<sup>87</sup> R. Largement, *ZA* 52 (1957) 242:31 f; this forecast alone in line 33b.

<sup>88</sup> Largement, 260 (*ACh* Ištar XL A 68 = R.C. Thompson, *Reports* 195:7).

<sup>89</sup> Largement: "MUL SAG.ME.GAR désigne Jupiter au 7e mois après son lever héliaque (*HAB* 24 f., *ŠL* Planetarium 334 I 1)".

<sup>90</sup> In Maqlu II 57 and *LBAT* 1597:6, commenting on "the star of Marduk" (= Jupiter); see M. Leibovici, *Journal asiatique* 244 (1956) 276.

<sup>91</sup> *TDP* 194:55, but independent in line 56.

<sup>92</sup> G. Meier, *Afo* 14 (1941-44) 142:35.

<sup>93</sup> Emending into *šu-uk(!)-bu-us* in *TDP* 220:21; uncertain. The text offers *šu-up-pu-uš* which one could compare with *išappiṣ* in *STT* 1 89:175; see note 99.

<sup>94</sup> *TDP* 220:21-23.

<sup>95</sup> E. Leichty, *TCS* IV (1970) 38 Izbu I 68, with note.

<sup>96</sup> *STT* 1 89:167-191, in Chapter V.

### "Spawn of Šulpaea"

recover; the second treatment involves anointing with weasel fat.<sup>97</sup> Most unusual are the "prescriptions" in the two next entries:<sup>98</sup>

- If a seizure (*šibtu*) seizes him while going in the street and, as it seizes him, he ... s<sup>99</sup> his hands (and) feet with the ground, his eyes are darkened, his nostrils are contracted (?), he "eats" his garment: "Spawn of Šulpaea". In due time, perishing of his father's house;<sup>100</sup> his father and his mother will bear his punishment. In order that (this disaster) does not reach (them), you bury him in the earth alive and its evil (portent) will be undone.
- If a seizure seizes him at sunset and, as it seizes him, a wailing voice shouts to him and he himself responds every time, (if) he time and again shouts: "[...] of (?)"<sup>101</sup> my father, my (!) mother, my brothers, my sisters, (are) dead", [...] .... and stops (shouting) every time, [...] after having cried he falls asleep and does not get up: (if), as the seizure leaves him he does not know that he has cried: "Spawn of Šulpaea"; it will not go away. You burn him with fire in his illness.

This patient can be no young child, for he walks and talks. There is something terribly wrong with him which will cause the downfall of "his father's house", i.e., his family — just as the baby in the teratological handbook forecasted. The measures taken are most unusual and simply unparalleled in the corpus of cuneiform medical texts. Burying or burning the patient is no therapy — this is doing away forever with an unwanted person. What is so wrong with him? The reader can judge for himself: the patient seems to be on the verge of madness, according to our perception, and he acts to the detriment of his own family. Such a person is not accepted by society. Below, we will have ample occasion to see how epilepsy and madness can go together (p. 49f.).

The fourth entry is badly broken:

- If his head (and) his body shake, he throws his neck to the right (or) the left, time and again, his tongue is swollen (or: "bound") (?), his tongue is 'knotted', he ... his mouth, his limbs (?) are let down, when walking he ...: "Spawn of Šulpaea". For a poor man: seizure of Evil; for an important person: < he will die > prematurely.

Whatever is meant, the prognosis is unfavourable.

Who is Šulpaea? He is a Sumerian god of second rank in the Mesopotamian pantheon.<sup>102</sup> He has astral traits and was identified with the planet Jupiter, "the star of Marduk".<sup>103</sup> Marduk was to the Babylonians the highest god, as Jupiter was with the Romans. Šulpaea can also appear in demonic form, to the surprise of some modern scholars.<sup>104</sup> Our expression "Spawn of Šulpaea" also brings us into the realm of demons. Indeed, the demon of epilepsy Lugal-urra belongs to his sphere, as we will

<sup>97</sup> Line 172, *šaman ajišsi*, following CAD A/1 231a; cf. K. Butz, *BiOr* 34 (1977) 283b.

<sup>98</sup> Lines 174–179 and 180–186. Also translated, without comments, by Erica Reiner in *Le monde du sorcier* (= Sources orientales, 7) (1966) 92.

<sup>99</sup> *KI qa-q-a-ri i-šap-piš* in line 175. Cf. *a-na qa-q-a-ru ú-ḥa-an-na-aš* in TDP 80:13.

<sup>100</sup> B. Landsberger's emendation in line 177 was not supported by collation; see *WdO* 3 (1964) 59, on note 16.

<sup>101</sup> "Of" probably to be deleted. The remark "broken!" in the next line shows that the scribe's original was not in good shape in this passage.

<sup>102</sup> A. Falkenstein, *ZA* 55 (1963) 11–67.

<sup>103</sup> Falkenstein, 33 f.; *LBAT* 1597:6. Already in the boundary stone of Nazi-muruttaš we notice this identification with Marduk if we recognise the god Šulpaea, mentioned in the text, IV 7, in the "spade" among the figures (*MDP* 2 90).

<sup>104</sup> Falkenstein, 34 f.



see later. In the great Babylonian handbook on astrology we read that the moon, when under certain conditions, at its first visibility, finds Šulpaea at its side, "the king will be sick (*salā'u*)".<sup>105</sup> A commentary on this passage, written by the Babylonians themselves, wants to explain why Šulpaea is associated with sickness here. Its line of thought is not very clear, but Lugal-urra is given as one possibility.<sup>106</sup> The astrological section in the Babylonian handbook of astronomy, Mul-Apin, associates the "Star of Marduk" (= Jupiter) with epilepsy (*bennu*): "If the Star of Marduk sees the body (*pagru*) of a man, *bennu* will seize him".<sup>107</sup>

What, then, is the "Spawn of Šulpaea"? Already an Old Babylonian text, broken, connects Šulpaea with "spawn of a star", *rihūt kakkabim*.<sup>108</sup> The word "spawn" derives from a verb best attested in its meaning "to fertilise"; its original meaning is "to pour out, impregnate", often used for diseases. It is this meaning that we need here and "pouring" will immediately remind us of the general Babylonian idea of diseases "raining down" from heaven — or was the baby's mother fertilised with this sperm? Here, a planet — Jupiter — is seen as the specific source of one disease, this severe form of epilepsy. The main god of the pantheon, Marduk, is its ultimate cause. That the patient himself can also be called "Spawn of Šulpaea", as we saw once, is a secondary development.<sup>109</sup>

#### Lugal-urra, "Lord of the Roof"

The "demon" of epilepsy had the name Lugal-urra. He was considered to be a god, as already the sign for "god", practically always written before his name, indicates. He appears among the various kinds of epilepsy in lists, together with, for example, *bennu* and a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a.<sup>110</sup> This god "seizes" a man.<sup>111</sup> The late commentary on a medical text in which we already found a kind of "definition" for a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a. — the "saliva" epilepsy —, says about Lugal-urra: "Lugal-urra: he turns away his right eye and his left eye". The translation "to turn away" for *kapāšu* probably is not entirely correct but is not far off the mark.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, among the symptoms of a seizure by Lugal-urra is often an abnormal condition of the eyes.<sup>113</sup> The first entry of a section about seizures by this demon states: "If, at the time it overcomes him, his right eye circles like a spindle, his left eye is full of blood, he opens his mouth time and again, he bites his

<sup>105</sup> ACh Suppl. 2, II 17.

<sup>106</sup> E.F. Weidner, *Afo* 14 (1941–44) Tafel IV VAT 7827 obv. II 14–16, <sup>4</sup>ŠUL.PA.È.A ina Á-šú GUB LUGAL i-sal-la-'a [...] (15) i-sal-la-'a i-har-ra-as // aš-šum si-li-tum // mur-š[u] (?) (16) aš-šú (or: ina ŠÚ) // LUGAL-UR.RA //. Note that the "god" determinative is lacking in front of Lugal-urra.

<sup>107</sup> Mul-Apin II III 57; H. Hunger, D. Pingree, *MUL.APIN. An Astronomical Compendium in Cuneiform* (1989) 117, Gap B 4. Text in *STT* 2 331 rev. 19 and dupl.

<sup>108</sup> A.L. Oppenheim and F. Köcher, *Afo* 18 (1957–8) 63 VAT 7525 I 12 f.

<sup>109</sup> Izbu I 68. Note, in broken context, "seven A.RI.A Šulpae", *KUB* 37 87:7.

<sup>110</sup> Both b. and a. with L.: *STT* 1 57:11 (?), 22 (?), 89:103–166, 194; 2 300:15; *BAM* 3 311:23, 52, 59, 77; 5 468:8; *BRM* 4 19:24; *SpTU* 1 43:6 (cf. 2, 5); Farber, *BID* 56:1 f.; Maqlû II 58 (?). b. alone with L.: *EA* 357:72. a. alone with L.: *BAM* 4 372 III 19; *BBR* 45:6 (F.A.M. Wiggemann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits* 6); *BRM* 4 20:32; *CT* 14 16 BM. 93084:19 f.; *KAR* 26:1, rev. 7, 44 rev. 10; *TCL* 6 34 I 1.

<sup>111</sup> W. Farber, *BID* 56:2 (= *KAR* 42:3); *BAM* 3 311:23; *STT* 1 89:105, etc.

<sup>112</sup> A. Goetze, *JCS* 11 (1957) 102 "to be bent forward"; Ivan Starr, *The Rituals of the Diviner* (1983) 22 f. "to be bent over (on the right / the left)"; said of parts of the sheep liver. *CAD* K 182 "to droop", also said of eye or ear.

<sup>113</sup> *STT* 1 89:103–140, especially in the first entries (Chapter V).

tongue: Lugal-girra [= Lugal-urra] has seized him".<sup>114</sup> Tablet XXIX of the Diagnostic Handbook, unpublished, surveys the effects of Lugal-urra (see p. 88f.).

Lugal-urra is one of the gods belonging to the sphere of Šulpaea. An Old Babylonian list of god names offers <sup>d</sup>Šul.p.a.e., <sup>d</sup>UD.AL.TAR, <sup>d</sup>Lugal-ù.r.ra, <sup>d</sup>Lugal-u.d.da, <sup>d</sup>Bár.u.l.e.[gar].r.a.<sup>115</sup> The later standard list has almost the same names in the same order, identifying them in a second column as "Šulpaea",<sup>116</sup> and continues with a list of five gods all identified as *bennu*: <sup>d</sup>Lugal.me, <sup>d</sup>Na.me.n.a, <sup>d</sup>A.g.á.g.i.g.d.u.11.g.a,<sup>117</sup> <sup>d</sup>En.ù.r.ta, <sup>d</sup>Šul.p.a.è.t.a.r.i.a.<sup>118</sup> We will not study these names as they hardly occur in another context.<sup>119</sup> We note that the last two names seem to mean "Lord from the Roof" and "Spawned by Šulpaea".

The name <sup>d</sup>Lugal-ù.r.ra is Sumerian and literally means "Lord of the Roof", and this is what the Babylonians took it to be. A bilingual Babylonian text renders <sup>d</sup>Lugal-ù.r.ra a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a as *mi-qiṭ bēl* (EN) *ú-ri* "fall of the Lord of the Roof".<sup>120</sup> The Akkadian "translation" sees between the two Sumerian words a syntactical link, the genitive, which is not there; it possibly was inspired by known expressions like *miṭ benni* or *miṭ šamē*. A few times we find this name without the "god" determinative.<sup>121</sup> Is there any real connection between this god and the roof? We can present ample evidence that there is. A chapter in a handbook of omina, giving predictions based on human behaviour during sexual intercourse, gives us this information:

- If a man approaches (a woman) on the roof, Lugal-urra will seize him.<sup>122</sup>

A very similar passage has:

- If a man approaches a woman on the roof, the (demon) Lurker (*rābiṣu*) will strike him (with a stroke).<sup>123</sup>

Stroke (*mišittu*) is a close associate of epilepsy, as we will see later, in Tablet XXVII. "Lurker" (*rābiṣu*) is the name for those demons that are lying in wait for their victims in various lonely places: the bathroom (his name is Šulak) or on a canal (we will meet them later in this book). One may safely assume that the Lurker on the roof has the name Lugal-urra. This is confirmed by an entry in the the diagnostic handbook telling of an ailing, pregnant woman:

- If the woman is ill and her hands are put on her skull and do not come down: the Hand of the Lord of the Roof. Ditto: the Lurker of the Roof will hit her; she will die.<sup>124</sup>

The flat roof of a house can be a dangerous place, especially during the night. Hemeologies — texts about lucky or unlucky days, full of taboos — warn a man not to ascend the roof on certain days, because the female demon *ardat lili* could "marry"

<sup>114</sup> *Ib.*, 103-5.

<sup>115</sup> *TCL* 15 no. 10:122-6.

<sup>116</sup> Instead of Barulegarra, Lugaligigunnu.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Th. Jacobsen, *Towards the Image of Tammuz* (1970) 420, note 16.

<sup>118</sup> *CT* 24 25:97-105, cf. 13:46-51 (An = Anum, Tablet II).

<sup>119</sup> Cf. W.G. Lambert, article Lugal-me ..., in *RLA* VII/1-2 (1987) 149.

<sup>120</sup> Sm. 28+ I 36 f.; see A. Falkenstein, *LSS NF I* (1931) 96:21, and B. Landsberger, *MSL* 9 (1967) 107:21. Confirmed by collation by Professor R. Borger.

<sup>121</sup> E.F. Weidner, *Afo* 14 (1941-44) Tafel IV VAT 7827 II 16 (LUGAL ÛR.RA), and EN ÛR = *bēl ūri* in *TDP* 214:11.

<sup>122</sup> *CT* 39 44:6.

<sup>123</sup> S.M. Moren, *JCS* 29 (1977) 66:2.

<sup>124</sup> *TDP* 214:11. The following entries give as diagnosis "seizure by an incubus".



him.<sup>125</sup> An unpublished diagnostic text, fragmentary, says that an ill person "was hit by a 'roof-hitting'; he will die".<sup>126</sup>

An Old Babylonian bilingual lexical text defining various "people" lists among persons with a defect (crippled, etc.) a man "hit by the Lord of the Roof" (*ma-aḥ-ša-am be-el ú-ri-im*). This is the "translation" of a Sumerian expression, literally "fallen by (?) the wall" (*lú.é.g a r<sub>8</sub>.d a.š u b. b a*).<sup>127</sup> We have to take the Sumerian "wall" (*é.g a r<sub>8</sub>*) seriously but before discussing it, we will turn to the Syriac New Testament.

The Lord of the Roof has a fine parallel in the Gospel of Matthew, as translated into Syriac, which has not been noticed before. The epileptic boy healed by Jesus is said to be possessed by "the Son of the Roof" (*bar 'eggārā*, Matthew 17:15), an expression not understood.<sup>128</sup> The same demon is met in the Aramaic incantation bowls and, under the name *Rišpi*, in the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>129</sup> Clearly the Babylonian demon of epilepsy lived on in Syrian lore under a very similar name. W.H.Ph. Römer came very close to this solution in a footnote commenting on a line in a Sumerian literary text speaking of "one who was thrown into a well, one who was thrown by the Man of the Roof (*lú.ù r. r. a. k e<sub>4</sub> š u.š u.ub. ba*)".<sup>130</sup>

Something ought to be said now on the word "roof" in Syriac, *'eggārā*. This word also exists in the Aramaic papyri found in Egypt but means there "wall", just as Akkadian *igarum* does — both words are of the feminine gender.<sup>131</sup> In cuneiform syllabic writing, the Aramaic word is attested in the phrase "a knot from a wooden (?) wall" (*ki-ta-ri mi-in ig-ga-ri aḥ-ḥu*), a translation of a Babylonian original, offering "you will take a knot of straw from a wall" (*ki-šir še.in.nu šá lib-bi é.sig<sub>4</sub> teleqqe*).<sup>132</sup> About this confusion between wall and roof the following comments have been made: "It is possible that we are dealing with a very old culture word taken [from Akkadian] into Aramaic meaning the entire superstructure of a building..."<sup>133</sup> We indeed saw the same confusion when we read the entry in the bilingual text: "wall" in Sumerian; "roof" in Akkadian. When we visualise the large residences made of rushes used by the ancient Sumerians and still constructed by the present-day Marsh Arabs in Southern Iraq (especially the impressive *mudhifs*), forming an inverted letter U or even V, we understand why those people could look at their "walls" and the "roof" as one and the same structure.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>125</sup> *ki-is-ki-li-li i-ḥa-ar-šu*, KAR 177 rev. III:26, 147:14, etc.; see CAD K 424a.

<sup>126</sup> *ŠIG-iš ú-ri ŠIG-iš* [GA]M, K. 23371:3', cf. 4' (a hit by n a m t a r).

<sup>127</sup> MSL 12 (1969) 201 Fragment I:4.

<sup>128</sup> Full discussion by G.J. Reinink, "Der Dämon 'Sohn des Daches' in der syrischen Literatur", in *Studia Patristica* XVI (1985) 105–113. See also T.C. Falla, "Demons and demoniacs in the Peshitta Gospels", *Abr Nahrain* 9 (1970) 60 note 9, who points out on p. 48 that the Sinai text has here *rūah palgā* "spirit of apoplexy" (cf. *palgā* in the Mandaic magical texts). — Note the demon *gūrgājā* ("noise") of the roof, in a Syriac incantation bowl, *Stud. Orient.* 51:14 (1981) 11:6.

<sup>129</sup> *Pesachim* 111b. The female demon *agrat* in Bab. Talmud *Pes.* 112–3 is different.

<sup>130</sup> *TUAT* III/1 (1990) 89, commenting on A.W. Sjöberg, *JCS* 25 (1973) 114:164.

<sup>131</sup> As G.R. Driver, *JRAS* 1932 77, pointed out. — See for the Aramaic word J. Hoftijzer, *DISO* 4 s.v. 'gr III, and P. Grelot, *Les araméens. Documents de l'Égypte* (1972) ad no. 32.

<sup>132</sup> For the latest translation of the Aramaic incantation from Uruk, see W.C. Delsman, *TUAT* II/3 (1988) 433; for the Babylonian original, KAR 43 rev. 19, see B. Landsberger, *Afo* 12 (1937–9) 250 f.

<sup>133</sup> S.A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (1974) 57.

<sup>134</sup> See for such buildings Ernst Heinrich, *Bauwerke in der altsumerischen Bildkunst* (1957) 11–20.

I may be allowed to put forward the suggestion that the Sumerian words for "roof" (ùr) and "wall" (egar) are one and the same. If this is true, one has to assume at least that the phone /g/ was weak. There is more evidence for that supposition: šu.ùr can be identical with šu.gu r.<sup>135</sup> and the Sumerian word egir "rear, behind" has a few times the form ùr (a very nice parallel for us!), as in "the ox walking in the rear", gu.d.á.ùr.ra<sup>136</sup> and gu.d.egir (ra).<sup>137</sup> Is it possible that the occupations (lú).egir (ra)<sup>138</sup> and (lú).ùr(ra)<sup>139</sup> are one and the same?

Returning now to Lugal-urra, this god bears in the diagnostic-therapeutic text that we have quoted already the unusual name <sup>d</sup>Lugal.gìr.ra.<sup>140</sup> Elsewhere, in another text from the same library (in Sultantepe), we again find this name where clearly Lugal-urra is meant.<sup>141</sup> That this is not a mistake made by an unskilled scribe in a provincial town is shown by a passage in a text from the library of king Assurbanipal: again Lugal-girra in a context of epilepsies.<sup>142</sup> In an astrological text we find *bennu* and Lugal-girra mentioned together: "There will be *bennu* in the land, Lugal-girra will devour (people)".<sup>143</sup> Now, Lugal-girra is a well known god, a manifestation of Nergal, the god of "plague", and exactly "devouring" (*akālu*) is the activity of Nergal. We hesitate to identify Lugal-urra along such indirect lines with Nergal — was Lugal-urra not a manifestation of Šulpaea? However, later on we will see that according to the myth "Nergal and Ereškigal" the demon *Bennu* was placed as gatekeeper in the Netherworld by Nergal, so there is a connection between epilepsy and the god of "plague".

Looking for a common original name like <sup>d</sup>Lugal.egar.ra, "Lord of the Roof/Wall", behind both names Lugal-urra and Lugal-girra is perhaps too hazardous but philological research still has to be done in the relationships between the names of the gods of "plague", Irra, Lugal-girra and Nergal, sharing the element / (g)ir /:

- in a bilingual text <sup>d</sup>ir.ra is the translation of <sup>d</sup>U.GUR "Nergal".<sup>144</sup>
- the gods <sup>d</sup>Gìr.RA.GAL and <sup>d</sup>IR.RA.GAL are closely related.<sup>145</sup>
- an OB Isin year-name gives the variants Lugal-gìr.ra and Lugal-ír.ra.<sup>146</sup>

P. Steinkeller and W.G. Lambert discussed closely related problems in recent articles.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>135</sup> M. Civil in *Studies Erica Reiner* (1987) 54; Akkadian *kapāru* (see also P. Herréro, *Thérapeutique* 26).

<sup>136</sup> M. Civil in *Studies Benno Landsberger* (1965) 5; now also in YOS 13 259:1, 14 321 I 14, CAD A/2 289 f.

<sup>137</sup> CAD; also in JCS 34 (1982) 171 no. 30:1.

<sup>138</sup> CAD A/2 289a, c.1'; also AbB 3 84:7 with comm. R. Frankena, SLB IV (1978) 239; BIN 7 65:19; CT 45 121:24; TIM 5 41:21; VAS 18 16:22.

<sup>139</sup> A.L. Oppenheim, AOS 32 (1948) 17 (top); A. Sjöberg, JCS 25 (1973) 140 ad 164 ("clearly a man of low standing; 'in the rear'"); M. Sigrist, RA 74 (1980) 20. Also in PBS 8/1 45 II 8, TCL 11 156:29, rev. 2 (?).

<sup>140</sup> STT 1 89:103-136.

<sup>141</sup> STT 2 300:15.

<sup>142</sup> R. Borger, *Studies Erica Reiner* (1987) 24:99.

<sup>143</sup> ACh Suppl. 1 I 32, with E.F. Weidner, *Beiträge zur Assyriologie* VIII/4 (1911) 34.

<sup>144</sup> STT 2 192:9-10 and duplicates.

<sup>145</sup> P. Steinkeller, ZA 77 (1987) 165; W.G. Lambert, BiOr 30 (1973) 356, and 36 (1979) 16 f. — Note also the god names <sup>d</sup>Lugal-gi.ùr (KAV 63 iii 8) and <sup>d</sup>Lugal.m.ùr.ra (RLA VII 150a). According to B. Meissner and F. Köcher we have to read Lugal-urra in "The Hand of x.ùr.ra" in LKU 58:2 = BAM 4 402:2.

<sup>146</sup> G.Th. Ferwerda, *A Contribution to the Early Isin Craft Archive* (1985) 4 note 7 (lit.). — Note the polemic between W.G. Lambert and P. Steinkeller in ZA 80 (1990) 45-48, 58-9; it is difficult to follow Steinkeller in equating the god with Bēl-gašir, known as a city god in the Diyala region.

<sup>147</sup> See the preceding footnote and add ZA 80 (1990) 40-59.



## Lugal-amašpae

The other, less well known, god of epilepsy was Lugal-amašpae. He is not attested many times and most often we find him in long lists of demons and diseases. There, he is closely associated with the various kinds of epilepsy that we know already: "Lugal-urra, a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a, *bennu*, Lugal-amašpae".<sup>148</sup> In the opening section of Tablet III of the handbook *Utukkū lemnūti* he is the last in a long list of demons closing in on a man walking on the street and his name is rendered *bennu* in the interlinear Akkadian version.<sup>149</sup> He is named "the evil god"; similarly in Tablet XIV of the same handbook in a passage where we find him after the gods of the Netherworld (kur) Etana and Gilgameš and before Nergal, "Lord of the Flood".<sup>150</sup>

Only one therapeutic text mentions Lugal-amašpae: this god "seizes" a patient and a very short prescription follows; the next entries indicate what to do if a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a "falls upon a man".<sup>151</sup>

What does this Sumerian name mean? Probably "Lord of Jasper".<sup>152</sup> Later on, in the discussion on amulets (Chapter VI), we will see that the stone "jasper" is the most important amulet against epilepsy.

Lugal-nam.en.na and *Bennu*

Two gods with Sumerian names identified as Akkadian *bennu* have already been mentioned: Lugal-nam.en.na dugud.da = *bennu* - *miqtu*,<sup>153</sup> and also Lugal-amašpae.<sup>154</sup> The evidence for the equation Lugal-amašpae = *bennu* is the best of the two.

Lugal-nam.en.na is equated with *be-[en-nu]* in a lexical text (the "god" determinative is lacking),<sup>155</sup> as the gods Lugal.me and Nam.en.na are.<sup>156</sup> A Middle Babylonian lexical text offers: <sup>d</sup>Dim.tur.tur = *E-da-nu-ú-um*, u<sub>4</sub>.nam.en.na = *ni ba ra ra ba* (?); *lilām*, *lilitum* (incubus and succubus) and *pašittum* follow.<sup>157</sup> It is unfortunate that I cannot identify the Akkadian word or name with which u<sub>4</sub>.nam.en.na is equated. The context makes clear, however, that interrelated demons are meant; possibly those threatening the life of a baby. The element u<sub>4</sub> could mean "demon". As to the Sumerian word nam.en.na, it indeed stands for epilepsy of a slave in an Old Babylonian letter.<sup>158</sup> It definitely does not mean "lordship"; rather, the en.na reminds us of the last element in the well known *lil.lá.en.na* "incubus", or in *LÍL.UD.TAR.EN.NA*.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>148</sup> BAM 5 468:8 f.; cf. BBR 45 I 6 with F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits* (1992) 6; STT 1 57:22 f.

<sup>149</sup> CT 16 2:61, after R. Borger, *BiOr* 28 (1971) 66b. A translation was given by R. Labat, *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (1970) 140 f.

<sup>150</sup> E. Ebeling, *ArOr* 21 (1953) 388:81 (Gattung II, cf. HKL II 54), with the "translation" "god *bennu*"; duplicate STT 2 210:18-21.

<sup>151</sup> *SpbTU* II 192 no. 48:10 ff.

<sup>152</sup> M. Krebernik, *RLA* VII/1-2 (1987) 111 s.v., suggests "König 'strahlend hervorgehender Hirt (ùt u l)'".

<sup>153</sup> CT 17 4:5, 7; see above, the discussion of *miqtu*.

<sup>154</sup> *ArOr* 21 388:22, *bennu* with determinative "god".

<sup>155</sup> MSL 17 (1985) 166 Antagal VII 161.

<sup>156</sup> An: Anum II 51-2; see *RLA* VII 149 s.v. Lugal-me.

<sup>157</sup> *UET* VII 93 IV 19-20.

<sup>158</sup> *AbB* 5 190:6, with note by F.R. Kraus.

<sup>159</sup> CT 14 16:22.



*Bennu* is occasionally a god in Akkadian texts. The myth “Nergal and Ereškigal” records that the god *Bennu* was installed as gatekeeper in the ninth gate of the Netherworld; Dizziness (*Šidānu*) in the tenth, *Mīqtu* in the eleventh and Lord of the Roof in the twelfth gates.<sup>160</sup> They belong to the fourteen “diseases” brought down from heaven by the god Nergal when he took residence in the Netherworld; the myth wants to explain their presence there, although to our feeling they are not all deadly – maybe they are lingering, “chronic”.<sup>161</sup> The second passage is in the diagnostic handbook where we find as a diagnosis “Hand of god *Bennu*, deputy of *Sin*: he will die”.<sup>162</sup> Elsewhere, a diagnosis is “Hand of *bennu* [here, the “god” determinative is lacking], demon, deputy of *Sin*”.<sup>163</sup>

*Bennu* is here associated with the moon-god *Sin*; there also is a connection between the moon and jasper (a m a š.p a.è) which will be discussed in Chapter VI. This provides us with another link between Lugal-amašpae and the epilepsy called *bennu*, so it seems.

It is surprising that the god Lugal-amašpae occurs so rarely in the texts whereas *bennu* is so frequent. Was *bennu* too general to allow an identification with a very specific demon? Note that *bennu* and Lugal-amašpae are kept separate in the long lists of diseases and demons.

<sup>160</sup> EA 357:70–72.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal* (1971) 86 f. The latest discussion of the myth will be found in M. Hutter, *Altorientalische Vorstellungen von der Unterwelt* (1985).

<sup>162</sup> TDP 234:23.

<sup>163</sup> BAM 3 202 rev. 7, dupl. 311:52.



### III EPILEPSY WITH OTHER AFFLICTIONS

#### The context of epilepsy

Several times we saw how the various kinds of epilepsy occurred together as a group and this group can be regarded as part of an even larger group of diseases. Modern medicine gives epilepsy a place in Neurology. The Babylonians did not, of course, and it will be interesting to see in what context they placed epilepsy. The "long lists of diseases" already referred to are our primary source of information and a sophisticated text from Late Babylonian (Seleucid) Uruk should grant us a deeper insight.

But first it is important to see in what context the ancient Greeks and Romans viewed epilepsy. Their later writings give the most systematic treatment and they unvariably locate the origins of all these kindred diseases in the head. *Soranus*, as transmitted in a Latin version by Caelius Aurelianus, discusses in his *On Chronic Diseases*, Book I, the following topics: headache (cephalea) – darkness before the eyes (scotoma) – incubus – epilepsy – madness (mania) – melancholy – paralysis – twitch. *Areteus* of Cappadocia, in his book on acute diseases: phrenitis (= meningitis)<sup>1</sup> – lethargy – wasting (marasmus) – apoplexy – epilepsy (V 1–5), and in his book on chronic diseases: headache – darkness before the eyes (scotoma) – epilepsy – melancholy (VII 1–5). *Posidonius*, as cited by Aetius of Amida in Book VI, wrote on: phrenitis – lethargy – catalepsy – heavy sleep (carus) – coma – darkness before the eyes (scotoma) – madness (mania) – melancholy – lycanthropy – nightmare (ephialtes) – epilepsy – dullness. *Paulus* of Aegina, III 4–16: headache – phrenitis – erysipelas – lethargy – seizure (catochus) – heavy sleep (carus) – scotoma – epilepsy – melancholy – madness – nightmare – lycanthropy. *Alexander* of Tralles: headache – phrenitis – lethargy – epilepsy – paralysis – melancholy.<sup>2</sup> *Galen* warns women against dyeing their hair with the wrong ingredients: the resulting cooling of the brain might lead to apoplexy, epilepsy, deep sleep (cataphora), lethargy, heavy sleep (carus), and "so-called" catalepsy.<sup>3</sup>

This categorisation is partly rational, partly traditional. Relating apoplexy and epilepsy with the head must have seemed obvious when ancient man saw the consequences of brain damage; furthermore, epilepsy can have symptoms of apoplexy. In this, the medical writer was rational. Folkloristic elements, like incubus or nightmare, look more traditional, going back to superstitious imagination and it is not surprising that a similar list of interrelated diseases could be drawn up for folk-medicine in 20th century Palestine.<sup>4</sup> They are treated all together in Babylonian "taxonomy".

The groups of epilepsy-related diseases in the Babylonian texts are usually not very telling. There they occur as a small group in a long list of demonic diseases as can be seen from a few relatively meaningless passages. We give some examples.

<sup>1</sup> Jackie Pigeaud, *La maladie de l'âme ...* (1981) 70–100; J.L. Heiberg, *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie* 86 (1927) 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Th. Puschmann, vol. I 464–617, Book I 10–17.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. C.G. Kühn, vol. XII 442, *De compositione medicamentorum* I 3. Cf. Danielle Gourevitch, *Le mal d'être femme. La femme et la médecine dans la Rome antique* (1984) 78.

<sup>4</sup> T. Canaan, *Dämonenglaube im Lande der Bibel* (1929) 45–47.



An incantation priest (conjurer), on his way to the sick patient, has to anoint himself in order to ward off the demons threatening him. We have an incantation for this purpose, followed by a recipe for the salve to be used. In the incantation formulas the exorcist claims to be a messenger of the gods and tells the demons to be gone. The subscript to the text says "Incantation against the devil (*gallû*), the Lurker, Lugal-urra, Provider-of-Evil, evil *alû*, a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a, and whatever (evil) there might be, in order not to come near to a conjurer". The incantation itself enumerates these demons and some more.<sup>5</sup>

A lengthy apotropaic ritual for "blocking the Foot of Evil in the house of a man" intends to prevent the evil coming from bad portents from entering the house.<sup>6</sup> It starts with a long list of all possible mishaps, not only those disasters that the ritual wishes to avert.<sup>7</sup> In this very general list we find Hand of the God, Hand of the Goddess, a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a, Lugal-urra, Lugal-amašpae.<sup>8</sup>

In the second tablet of the magical instructions *Bīt mēseri* the god Lugal-girra — in fact embodied in two figurines at the door empowered with apotropaic force — is addressed twice in order to chase away demons.<sup>9</sup> In the first prayer it is said "I installed you, Lugal-girra, in order to eradicate Provider-of-Evil; I invoked you against *utukku*, *šēdu*, Lurker, Spirit (of the dead), incubus, succubus, *kattillu*, evil *bennu*, Hand of the God, "Spawn of Šulpaea" and a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a, any Hand of a Spirit (of the dead), the god of a father or the goddess of a mother, whatever there is, against the sorceries of a god or the god of a man, that have been told to pass by NN (leaving him unharmed)".<sup>10</sup> This looks like a wholesale list of demonic forces.

Elsewhere we can observe that the group of epilepsies were inserted afterwards into an already existing list: Lugal-urra, a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a, *bennu*, Lugal-amašpae, Hand of a Goddess, Provider-of-Evil.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of another text, a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a and Lugal-urra appear in one manuscript and are omitted in the other.<sup>12</sup> They return in the ritual prayer but there they have been added later, together with other demonic attacks,<sup>13</sup> as the scribe wanted to change the original incantation against black magic into a prayer to the gods who had sent these diseases.<sup>14</sup>

A number of clay tablets, all duplicates, give incantations for "eradicating" three groups of diseases. We already have met the "fall" (*miqtu*) from heaven in the first group, and noticed that "fall" in the second group has nothing to do with epilepsy; in the third group there is a long list: illness — "fall" — *li'bu*-fever — *asakku* — the demon of jaundice — feverish shivering — depression — chill — incubus — *bennu* — seizure — dizziness

<sup>5</sup> KAR 31 (esp. lines 31 f.), with E. Ebeling, ZDMG 69 (1915) 89–92; cf. A. Falkenstein, LSS NF I (1931) 28.

<sup>6</sup> Thus the interpretation of F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits* (1992) 91 f., 93 f.

<sup>7</sup> Wiggermann, 92, D.

<sup>8</sup> BBR 45:1–10, with O.R. Gurney, AAA 22 (1935) 42, and F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits* 6.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Wiggermann, 59. Wiggermann, 106 seems to mean that tablets I–II are against potential danger and tablet III is against present danger.

<sup>10</sup> G. Meier, AfO 14 (1941–44) 142:33–40.

<sup>11</sup> BAM 5 468:8 f., introduced by an unexpected *šumma*.

<sup>12</sup> KAR 26:1 (Ebeling, ZDMG 69 96–103), compared with AMT 96,7:1–2. — This observation invalidates J.V. Kinnier Wilson's complex "diagnosis" given in *Studies Benno Landsberger* (1965) 291 f.

<sup>13</sup> Line 38, with the analysis by T. Abusch, JCS 37 (1985) 91 f., see already W.G. Kunstmann, LSS NF II (1932) 96 f.

<sup>14</sup> Thus T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature. Case Studies* (1987) 45–60.

– nocturnal fear (*hajjattu*) – Provider-of-Evil.<sup>15</sup> These examples should suffice for the moment.<sup>16</sup>

But there are texts that are more specific about the manifestations of epilepsy and the diseases that were closest to them according to Babylonian perceptions. We already get a general idea from the texts prescribing amulet stones against epilepsy within the context of amulets against other demonic attacks. Those are: Any Evil – the evil *alû*-demon – gnashing one's teeth – quivering in bed – stroke.<sup>17</sup> Once dizziness follows,<sup>18</sup> and on two occasions mental disturbance (*šinūt tēmi*).<sup>19</sup>

A text from Assur is particularly helpful for our investigation because it gives in a very systematic way a survey of the tasks of an Assyrian (or Babylonian) conjurer. There, we find this entry:

- Remedies against a n.t.a.š u b.b a, Lugal-urra, Hand of the God, Hand of the Goddess, Hand of the Spirit (of the dead), evil *alû*-demon, incubus, Provider-of-Evil, Hand of the Oath, Hand of Man (= sorcery), and remedies against all.<sup>20</sup>

It is possible that in this particular entry the shared (?) “remedies” determine this group as one group.

A late text about fumigation as a remedy starts with: “If a n.t.a.š u b.b a, Lugal-urra, Hand of the God, Hand of the Goddess are upon a man ...”;<sup>21</sup> the reader will notice the same sequence as that in the text from Assur. A duplicate text gives as extra “Hand of the Spirit (of the dead)”.<sup>22</sup> The commentary on these lines, made by the Babylonians themselves, explaining the expressions that interest us is especially important:<sup>23</sup>

- a n.t.a.š u b.b a: “the sick person is choking and discharges his saliva all the time” (*mar-šu uḫ-tan-naq ù ūḫ-su ŠUB.ŠUB-a*);
- Lugal-urra: “he turns away (?) his right eye and his left eye” (IGI<sup>II</sup> XV-šú u CL-šú *i-kap-pi-iš*);
- Hand of the God: “he curses the gods, he speaks insolence, he hits whom(ever) he sees” (DINGIR.MEŠ *i-nam-zar šil-lat i-qab-bi šá im-mar i-maḫ-ḫaš*);
- Hand of the Goddess: “he has ... of heart-break, time and again, and forgets his (own) words, time and again” (*ḫu-uš-ši GAZ ŠÁ TUKU.TUKU-ši ù (?) INIM.MEŠ-šú im-ta-na-aš-ši*);
- Hand of a Spirit: “his ears ring, he ...s, time and again (*tēpū*), his teeth do not come close to food” (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>.MEŠ-šú GÜ.DÉ.MEŠ *ma-gal iṭ-tē-né-pi ši-in-na-šú ana ma-ka-le-e la ú-qar-ra-ba-ma* [sic]).

These explanations look at first sight like “definitions” but they unfortunately are not, as a glance at the diagnostic handbook will show that different symptoms for the same ailments are found there. Although those ancient learned Babylonian commentaries

<sup>15</sup> STT 2 138 rev. 21 f., read with K. 8104, see MSL 9 105, c) and C.B.F. Walker, *BiOr* 26 (1969) 77a); BAM 4 338 rev. 6–8.

<sup>16</sup> More in W. Farber, *BID* (1977) 56, 64:1–4; R. Borger, *Studies Erica Reiner* (1987) 24:97–100. Cf. also the long list in Maqlu II 52–62, where we have to supply at the end of line 58 Lugal-urra. The manuscript offering dingir x [...] is K.2455 (courtesy Tzvi Abusch).

<sup>17</sup> As in BAM 4 356, 372 III (etc.) and the summaries in 364 and 400; cf. F. Köcher, *Afo* 20 (1963) 156–8.

<sup>18</sup> BAM 4 376 II 15 (DIŠ NA IGI<sup>II</sup>.MEŠ-šú NIGIN.MEŠ-du).

<sup>19</sup> Written KA.ḪI.KÚR.RA, BAM 4 376 III 3 and STT 2 286 II 14.

<sup>20</sup> KAR 44 rev. 10–12, with J. Bottéro, *Mythes et rites de Babylone* (1985) 83, 104.

<sup>21</sup> TCL 6 34 I 1–2.

<sup>22</sup> AMT 53,3:1.

<sup>23</sup> BRM 4 32:1–4.



can often be off the mark there are elements of truth in these explanations which can be discovered. In the discussion on a.n.t.a.š u b.b a and Lugal-urra, we already saw that "saliva" and "movements of the eye" could very well be their respective distinctive features. Hand of the Goddess again has the symptom "heart-break" in two other passages in the diagnostic handbook;<sup>24</sup> and ringing (*šasû*) of the ears certainly is one of the principal characteristics of Hand of a Spirit: spirits of the dead were thought to enter the head through the ear.<sup>25</sup> Hand of a God can be a disease of newborn children, as we will see later; here it obviously is an adult abusing God and man — a unique description, in a way reminding us of the symptoms of the Gilles de la Tourette disease.

Our general conclusion is that only a few features of the five diseases were singled out by the commentator. The grounds for his selection are not always clear to us.

What comes closest to an epileptic attack according to our definitions, is a passage in an incantation to be recited by a patient suffering from a seizure by a spirit:<sup>26</sup>

"The wind of an evil word (?) has blown into me, an evil Lurker has been put upon me and chased me all the time: he smote (*maḥāsu*) my skull and (then) I have bitten my tongue; he smote my legs while my arms were tied; he fell upon me and knocked me (down) (*imqutannima idi'panni*)".

Only twice in cuneiform literature do we find biting the tongue in a description of an attack: here and in a deviating diagnostic tradition.<sup>27</sup> It is remarkable, that we never find this as one of the symptoms among those of the various epilepsies listed in the canonical Diagnostic Handbook. Its editor may have been aware of the accidental nature of tongue-biting during a fit: so to him perhaps this was no meaningful symptom. Note that other possible concomitant symptoms are not mentioned either: foaming and urinating.

This text is directed against a "roaming spirit (of the dead)" that has seized a man (*eṭemmu murtappidu iṣbassu*). The symptoms of the seizure are given at the beginning of the text and do not resemble those given by our passage; only the symptoms of laming (*šimmatu*, *rimûtu*) have a little in common with our passage. We assume that the incantation text was a separate charm, against the Evil Lurker, inserted in our text. He may be that "roaming spirit", after all, because the "wind" blowing into the patient probably stands for a spirit.<sup>28</sup>

The German excavations in Uruk yielded an unparalleled, unique, text written at the time of the Seleucid kings.<sup>29</sup> F. Köcher realised its importance. This text distributes 36 or 37 diseases over four parts of the body where they originate ("are from"). Such a view on the physical origin of disease is new.<sup>30</sup> The parts of the body are: the heart, the ..., the lungs, the kidneys. For the second organ, hard to read on the clay tablet, Köcher suggests the mouth of the stomach (*pi karši*), but as several of the diseases originating in this organ are diseases of the head, "the head" (or a part of it) seems to

<sup>24</sup> TDP 126:43 (*huṣṣa ḥīp libbi*); cf. *libbašu iḥteneppešu*, STT 1 91:26 f. and dupl. (Tablet XXVI:24).

<sup>25</sup> R. Labat, *RSO* 32 (1957) 110 f., and see now the Babylonian commentary *SpbTU* III 189 no. 100:13.

<sup>26</sup> LKA 86 rev. 5-9, par. 88 rev. 1-5.

<sup>27</sup> STT 1 89:104 f., 111 f., see Chapter V.

<sup>28</sup> W. von Soden, *AHW* III 1192b s.v. *šāru* 7, d: *šār šēri* "Totengeist".

<sup>29</sup> *SpbTU* I no. 43.

<sup>30</sup> F. Köcher in: Christa Habrich, etc., Eds., *Medizinische Diagnostik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Festschrift für Heinz Goerke zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (1978) 17-39, esp. 22 ff.



be more likely.<sup>31</sup> From the kidneys come diseases that have to do with the urinary tract, including sterility. Students of the history of medicine may be tempted to see in the four organs the seats of the "humours", so well known from Greek science: the heart (blood), the head (phlegm), the spleen (water; later: yellow bile), the gall (black bile). They may conclude that there were Greek influences in this Late Babylonian text, but such a conclusion seems rash.

The first section of the text, listing the diseases "from the heart" include the types of epilepsy. "Heart" (*libbu*) can be the heart, but very often means in a general way "intestines" in the abdomen; with the "upper side of the 'heart'" (*rēš libbi*) the Babylonians meant the epigastrium. In contrast, the "lungs" stand for the organs of the chest.<sup>32</sup> The following five diseases are said to spring from "the heart": heart-break, a n.t.a.š u.b.b a, Hand of the God, Hand of the Goddess, *bennu*, Lugal-urra. We easily recognize the usual list of epilepsies and closely related diseases but "heart-break" (*hīp libbi*) is new to us. This is naturally a disease of the "heart" according to its name,<sup>33</sup> but there are more texts that group it together with the epilepsies which was suggested above where heart-break was seen to be a symptom of Hand of the Goddess; below fumigation will be seen to serve for epilepsies and heart-break.

# Melancholy

The historian of medicine, who will be aware that there is a close relationship between epilepsy and melancholy in Greek and later medicine, may be inclined to see in "heart-break" something similar to melancholy. This problem is worth pursuing.

"Melancholy" originally is a Greek word meaning "black bile", a concept fitting in the gradually developing Greek theory of the four humours in the human body already mentioned. People suffering from an excess of black bile are the melancholics (another, originally Latin, word is *atrabilius*).<sup>34</sup> Melancholy always has been considered a corporal disease that can be cured by the normal therapeutic means, including the usual *materia medica*. To the Greeks, the plant black hellebore was the most important remedy. Babylonian "heart-break" is similarly regarded as a disease subject to the same cure as the others. Epilepsy, too, is caused by too much black bile, according to a pseudo-Hippocratic writing: the blood goes bad, the flow of air (!) through the veins is hampered and as a consequence the patient suffers from epilepsy or a stroke.<sup>35</sup> Plato wrote that black bile mixed with white phlegm vitiates the "divine" brains and this is

<sup>31</sup> This would require at least one emendation, like SAG instead of KA, unless we may read *ka-li-šu : kallu* is "the crown of the human skull" (CAD K 83b; add the refs. BAM 3 221 III 2, 300:3, 518:4; STT 1 57:47). — An emendation SAG ŠA-šú "his epigastrium" would be more in line with Köcher's proposal.

<sup>32</sup> Note *kišir(tu) libbi* vs. *hašē*, constriction in the abdomen vs. chest. STT 1 102 distinguishes the lungs (1–6) from the epigastrium (7–11).

<sup>33</sup> Note that in a lexical list on persons a man "whose heart is broken" is followed by persons suffering from intestinal troubles, MSL 12 (1969) 185 OB Lu B v 49.

<sup>34</sup> The "classic" on melancholy is the book by R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, and F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (London 1964). We used the updated new German edition, *Saturn und Melancholie. Studien zur Geschichte der Naturphilosophie und Medizin, der Religion und der Kunst* (Übersetzt von Christa Buschendorf) (Suhrkamp Verlag 1992).

<sup>35</sup> Hipp., *Regimen*, Appendix VII; Littre II 406; R. Joly, *Hippocrate* VI/2 (1972) 71.

why epilepsy is of a "sacred nature".<sup>36</sup> Later texts tell us time and again that epilepsy is due to an excess of black bile.<sup>37</sup> Epileptics and melancholics suffer from the same disease; the first display the symptoms in their bodies, the second in their minds.<sup>38</sup> In his description of melancholy Galen often adduces epilepsy in comparison and does not mention other mental diseases, as all later authors or compilers did.<sup>39</sup>

Thanks to Aristotle, melancholy has become a famous, respected ailment: he thought that this was the disease of the "outstanding" or "eminent" (*perittot*) among mankind; incidentally, it has been suggested that this idea may belong to Theophrastus and not the great philosopher himself.<sup>40</sup> He compares its effects with those of drinking wine, depending on quantity, quality, etc. At the beginning of his discussion he makes a remark on melancholy and epilepsy taken up by the Renaissance humanists but not elaborated upon by himself. We quote this influential passage:<sup>41</sup>

Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly of an atrabilious temperament (*melancholikot*), and some of them to such extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile, as is said to have happened to Heracles among the heroes? For he appears to have been of this nature, and that is why epileptic (*epileptikot*) afflictions were called by the ancients "the sacred disease" after him. That his temperament was atrabilious is shown by the fury (*ékstasis*) which he displayed towards his children and the eruption of sores (*hélkè*) which took place before his disappearance on Mount Oeta; for this often occurs as the result of black bile. Lysander the Lacedaemonian also suffered from similar sores before his death. There are also the stories of Ajax and Bellerophon, of whom the former became insane (*ekstatikós*), while the latter sought out habitations in desert places (...).

Later, we will have more to say about the insanity and the sores, related to black bile.

Can Babylonian "heart-break" be interpreted as a form of melancholy? The medical texts and Babylonian and Assyrian letters where the expression is quite frequent are helpful. "Heart-break" or "to break the heart" were everyday words often used with iterative or permansive verbal forms, meaning that the heart breaks "time and again", or "all the time".<sup>42</sup> In a Neo-Babylonian letter heart-break "eats" a man.<sup>43</sup> All this shows that it is a chronic condition. The medical texts have heart-break in a context

<sup>36</sup> Plato, *Timaeus* 85A-B. — Interestingly, Hippocrates in his well known *On the Sacred Disease* ascribes this disease to an excess of phlegm, not bile (II, 6; V, 1).

<sup>37</sup> O. Temkin, 54 f.; also M. Ullmann, *Rufus von Ephesos: Krankengeschichte* (1978) 102–6, case XVI.

<sup>38</sup> Hipp., *Epidemica* VI 8, 31 (Littre V 354–6). Cf. W. Müri, *Griechische Studien* (1976) 108 f., 155 f.

<sup>39</sup> *De locis affectis* III (C.G. Kühn VIII, 173–9, etc.), with H. Flashar, *Melancholie und Melancholiker* (1966) 105.

<sup>40</sup> H. Flashar, 61–67; Bennett Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece. The Classical Roots of Modern Psychiatry* (1978) 228–237. Now: Ph.J. van der Eijk, "Aristoteles über die Melancholie", *Mnemosyne* 43 (1990) 33–72 (Problem. XXX, 1 is in line with Aristotle's own ideas about melancholy).

<sup>41</sup> Aristoteles, *Problemata physica* XXX, 1 (Bekker, 953A 10 ff.), as translated in Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford translation* II (1984) 1498 f. Cf. the edition in R. Klibansky, etc., *Saturn und Melancholie* (1992) 59 ff. — See for a further discussion H.H. Biesterfeld, D. Gutas, *JAOS* 104 (1984) 21 ff. (with lit.).

<sup>42</sup> R. Frankena, *SLB* IV (1978) 230 (OB letters). Cf. *hip libbim nasâhum* "to eradicate heart-break" in the OB letter *ARM* 10 1:7, after J.M. Durand's collations in *MARI* 4 (1985) 433 note 237. The iterative of *rašû* is attested in *STT* 1 95 IV 145, "he contracts heart-break, time and again, day and night he gets fear (*puluhtu*)".

<sup>43</sup> *TCL* 9 138:28 f.



of anxiety and fear (*parādu*, *pirittu*, *puluhtu*, *nissatu*):<sup>44</sup> the same is true for the literary prayers, using a larger choice of words.<sup>45</sup> The wrath of the gods is always its cause,<sup>46</sup> and among its remedies are plants<sup>47</sup> amulets,<sup>48</sup> leather bags filled with *materia magica*,<sup>49</sup> and fumigation.<sup>50</sup>

Some passages show how heart-break manifests itself: the patient suffering from the god Marduk's wrath "breaks his 'heart' all the time when at (his) meal; in (his) house he has to do with strife (*šaltu*), in the street with quarrelling (*puḥpuḥhū*)."<sup>51</sup> Strife and quarrelling indeed were conspicuous signs of heart-break<sup>52</sup> and a psychologist may remark that the man may already have had a bad temper, provoking strife and quarrelling, perhaps unwillingly. Apart from fears, the feeling of being a victim of slander and experiencing bad dreams can be symptoms.<sup>53</sup> There are many passages with a variety of symptoms which could be cited<sup>54</sup> but one lengthy description of a man confronted with misfortune (*mihru*), not knowing how this could have happened to him is very clear:

- 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, constantly giving orders but no (one) complying, calling but no (one) answering, the curse of numerous people,<sup>55</sup> he is all the time apprehensive when lying (in his bed), he contracts paresis, he is filled with anger against god and king until his epileptic fit (?),<sup>56</sup> his limbs are hanging down, from time to time he is apprehensive, he does not sleep day or night, he often sees confused 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.<sup>57</sup>

The ritual in this text intends "to release him, so that his fears will not overwhelm (*kašādu*, lit. "reach; conquer") him".

This poor man, an emblematic figure like Job in the Bible, has lost everything, plunged into a mental depression the symptoms of which are listed — many of them are just alternatives! — and not knowing the reason of his misfortune, he ascribes it

<sup>44</sup> BAM 3 316 III 8 (par. 317 rev. 13), 13 (par. 317 rev. 16 offers *pirittu* instead of *puluhtu*), 23 f., 317 rev. 24 f., KAR 92:1. Note *gilittu* in AMT 71:5, 11 and LKA 155:21.

<sup>45</sup> Maqlu V 75 ff., VII 130 ff.; W.G. Lambert, *AFO* 19 (1959-60) 64, Prayer to Marduk no. 2:90 (*adīrātu*); 4 R<sup>2</sup> 59,1 rev. 15 f., KAR 80 rev. 7 f. (*nissatu*).

<sup>46</sup> As in BAM 4 370 Ia:3 f., 372 I 2; etc.

<sup>47</sup> BAM 2 159 III 28 f., 4 379 I 19-20 (cf. BRM 4 32:19, according to F.Köcher); Uruanna II 9; KADP 1 V 66 (after *nissatu*).

<sup>48</sup> BAM 4 370 Ia:3-4, 372 I 1 f., 375 I 11; K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction* ... (1985) Plate 8 K. 3937:2.

<sup>49</sup> BAM 3 311:22, 317 rev. 17, end, rev. 19, 23 (par. 311:6, 7, 5); STT 1 95 IV 145-9.

<sup>50</sup> BAM 4 388 I 6, 7 11 (par. TCL 6 34 III 6, 10).

<sup>51</sup> BAM 317 rev. 27 f.; AMT 40:2:4 f.; STT 1 95:7 f. Cf. BAM 3 232:14 f.

<sup>52</sup> In non-medical texts: KAR 80 rev. 7 f., 228:19-22

<sup>53</sup> BAM 3 315 III 1-9 with dupls.; SpbTU II 109 no. 22 I 16-19.

<sup>54</sup> CT 23 38 = BAM 5 480 IV 38 f. with dupl. Jastrow; BAM 3 316 III 23 f. with KAR 92:1; BAM 3 317:7 f., rev. 24f.

<sup>55</sup> Reading *i-zi-ir* (!)-*tū* KA UN.MEŠ H.A.M[EŠ] (= *pi nīšī ma'dāti*) at the end of line 5. — At the end of line 15 I suggest *šā UD*. [1.KAM], qualifying the garment *nēbehu*.

<sup>56</sup> *a-du bi-nu-ti-šū* in line 6, connecting this obscure word with *bi-nu-UD* in the Hana slave sale contract published by F. Thureau-Dangin, *Syria* 5 (1924) 272, line 15.

<sup>57</sup> BAM 3 234:1-10, largely following E. Ritter and J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *AnSt* 30 (1980) 24 ff.



to divine anger. It gives us an impression of the larger psychological and social context of "heart-break". A man has a similar reaction when he loses his family.<sup>58</sup>

A remark ought to be made about a variation of the expression "heart-break": sometimes it is preceded by the obscure word *hu-uš*, *hu-uš-ša*, *hu-uš-ši*, once *hu-ū-ša*.<sup>59</sup> There must be a genitive relationship between both words: the "... of heart-break".<sup>60</sup> It is noticeable that we find this combination only occasionally in the medical texts — where a duplicate could omit *hu-uš*<sup>61</sup> — but always in strictly literary texts like prayers.<sup>62</sup> Adding this word *hūšu* was obviously a matter of style and we gather from a late Babylonian commentary that later they no longer understood this word.<sup>63</sup> Our conclusion is that this variant of heart-break makes no difference for us.

We will now turn to the epistolary texts. "My heart is broken/will be broken all the time" is a frequent complaint in Old Babylonian letters, urging the addressee to take the writer seriously. Often he or she makes this remark when a response with news fails to come.<sup>64</sup> Worry or alarm about somebody else, not necessarily an inherent and persistent feeling of fear, is the kind of mood these writers are in.<sup>65</sup>

The Assyrian letters seem to have a different shade of meaning and "panic" seems to be the best translation. In one letter, full of related idioms, we read:

- (While) all my associates are happy (*hadū*), I am dying of a shattered heart (*kusup libbi*). I have been treated as if I did not keep the watch of the king, my lord; my heart has become backsliding (*suāgu*),<sup>66</sup> indeed, panic (*hi-ip libbi*) has seized me, I have become exceedingly afraid (*palāhu*): may the king revive my heart just like my equals!<sup>67</sup>

An Assyrian royal inscription says that an Elamite enemy "got 'heart-break', fled from the land Elam and grasped my royal feet".<sup>68</sup> Again a sudden emotion, clearly panic. There could be reason to study the Assyrian terminology for emotions of the "heart" of which we saw only something in the letter; examples are "throbbing" (*tirku*)<sup>69</sup> or the heart being "low" (*šapil*).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>58</sup> AMT 71, with E. Ebeling, ZA 51 (1955) 167 ff.

<sup>59</sup> In AMT 71:5, 11. Note *hu-uz-zu* in K. 5968, C. Bezold, Catalogue, II 752.

<sup>60</sup> In 4 R<sup>2</sup> 59,1 rev. 16 we find "and" between the two words, but this is an error, made under the influence of *kūru u nissatu* in the preceding line.

<sup>61</sup> Compare BAM 3 311:22, etc., with 317 rev. 17, etc., or 232:14 with 317 rev. 27 and STT 1 95:7, AMT 40,2:4.

<sup>62</sup> Read thus also in KAR 80 rev. 8. Cf. LKA 155:21.

<sup>63</sup> GCCI II 406:10, with CAD H 260b. *hu-uš* (?) *šuburri* in SpTU III 54 no. 67 III 28 is uncertain. As to a possible etymology, cf. J.L. Boyd, Or. NS 52 (1983) 247, note 2.

<sup>64</sup> AbB 3 80:11 with comm. by R. Frankena, SLB IV (1978) 230. In letters written by women: AbB 10 28:9, 11 168:17.

<sup>65</sup> Fear is excluded in TIM 1 = ABIM 20:10 (it is rather disappointment) and not likely in AbB 1 124:19. Cf. F.R. Kraus, JEOL 31 (1989-90) 46. — Refs. from Neo-Babylonian letters (always using the stative "broken") are TuM 2-3 256:19 (= Ebeling, NBB 283), CT 54 521 rev. 3, Baghdad. Mitt., Beiheft 2 (1980) 113:17 (*na-za-qat šā GAZ lib-bi itti-šā*), TCL 9 138:28.

<sup>66</sup> S. Parpola connects in his commentary this verb (form *is-su-gu*) with Hebrew *sāg leb* in Proverbs 14:14.

<sup>67</sup> ABL 525 rev., following S. Parpola, LAS 264 rev. 9-18. — Note that Parpola in his commentary volume, p. 51 ad ABL 687 = LAS 41 rev. 18, and W. von Soden, AHw, each one in his own way, connect the words *hūpu* and *hūpu* with another verb meaning "to fear", *hūpu*.

<sup>68</sup> VAB VII/2 62 Asb. Prisma A VII 55.

<sup>69</sup> ABL 584 + 1370 = LAS 247:18 with comm. Parpola, p. 242. Cf. *maqātu* (or: *nakātu*?) in *libbi it-tu-q* *u-ut adanniš*, LAS Commentary, 371 no. 370 rev. 3.

<sup>70</sup> LAS 121 rev. 5-6, 122:21 f.; see K. Deller, AOAT 1 (1969) 51 f. Note *šuplu libbi* "depression", LAS Commentary, 372 no. 370 rev. 35. Lowless of the heart is always accompanied by *ikku kūri*. Also in the medical

To summarize, a man with a broken heart can be ill-tempered, suspicious, have a nervous breakdown, be full of apprehensions, be worried, or in a panic. He could be called a "melancholic" which can include being a hypochondriac and neurotic. The reader who wants to know exactly what "melancholy" stands for according to the West-European tradition, can be referred to Robert Burton's classic *The Anatomy of Melancholy* written in 1621 where in the "Symptoms, or Signs of Melancholy in the Body/in the Mind" given by Burton Babylonian heart-break symptoms can easily be recognised.<sup>71</sup>

The Babylonians also saw a connection between "breaking of the heart" and gall. The Old Babylonian myth Atram-ḫasīs describes the restless Atram-ḫasīs, faced with the impending Flood: "the heart was broken (and) he was vomiting (*mā'um*) gall (*martum*)", a metaphor also known to the much later Assyrians in expressions like "their hearts pound and they vomit gall".<sup>72</sup>

Having established the connection between melancholy and the gall the question remains: What exactly is "black bile"? In fact no such bodily humour exists although the large majority of physicians believed in it for more than two thousand years! Important remarks on the origin of this false idea have been made by F. Kudlien.<sup>73</sup> He contended that "black bile" belongs to the realm of magical thinking. To the ancients, "black" or "dark" intestines conveyed a feeling of depression, as Kudlien shows with passages taken from Homer, Theognis, Aeschylus and Sophocles. The intestines fill with black matter having poisonous characteristics; that is why precisely the black variant of hellebore is effective against black bile, melancholy. So the idea of "black bile" is sheer magic, also surviving for two thousand years. Later medicine was to demythologize this notion and Diocles of Carystus (fourth cent. B.C.), heretically not believing in "black bile", still accepts the word "melancholia" and situates the disease in the epigastrium, around the stomach — as the Cnidian School did; this is hypochondria.<sup>74</sup> Rufus of Ephesus (ca. 100 A.D.) wrote a book (now lost) on "epigastric" and "hypochondriacal" melancholy and another work by him surviving in Arabic translation makes clear that melancholy could originate in the spleen or between the ribs.<sup>75</sup>

Did the Babylonians speak of "black" organs? Yes, for them the spleen (*ḫulimu*) was "the black 'heart'", as its Sumerogram ŠÀ.GIG shows.<sup>76</sup> At first sight this combination means "diseased heart", but we can venture to see in GIG an unusual writing for Sumerian *g e<sub>6</sub>(g)*, "black"; note that the very sign GIG is a combination of *g e<sub>6</sub>* and NUNUZ.

texts: AMT 76,1:7, BAM 3 231:3, 232:10, STT 2 256:3.

<sup>71</sup> In the edition of Everyman's Library (1932), vol. I, 382–397.

<sup>72</sup> Atramḫasis III ii 47, and see CAD M/1 437a (*mā'u*); note also 299b, *martu*, sub c), "bile" in transferred meanings; as in EA 359:23, "the heart of the merchants is ... filled with gall" (*i-ra-a ma-ar-ta bu-ul-lu-ul*) (Šar tamḫāri; transl. A.F. Rainey). "Throwing up" (*nadūm*) gall is to be taken literally as a symptom of a physical disease; cf. AEM 1/1 (1988) 224 no. 85:5, and compare CAD M/1 299, sub b).

<sup>73</sup> F. Kudlien, *Der Beginn des medizinischen Denkens bei den Griechen von Homer bis Hippokrates* (1967) 77–88 (note the correction of a detail by J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate. Pour une archéologie de l'école de Cnide* [1974] 110–3); Kudlien, "Schwärzliche Organe im frühgriechischen Denken", *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 8 (1973) 53–58. Cf. Bennett Simon, *Madness ...* (1978) 234–6.

<sup>74</sup> H. Flashar, *Melancholie und Melancholiker* (1966) Chapter 3, with Kudlien (1967) 84 f.

<sup>75</sup> M. Ullmann, *Rufus von Ephesos, Krankenjournal* (1978) 66–72, cases I and II, with comm. on p. 118 f.

<sup>76</sup> In the medical commentary published by M. Civil in JNES 33 (1974) 336:6 f. Perhaps already in the Ebla lexical texts where Eblaite *ti-ḫ-mu* "spleen" (?) is equated with šà.gig; see P. Fronzaroli in *Studies on the Language of Ebla* (1984) 151.



Another Sumerian word for "black" is the same sign GIG, written twice, with the reading kúkku (or k u<sub>10</sub>.k u<sub>10</sub>). That we have found here the correct interpretation is proved by a medical explanatory text:

- [If a man] suffers from [ŠA.GIG].GA: black heart (Š[Ā] GE<sub>6</sub>);
- [If a man] suffers from [ku-u]k-ki: black heart.<sup>77</sup>

We can now supply and understand the word *kukki* in the second line. The Sumerian word kúkku has become a loanword in Akkadian, so it seems, and one wonders whether we do find the same word as an element in designations for the ("black?") stomachs of ruminants, *kukkubānu*, *kukkubātu*, *kukkudru*.

Lexical texts equate "black heart" with "the black intestine" (*irru šalmu*) and add as a third explanation "spleen".<sup>78</sup>

The third collection of Sumerian proverbs pictures "sick heart" (šā.gig) as an invisible disease, hard to find — unlike "a diseased finger" — (Coll. 3.127) and adds the saying "May Inanna pour oil on my sick heart" (3.128). We assume that love-sickness is meant, to be cured by Inanna, the goddess of love. Here, gig means "sick" although "black" as a sign of melancholy also could be true — but not for the "sick" finger. "Black heart" (ŠĀ GE<sub>6</sub>) in the later medical texts is also a condition of a sick person. Pharmaceutical texts give lists of five,<sup>79</sup> seven<sup>80</sup> or nine<sup>81</sup> herbs to be used against it. One fragmentary text shows that an incantation "for Black Heart (UZU ŠĀ GE<sub>6</sub>)" was recited; the following ritual starts by enumerating seven herbs, five of which were also found in the pharmaceutical texts.<sup>82</sup> In one pharmaceutical text the next recipe is "herbs for a Good Heart"<sup>83</sup> and, in contrast, by such a heart a joyful mood must be meant.<sup>84</sup> Of course, a black heart must stand for quite the reverse.<sup>85</sup>

The spleen, therefore, a "black/sick heart" in Babylonian thought, was considered to be the site of feelings of unhappiness. According to the Greeks it was the source of black bile<sup>86</sup> and it is "black" itself.<sup>87</sup> We do not hesitate to conclude that the Greeks and the Babylonians had similar ideas on "dark intestines".<sup>88</sup>

<sup>77</sup> KADP 22 I 13 f.

<sup>78</sup> MSL 9 (1967) 37 Recension D:56. In Ebla: nīg.ge<sub>6</sub> ("black matter") = *ir-ru*<sub>12</sub>, see M. Civil, in L. Cagni, *Il bilinguismo a Ebla* (1984) 85. — Note that in an unpublished OB list we find at the end UZU ŠĀ, UZU šū-li-mu-um, UZU we-er-ra ša-al-mu-um, A. 3207:16–18. — What does "black SAR.MEŠ" in BAM 2 166:9 f. mean?

<sup>79</sup> BAM 2 164:10–12, 5 430 VI 5–7.

<sup>80</sup> BAM 3 305:5–9.

<sup>81</sup> BAM 5 431 V 42–46. — In broken context: STT 2 240 rev. 2, 4.

<sup>82</sup> BAM 3 305, according to F. Köcher "Rezept zur Heilung einer Milzerkrankung" — too narrow a definition.

<sup>83</sup> BAM 5 430 VI 8–18, par. 431 VI 1–5, Ū ŠĀ DŪG.GA. Cf. Ū DŪG.GA lib-bi in BAM 1 59:20, 190:7, with in dupl. 161 III 6 Ū ŠĀ DŪG.GA.

<sup>84</sup> AHw 1393 a, šūbum 10 "seelisches, körperliches Wohlbefinden, -ergehen; auch Herzensfreude".

<sup>85</sup> TDP 180:28, kiširtu ŠĀ GE<sub>6</sub> means "black 'bound matter' of the 'heart' (= entrails)". In line 25 the man coughed up "black matter" (kiširtu GE<sub>6</sub>), in both cases he is suffering from an "oath".

<sup>86</sup> B.H. Stricker, *De geboorte van Horus IV* (1982) 473 (a number of ancient sources is listed in notes 5556, 5558, 5571, 5583; Pseudo-Hippocrates and Galen); cf. R. Klibansky, *Saturn und Melancholie* (1992) 206, 227.

<sup>87</sup> Galen, *De atra bile* VI, 4, ed. W. de Boer, CMG V 4,1.1 (1937) 83, cf. 86. Galen also studies the blackness of animal spleens.

<sup>88</sup> Note that one time in the medical corpus the Sumerogram for "gall", ZĒ, in a context of jaundice, is followed by II "two", suggesting the presence of two gall-bladders; are they the gall-bladder and the spleen (ah-ḥa-zu u ZĒ<sup>II</sup>, BAM 1 52:96)?



"Hand of the God"

The "Hand of the God" or, perhaps somewhat less often, "Hand of the Goddess", occurs several times together with epilepsy. What do these expressions mean? The problem of "Hands" of gods is complicated.

Medical and magical texts often refer to the "hand" of a god, often with his name added; sometimes to the "hand" of a disease or a demonic power. The descriptions of symptoms of one "hand" often are so varying that we cannot pinpoint one particular "hand" to a specific set of symptoms, let alone one particular disease.<sup>89</sup> This is our first problem, a major one; the second problem is that in "The Hand of the God/Goddess" the identity of this anonymous "God" and "Goddess" is unknown to us. The "Hand of the Goddess" is far more frequent.<sup>90</sup> A complicating factor is that we sometimes meet with "Hand of his God/Goddess".

There are good reasons for assuming that these gods are the personal, tutelary, deities of a man when they are paired with each other<sup>91</sup> or when the "Hand of the God" is paired with "Hand of the God/Goddess of his city"<sup>92</sup> or with "Hand of the God of the King".<sup>93</sup> In Babylonia a man had a personal god standing "at his right hand" and a goddess standing "at his left hand".<sup>94</sup> The word for "goddess" always is *ištaru*, Ištar, the goddess of love. One passage shows us that "Hand of the Goddess" and "Hand of his Goddess" can be just simple variants.<sup>95</sup>

All this looks fine, but what is to be done when these expressions are not paired but occur alone?

We cannot exclude the possibility that the god in "Hand of the God" indicates a deity unknown to the patient or his helpers. The best evidence for this theory comes from texts from the land of the Hittites and the Syrian city of Ugarit. The Hittite king Mursilis reports that the "Hand of the God" struck him in a dream causing aphasia and that he turns to an oracle to find out which god exactly it had been.<sup>96</sup> In Ugarit this "hand" was associated with lethal disease, possibly plague and naturally pointing to Nergal.<sup>97</sup> In Egypt being in "the hand of God" stands for mental disarrangement.<sup>98</sup> The highly formulaic texts from Assyria and Babylonia proper are never very explicit but it is clear that the "Hand of the God" manifests itself in a disease.<sup>99</sup> An oil omen

<sup>89</sup> See R. Labat in the introduction to his *TDP*, p. XXII f.

<sup>90</sup> See Labat's counts: 72 against 15.

<sup>91</sup> *AMT* 103 II 5, *TDP* 196:69 (Hand of his God), 70 (Hand of the Goddess). Hand of his God and his Goddess: *TDP* 134:36, 140:42 f.

<sup>92</sup> *TDP* 104:23 f. and 236:44 f.; *SpBTU* III 133 no. 88 II 3. — God and goddess of his city: *TDP* 192:43.

<sup>93</sup> *CT* 39 45:30; F.R. Kraus, *Studies Erica Reiner* (1987) 183:1; *SpBTU* III 186 no. 99:8.

<sup>94</sup> *BMS* 22:18 or 9:18 with dupl. O. Loretz, W.R. Mayer, *Šu-ila-Gebete* (1978) 26 rev. 2 f., *KAR* 252 II 34 f.; and passim. — A man names Nabû "his god" and Tašmētu "his goddess", *LKA* 114 rev. 2 f., see R. Caplice, *Or. NS* 34 (1965) 127.

<sup>95</sup> Comparing *TDP* 140:43 with 244 E 12.

<sup>96</sup> Latest translation by H.M. Kümmel in *TUAT* II/2 (1987) 289 f.; latest edition by R. Lebrun, *Hethitica* VI (1985) 103–137 (line 8).

<sup>97</sup> D. Pardee, "As Strong as Death", in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (1987) 65–69, discussing *KTU* 2.10:11 ff. and "the Hand of Nergal" in *EA* 35.

<sup>98</sup> In the Wisdom of Amenemope, discussed by H. Grapow, *Krankheit und Arzt* (1956) 38.

<sup>99</sup> Material has been collected by J.J.M. Roberts, "The Hand of Yahweh", *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) 244–251.

is interpreted: "For a sick man (it means) Hand of the God" (*qā-ti i-lim*).<sup>100</sup> Experts tried to find out with help of extispicy what the outcome of this disease was to be.<sup>101</sup> This "hand" could "reach"<sup>102</sup> or "seize"<sup>103</sup> a person or "be laid upon" him.<sup>104</sup> One text seems to imply that being seized by the Hand of a Spirit (of the dead) is followed by "the Hand of the God and the Goddess is upon him",<sup>105</sup> another text has this sequence: being seized by an 'Oath' – "Hand of the Goddess".<sup>106</sup> Sometimes the "Hand of the God" reaches (*kašādu*) an entire city; in this case we probably have to do with the city-god.<sup>107</sup> One text mentions this "hand" in one breath with sins.<sup>108</sup> Everything reminds us of parallel expressions like "being reached/overcome by the god" (*kišitti ilim*) and "being touched by the god" (*lipit ilim*), both diseases of man or cattle.

Rarely attested is "Hand of Divinity" (*qati ilūtīm*),<sup>109</sup> using the abstract form of "god": Divinity, possibly meaning "any deity" or, simply, "a god". It has a parallel in "Hand of Man" (*amēlūtīm*), referring to humans practising sorcery. We cannot say what the difference is between "God" and "Divinity" but there might have been some difference because we never find "being seized by the God" or "being hit by the God" and we do find this combination in connection with "Divinity": *šibit ilūtīm, mihiš ilūtīm*.<sup>110</sup>

So the expression "Hand of the God" remains a mystery in general, but a closer study of epilepsy in the Babylonian world allows us to single out one category within the entire group, namely "Hand of the God" as a disease of newborn babies, closely related to epilepsy, where more precise information is available. Here is the evidence.

A medical text adds to numerous prescriptions for a woman in labour a section "in order that the 'Hand of the God' should not approach the baby".<sup>111</sup>

The diagnostic handbook, in the chapter on babies, gives this information:

- If the baby, two, three days having passed after he is born, does not accept the milk, *mi-iq-tu* (var. *šub-tum*) is falling upon him time and again, like the Hand of the God: its (= the disease's) name is Hand of Ištar, the Snatcher (*Ekkēmtu*) — he will die.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>100</sup> CT 3 3:33.

<sup>101</sup> CT 31 36 rev. 7–9, with the not entirely correct translation by J. Nougayrol in *Semítica* 6 (1956) 14, second paragraph.

<sup>102</sup> CT 38 5:126, 28:22; 39 45:30; KAR 212 II 17 (= Labat, *Un Calendrier* ... 106 § 41:8), 395 rev. II 13 (all omen texts). The Hand of the King — never in diagnostic texts — typically "reaches" a person (always KUR-su).

<sup>103</sup> R. Labat, *Un Calendrier* ... 134 § 65:8; KAR 178 rev. IV 53 (HMA 116).

<sup>104</sup> A.L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams* ... 325 rev. II 7 (*emēdu* N); TDP 32:4 (the Hand of his God *ummuda* <it>). — Most unusual is the positive meaning that *qāti Ištar elišu ummudat* seems to have in the OB letter *AbB* 6 144.

<sup>105</sup> AMT 103 II 5: "If the Hand of a Spirit has seized a man and the Hand of a God and/or the Hand of a Goddess is upon him".

<sup>106</sup> BAM 6 584 II 26: "Red boils are on the skin of a man [...] the Hand of Sin, an Oath has seized him, the Hand of a Goddess (*dINANNA*) [...]"

<sup>107</sup> CT 38 5:126, cf. 3:63, "that city: Hand of its God".

<sup>108</sup> A. Boissier, *DA* 211 Rm. 130 (= K. 220) rev. 7: apodosis *arnu hitu ŠU DINGIR*.

<sup>109</sup> CT 5 4:2 and dupl. YOS 10 58:2; F.R. Kraus, *TBP* 22 I 23 f.; TDP 112:32; *SptTU* I 34:16; the refs. given in the next note; probably also TDP 220:29 f., 50 (see below); D. Charpin, *AJo* 36–7 (1989–90) 101, on CAD Q 186 f.

<sup>110</sup> Respectively in G. Pettinato, *Ölmina* (1966) II 12 Text I:1, variant for *qāti ilūtīm*; and the two texts given by CAD M/2 61b 4.b.

<sup>111</sup> BAM 3 248 IV 39 (and dupl.), see W. Farber, *Schlaf Kindchen schlaf* ... 124 § 44.

<sup>112</sup> TDP 220:26 f., see already above, in the section on *miqtu*.



This entry has already been discussed in the section on *miqtu* ("what falls"); it now appears from this passage that "Hand of the God" is close to that form of epilepsy.

The three following entries describe the symptoms of related diseases. They speak of "Hand of the God", or "Hand of Divinity". Whether "Hand of the God" or "Hand of Divinity" is involved depends on two alternative readings of the Sumerian signs ŠU DINGIR TI: either "Hand of the God": he will recover (TI = *iballut*), or "Hand of Divinity" (DINGIR-ti = *ilūti*), with no further prognosis. "Hand of the God" was written ŠU DINGIR.RA in the entry already cited and this indeed is the most common writing. Because the extra .RA is lacking in the next lines we prefer "Hand of Divinity".<sup>113</sup> Although this "hand" is probably of no direct interest to us, it will be good to offer a translation of the entries; coming generations may see a connection with "Hand of the God":

- If a baby cries all the time and 'shouts' all the time: Snatcher, Hand of the goddess, daughter of Anum.
- If a baby is covered with green-yellow (*arqu*) on his 'flesh', his bowels are cramped (?), his hands and feet are swollen, he has the *li'bu*-fever very much: he suffers from the lungs; Hand of Divinity.
- If the bowels of a baby are swollen all the time and he cries all the time: Hand of the Nether World (*qāt eršetim*). Ditto: Hand of the daughter of Anum/Hand of Divinity.<sup>114</sup>
- If a baby has appetite, opens his mouth all the time (but) brings back (= vomits) whatever he ate all the time: Hand of Dingirmah/Hand of Divinity.<sup>115</sup>

Two texts not belonging to the corpus of medical texts nicely confirm that "Hand of the God" is an affliction of young children. The first example comes from an Old Babylonian letter found in Tell al Rimah. The writer assures that "the boy upon whom the Hand of the God came to be is very ...; there is no 'sin' (upon) him".<sup>116</sup> The "boy" could be a baby, but others take him to be a "servant". The other text, about 1500 years younger, dating to Seleucid times, is of an astrological nature: a lunar eclipse when the moon is in a specific constellation (the Pleiades), occurring at the moment of the conception of a child, means that "(right) from the womb 'Hand of the God' will seize him"; the preceding forecast said that an Incubus will seize the baby when the moon is in Aries.<sup>117</sup> The moon is in the Pleiades at the beginning of the Babylonian year — obviously not the best moment for cohabitation. A contract about a female slave from Nuzi envisages that the girl (?) might appear to suffer from "Hand of the God"; the clausula reminds us of those in other slave sale contracts that will be discussed in Chapter X. If she is a very young girl, then this reference is relevant to us but the text is hard to interpret.<sup>118</sup>

It is strange that "Hand of the God" does not occur in the chapters on epilepsy in

<sup>113</sup> "He will recover" is written in this text as follows: TI, 37 f., AL.TI, 35, DIN, 40, 43 f., 120. — Note that Labat's ŠU DINGIR DIN in TDP 224:63–68 is wrong: read ŠU <sup>d</sup>KUR = *qāt eršetim*. The manuscript distinguishes DIN (38) from KUR (63–68) as TDP II Planche LXIII shows. Moreover, line 30 giving the same symptoms as 64, has ŠU *er-se-tim* written out.

<sup>114</sup> TDP 220:26–30. — The "Hand of Kubi" follows.

<sup>115</sup> TDP 222:50; cf. W. von Soden, *StudOr* 46 (1975) 324 ("Appetit").

<sup>116</sup> S. Dalley, *OBTR* no. 65, with J.-M. Durand, *AEM* 1/1 (1988) 40.

<sup>117</sup> E.F. Weidner, *Gestirndarstellungen auf babylonischen Tontafeln* (1967) 14.

<sup>118</sup> JEN 554, with G. Wilhelm, *ZA* 77 (1987) 127–135; see the Bibliography.



the diagnostic handbook that we have. Was it a children's disease treated in a special chapter not yet known to us? Only once does the handbook give the diagnosis "Hand of his god";<sup>119</sup> elsewhere "Hand of the God/Goddess of his city" is used.<sup>120</sup> Does a baby not yet have "his" god?

Can we say anything about the nature of "Hand of the God?" This "hand" caused aphasia in the dream of the Hittite king Mursilis which reminds one of a stroke. Indeed, a late lexical list equates "Hand of the God" with "seizure" (*šibtu*) which also can apply to aphasia, "seizure of the mouth". Babies cannot talk and the identification of "Hand of the God" could be sought in a form of spasms — so easily confused with epilepsy.

#### "Hand of the Goddess"

When first discussing "Hand of the God" it was shown that "the Goddess" can be the personal goddess of the patient, standing at his left side. This was clear in texts where both "hands" were paired. A man falling down to the right, suffers from Hand of his God, when falling to the left, from Hand of the Goddess (Ištar).<sup>121</sup> Another pairing can be discovered in passages where the sun-god Šamaš is associated with right side and Ištar with the left side of the body, of a wagon, etc.<sup>122</sup> Elsewhere this opposition is marked by colours: white for the sun-god, black for Ištar.<sup>123</sup> Ištar is also opposed to Šulpaea as left is to right.<sup>124</sup> Although a few references blur this general picture,<sup>125</sup> we can safely conclude that the association of the most important female deity in Mesopotamia with the left side fits the universal idea that the right side has to do with "male" and the left side with "female",<sup>126</sup> as exemplified by a Babylonian ritual: "He holds the male (bird) in his right hand, the female in his left hand".<sup>127</sup>

In the preceding section "Hand of Ištar" was always translated as "Hand of the Goddess", because *Ištar* or *ištaru* can mean "goddess". In the examples above, Ištar as opposed to Šamaš is clearly the goddess herself. When we note that "Hand of his God" is associated with the right side and "Hand of Ištar (variant: his Goddess)" with the left side,<sup>128</sup> the personal god and goddess, we realize how flexible the concept "Ištar" can be. Ištar as the goddess of love is certainly meant when the "Hand of Ištar" means that a man has lost his sexual potency<sup>129</sup> or is suffering from a venereal disease — once ascribed to "Hand of his God" and also "Hand of his Goddess".<sup>130</sup> Again, we see how

<sup>119</sup> TDP 194:55.

<sup>120</sup> TDP 192:43.

<sup>121</sup> KMI 55:2, 8; dupl. CT 37 46:18, 47:1 (behavioural omens).

<sup>122</sup> CT 40 36:32 f., 36-38; TDP 34:25 f., 238:62; SpbTU I 30:12 f. (with Babylonian commentary); cf. SpbTU III 133 no. 88 II 10 (both gods for both temples).

<sup>123</sup> TDP 74:47-49; cf. 28:91-95; BAM 6 584 II 25, 29 (the colour of boils). The Moon-god is associated with red boils.

<sup>124</sup> TDP 108:23-5, 236:49 f.

<sup>125</sup> Ištar for right and left: TDP 118:22-30; for right: 88:13; confused: 142:6 f.

<sup>126</sup> M. Stol, *Zwangerschap en geboorte bij de Babyloniërs en in de Bijbel* (1983) 79 with note 476.

<sup>127</sup> OECT 6 Plate 6 obv. (!) 12, dupl. STT 2 235:9, see Or. NS 36 275 and 40 179.

<sup>128</sup> TDP 140:42 f., 244 E 11 f.

<sup>129</sup> TDP 126:41; KUB 37 82:4 and, possibly, KAR 70:9, see R.D. Biggs, *Šaziga. Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (1967) 61, 46.

<sup>130</sup> TDP 178:14 f., 134:34-36. — Note that the Hand of the astral Venus, Dilbat (*qāt Dilbat*), always is associated with problems of the lower abdomen: TDP 134:38, 232:14, 236:53 (cf. 140:47), ABL 203 rev. 1 (venereal disease?). Fragmentary are TDP 142:1, 244 E 10.

vague the distinction between Ištar and "his Goddess" can be.

However, the distinction between Ištar and the female demon Lamaštu is clear: Ištar is the daughter of the moon-god Šin<sup>131</sup> and Lamaštu is the daughter of the god of Heaven, Anum,<sup>132</sup> the god who fathered so many demons. Lamaštu is the greatest danger for mother and child. From the following entry in the diagnostic handbook it is clear that "Ištar" here means "goddess" and certainly not Ištar herself:

- If a baby cries all the time and 'shouts' all the time: Snatcher, Hand of "Ištar", daughter of Anum.<sup>133</sup>

Indeed, "Snatcher" (*Ekkēmtu*) is the epithet of Lamaštu. One now understands why the preceding entry gives a diagnosis with an explanation: "Hand of the Goddess: Snatcher (is) its name; (the baby) will die". Just "Hand of Ištar/the Goddess" would be too ambiguous, so the identification is added. On the other hand, when the diagnostic handbook really means "Hand of Ištar" in the chapter on children's diseases (and in other cases), it adds "(and) (Hand of) Šin", apparently.<sup>134</sup>

It should be re-emphasised that there is a bewildering variety of symptoms for "Hand of the Goddess" and only the underlying "law" of the opposition right – left could be discovered. But the epilepsy texts may reveal the relationship between "Hand of the Goddess" and epilepsy. We already saw that in enumerations of diseases it occurs in the same context as epilepsies. This is confirmed by the place it takes within the therapeutic and diagnostic texts.

First, "Hand of the Goddess" as an affliction of newborn babies:

- If a baby sucks the breast and a *miqtu* falls upon him: Hand of the Goddess/Šin.<sup>135</sup>
- If a baby quivers, is confused, (variant adds: and) is apprehensive all the time: Hand of Šin and Ištar.<sup>136</sup>
- If a baby shouts, quivers, is all the time confused and crying and apprehensive, he wailingly (*širhiš*) is throwing up whatever he drinks: Hand of Šin and Ištar.<sup>137</sup>

The children must be older in the following cases:

- If the 'baby' when lying down (in his bed) shouts without knowing this (= unconsciously): Hand of the Goddess (*d Iš-tar*);
- If the 'baby' when lying down (in his bed) shouts and (can) tell whatever he saw: Hand of the Goddess; (unfulfilled) promises (made to the gods) have seized him.<sup>138</sup>

An unpublished text gives prescriptions against these problems, "If the Hand of the Goddess has seized a baby".<sup>139</sup>

Turning now to "Hand of the Goddess" as a disease of adults, we note that prescriptions "for eradicating a persistent Hand of the Goddess" occurs after those against heart-break and "Lord of the Roof", Lugal-urra; elsewhere in the text against a n. t a.š u b. b a.<sup>140</sup> The diagnostic handbook informs us how one type of epilepsy can change

<sup>131</sup> See simply CAD M/1 303b, or K.L. Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (1938) 124 f.

<sup>132</sup> E.A.M. Wiggermann, in M. Stol, *Zwangerschap ...* 100 f., W. Farber, *RLA* VI/5-6 (1983) 439.

<sup>133</sup> TDP 220:28.

<sup>134</sup> See the refs. given below. In another context: TDP 120:31, 242:13.

<sup>135</sup> TDP 224:60, end supplied with K. 3628+ : 9, courtesy I.L. Finkel.

<sup>136</sup> TDP 222:47.

<sup>137</sup> TDP 224:55.

<sup>138</sup> TDP 230:112 f.

<sup>139</sup> K. 3628+ : 12; see the extract in W. Farber, *Schlaf ...* 126, below.

<sup>140</sup> BAM 3 311:30 ff., cf. 22, 23, 59, 77. — Also in STT 1 57 and 58.



into another and "Hand of the Goddess" is one of them.<sup>141</sup> Only two passages in the diagnostic handbook give a description of symptoms:

- If, when a fit overwhelms him, his temples hurt him, his 'heart' is broken all the time, afterwards he rubs his hands and feet, he is turned over (?), he has no saliva / he rolls over and over: *miqtu*/goose-flesh (?): Hand of the Goddess; it will go away.<sup>142</sup>
- If he slips into his clothing (and) throws (it) away time and again, he ..., talks (?) much, does not eat bread or beer anymore and does not sleep: Hand of the Goddess; [he will recover].<sup>143</sup>

One has to admit that we cannot draw any conclusion as to the nature of "Hand of the Goddess" in epilepsy. Babies cry and shout a lot, but that may not be typical for this "hand". Adults suffer from "heart-break" but this is only one of the many possible symptoms. In any case, we will resist the temptation to identify both "hands" as indicators for spasms or paralysis of the right side (Hand of the God) and the left side (Hand of the Goddess) of the body — how alluring this idea may be: there is no evidence for it.

#### Terrors at night

The symptoms associated with epilepsy often include repeated or continuous shivering (*galātu*) in bed. Herbs hung around the patient's neck<sup>144</sup> or amulets<sup>145</sup> prevent it from approaching. Shivering is often mentioned in one breath with "apprehension" (*pirittu*). Much closer to *bennu* and even on a par with it is the Akkadian concept *šuruppû* (also *šurpû*), a word that has to do with "frost, ice" in Akkadian (*šurīpu*);<sup>146</sup> we translate "feverish shivering". Literary texts enumerating diseases often name malaria (*dī'ū*) and cold shivers (*hurbašu*) together with it,<sup>147</sup> but *bennu* obviously was most akin to it because the same amulet stones served against both *bennu* and *šuruppû*.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, one can consider "feverish shivering" to be a prodrome of an epileptic attack.

In German this kind of fever is called *Fieberfrost*; the Greeks gave it the name *ēpīalos* or *ēpīālēs* and saw in it a demon attacking people in their sleep; the effects of delirium may have given them this idea.<sup>149</sup> This sets us on a new track, that of nocturnal terrors, so omnipresent in folklore, ancient and modern.

The Greeks personified nightly terror as *Ephialtes*, a demon causing nightmares,

<sup>141</sup> TDP 194:40, 43, 47, 50, 53, 56; cf. Chapter IV, Tablet XXVIII.

<sup>142</sup> STT 1 91:26 f. with dupl., 24 f. (= Tablet XXVI, Chapter IV).

<sup>143</sup> STT 1 91:74 f. with dupl., rev. 19 f. (= Tablet XXVI).

<sup>144</sup> BAM 4 379 III 3, 8, 12, 15.

<sup>145</sup> BAM 4 343:15 f., in line 14 a stone against *bennu*; LKA 9 I 17 with UET VII 121 II 5–8, cf. 15; CT 51 88:5.

<sup>146</sup> The Sumerogram for *šuruppû* is AŠ.DU (and variants), see MSL 13 (1971) 188 Izi E 170–3 and R. Borger, Or. NS 26 (1957) 8. Can AŠ.DU be a by-form of ŠED<sub>7</sub> "cold"? Cf. the equations "ice; snow" of *bibīnu* (= *bennu*?) in Malku III, given by CAD B s.v.

<sup>147</sup> For example in Ludlul I 26, UET 6/2 392:14, STT 2 183:19, 303:24.

<sup>148</sup> BAM 2 183:32, 4 377:7; CT 51 89 rev. III 14, 26; STT 2 273 III 6. — The special amulet stone against feverish shivering is NA<sub>4</sub> EN.GI.SA<sub>5</sub>, see CT 51 89 II 18 and BAM 4 344:6.

<sup>149</sup> W. H. Roscher, *Ephialtes* (1900) 51–3. The Greek grammarian Didymus defined *ēpīalos* as 1. a demon; 2. shivering before fever; see M. Wellmann in *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und Medizin* 2 (1931) 33 with note 1.

and certainly related to *ēpialos*.<sup>150</sup> Summarising what W. H. Roscher wrote on this demon in his classic book of 1900: the patient has the feeling of a heavy pressure on the chest — which can be very real — and gets frightening dreams<sup>151</sup> or symptoms of delirious fever.<sup>152</sup> Demonic apparitions can be like hairy goats or bucks, just as in the Old Testament (Is. 13:21, 34:14, Lev. 17:7). “Satyrs” like this were identified with the god Pan and, consequently, “panic” overcomes the patient.<sup>153</sup> The nightmares can be erotic, both according to ancient ghost stories and modern clinical observation, writes Roscher.<sup>154</sup>

The Greek physician Posidonius, living in the fourth century A.D.,<sup>155</sup> quoted by Aetius of Amida, wrote: “The so-called *Ephialtes* is no demon, but the worrying symptom and prelude to epilepsy or madness or apoplexy”. “Because whatever epileptics are enduring in their fits, the same (are enduring) those having a nightmare (*ephialtikoi*) when sleeping”.<sup>156</sup> This passage gives us a first example of the ways the Greeks saw a link between nightmare and epilepsy. Posidonius gives a rational explanation for such a link and we can read the superstitious popular beliefs between the lines.

Another late medical author, Paul of Aegina (seventh century), wrote the following about nightmares (*ephialtēs*): “The evil must be guarded against at the commencement; for when it continues long, and attacks every night, it is the forerunner of some serious disease, such as apoplexy, madness, or epilepsy, when the exciting cause is determined to the head; for such as persons affected with epilepsy are, during the day, those labouring under nightmare (*ephialtikoi*) are in their sleep. Some imagine often that they even hear the person who is going to press them down, that he offers lustful violence to them, but flies when they attempt to grasp him with their fingers”.<sup>157</sup> “Lustful violence” is a new element here.

A few centuries earlier, Soranus of Ephesus (ca. 100 A.D.) as recorded in the later Latin version made by Caelius Aurelianus, provides more information: “Some hold that the word ‘incubus’ (*incubo*) refers to a human form or likeness, others to the vision (*phantasia*) by which the patient is affected, for he seems to see something climbing over him and settling upon his chest (...). Some of the ancients call it *ephialtēs*, others *epofeles* because it may be useful to the patient [Greek *ōphellō* means “to be useful”] (...). The above mentioned disease is, however, a forerunner of epilepsy (*epilepsiae tentatio*). And Soranus (...) has shown abundantly that the incubus is not a god or a demigod or Cupid”.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>150</sup> W. H. Roscher, *Ephialtes, eine pathologisch-mythologische Abhandlung über die Alpträume und Alpdämonen des klassischen Altertums* (= Abhandlungen der königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Classe, XX Nr. II) (1900).

<sup>151</sup> Roscher, 5–17, 120 f.

<sup>152</sup> Roscher, 24–6, 51 f.

<sup>153</sup> Roscher, 29 f., 60–2, 68–76 (on panic, also affecting cattle). — For panic and Pan, see now Philippe Borgeaud, *Recherches sur le dieu Pan* (1979) 137 ff.

<sup>154</sup> Roscher, 16 f., 30 f. (satyrs in dreams), 34–6 (Damaratos in Herodotus VI 65 ff.), 36–38 (Sirene), 82–4 (satyrs), 116 (a medieval source).

<sup>155</sup> Not the Stoic, as F. Kudlien proposed in *Hermes* 90 (1962) 422–4; see H. Flashar, *Melancholie und Melancholiker* (1966) 121–5, with note 11. We add that the church historian Philostorgius was Posidonius' contemporary, see F.J. Dölger, *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934) 106.

<sup>156</sup> Aetius Amidenus, VI 12; ed. A. Olivieri, *CMG* VIII 2 (1950) 152. We also know from another source that Posidonius rejected the idea that Ephialtes is a demon; see F.J. Dölger.

<sup>157</sup> Paulus Aegineta III 15, as translated by Francis Adams, vol. I (1844) 388.

<sup>158</sup> Caelius Aurelianus, *On Chronic Diseases* I 3, ed. and transl. I. E. Drabkin (1950) 474 f.



Cupid is a male god of love which means here that 'incubus' can have sexual connotations according to popular belief. This belief certainly was suggested by nocturnal emission of the semen, a topic discussed by Soranus elsewhere in his book *On Chronic Diseases*. There, he writes that this is "a consequence of what the person sees (*phantasia*) while he sleeps, and results from a longing for sexual enjoyment (...). But this condition may often become a disease, or may be the forerunner of another disease such as epilepsy, insanity or the like (*alterius passionis aliquando antecedens fiet, ut epylepsiae, furoris quem Graeci manian vocant, cuiusquam similis morbi*)".<sup>159</sup>

Hippocrates, giving examples of superstition surrounding the Sacred Disease, tells us: "If he suffers at night from fear and panic, from attacks of insanity, or if he jumps out of bed and runs outside, they talk of attacks of Hecate and assaults of the Heroes".<sup>160</sup> Hecate is a goddess of the moon and the Heroes are spirits of the dead. An ancient commentary on Euripides, *Medea* 1172, provides the information that "people in olden times were of the opinion that those falling down suddenly have been stricken in the mind by Pan and Hecate". Here, again, we have a link between fear ("panic") and epilepsy.

How frightening nocturnal apparitions can be is also indicated in the book Job of the Old Testament: "Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep (*tardēmā*) falls upon men, dread (*paḥad*) came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up (...)" (Job 4:13-15; RSV).

It will be good to summarise what the later Greek authors are telling us — whether they believed it or not. They viewed in the same perspective: feverish shivering (*ēpialos*) — nightmare (Ephialtes) — panic — 'incubus' — nocturnal sexual illusions — epilepsy — madness. In the following discussion the Greek data will not be used as a model for Babylonian ideas but the similarities will be indicated. After all, folklore seems to have universal notions.<sup>161</sup>

First, the "incubus". In current terminology this is a male demon who "lies on top" (Latin *incubare*) while engaging in sexual intercourse with women during the night. His female counterpart is "succubus", subjecting herself to intercourse with a man. Originally, however, the "incubus" was known and feared simply as a demon "coming down" on a patient who experiences this demon as a heavy pressure on the chest as we have just read in Soranus.<sup>162</sup> Equally appropriate is perhaps the Greek word *pnigalion*, coined by Themison, "since it chokes [Greek *pnigō*] the patient (...); from the feeling of heaviness we gather that the disease involves a state of stricture" — thus again Soranus.<sup>163</sup> The Syrians named this demon *kābōšā*, the Arabs *kābūs*, a derivation of a verb meaning "to (op)press". In Cairene folklore this is "a nightmare which throws

<sup>159</sup> V 7, ed. Drabkin 958 f.

<sup>160</sup> Ed. Littré VI 362, Grensemann 66, Jones 148.

<sup>161</sup> In the Middle Ages we find them all together as one group; see H.H. Beek, *Waanzin in de Middeleeuwen. Beeld van de gestoorde en bemoeienis met de ziekte* (1969) 118 f. (Note that "subeth" stands for lycanthropy; see M. Ullmann, "Der Werwolf", *WZKM* 68 [1976] 171-184).

<sup>162</sup> Also stressed by Steuding in W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* I (1884-86) 128, art. Incubus.

<sup>163</sup> *Chronic Diseases* I 54, 56; ed. Drabkin 474-7.

itself heavily on a sleeper, preventing him from moving or opening his eyes, and which disappears as soon as he awakes".<sup>164</sup>

# The demon *Alû*

In Babylonia, a "terror of the night" oppressing the patient was the demon *alû*, often followed by the qualification "evil". He appears in a prescription between "fit" and "quivering in bed".<sup>165</sup> Very often we find him in a context of "quivering in bed" and the epilepsies *bennu* and a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a; invariably six amulet stones are recommended against him.<sup>166</sup> This demon can "seize" a patient,<sup>167</sup> but typically he "throws himself down" on his victim (*saḥāpu*),<sup>168</sup> especially when he is lying in bed.<sup>169</sup> This is the most characteristic of the multifarious machinations of the evil *alû*; a full description is given in the handbook on the evil *Utukkus*.<sup>170</sup> We learn from it that he throws himself on a man like a net (*alluhappu*). It can be a children's disease.<sup>171</sup> The diagnostic handbook devotes only three entries to the "hand" of evil *alû*, fragmentary. As far as they can be understood, the mouth of the patient has been "seized" and he cannot speak.<sup>172</sup> This looks like a form of stroke.

A Neo-Assyrian letter written by the chief exorcist to the king sets out how one can "eradicate evil *alû* and a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a":<sup>173</sup>

- As regards the rites accompanying the incantation "Verily you are evil" about which the king, my lord, wrote to me, they are performed to drive out the evil demon [*alû*] and epilepsy [a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a]. As soon as something has afflicted (*lapātu*) him (= the patient), the exorcist rises and hangs a mouse (and) a shoot of a thornbush on the vault of the (patient's) door. The exorcist dresses in a red garment and puts on a red cloak. He [holds] a ra[ven in] his right, a falcon in [his left], (and) po[urs] [...] on the censer of the "seven divine powers", grasps a [...], holds a t[orch (?) in his han]d, stri[kes] with a [w]hip and recites [the incantation] "Verily you are evil". [After] he has finished, he makes another exorcist go around the bed of the patient, followed by a censer and a torch, recites the incantation "Evil *hultuppu*, go out" (going) as far as to the door and (then) conjures the door. Until (the demon) is driven out, he acts (in this way) (every) morning and evening (Translation by Simo Parpola).

<sup>164</sup> R.C. Thompson, *Semitic Magic. Its Origins and Development* (1908) 81, with the important footnote 5. Thompson compares this demon with Babylonian *alû*. Somewhat different is the *kebsā* of the Mandaeans; see E.S. Drower, *Iraq* 5 (1938) 105-8.

<sup>165</sup> *BAM* 4 376 II 26-30 (*hājātu - alû lemnu - šumma amīlu ina eršīšu iḡtanallut*).

<sup>166</sup> *BAM* 2 183:30-33; 4 311:47-52, 356 II 10-13, 364 I 4-7; *STT* 1 58:54.

<sup>167</sup> *BAM* 3 311:47.

<sup>168</sup> Sumerian *ŠU.ŠU*; *BAM* 4 364 I 4, 376 II 28; *KAR* 26:3; etc. A recent discussion by N.M. Waldman can be found in his article "The image of clothing, covering, and overpowering", *JANES* 19 (1989) 162 ff. Tom Nash, "Devils, demons, and disease: folklore in Ancient Near Eastern rites of atonement", in W.W. Hallo, etc., *Scripture in Context III* (1990) 57-88, wants to identify *alû* with Biblical Azazel.

<sup>169</sup> *CT* 39 42 K. 2238+ II 9; note in 10 U<sub>x</sub>.LU KUR.RA = *alû šadē*.

<sup>170</sup> M.J. Geller, *Forerunners to Uduḫ-Hul. Sumerian Exorcist Incantations* (1985) 80-82, lines 857 ff.

<sup>171</sup> K. 3628+ rev. 8, 12, 21; see W. Farber, *Schlaf Kindchen schlaf* ... 128 f.

<sup>172</sup> *TDP* 190:20-23; cf. dupl. *SpTU* III 138 no. 89:8-11; Tablet XXVII.

<sup>173</sup> *ABL* 24 = *LAS* 172. Parpola's "drive out" is our "eradicate", Akkadian *nasāhu*.



The incantation "Verily you are evil" against *alû* is known;<sup>174</sup> *alû* is a demon attacking and ensnaring his victims in the night.

*Hajjattu*, "fit"

Another "terror" was *hajjattu*. What does this word mean? The latest discussion was presented by B. Landsberger who rejected a translation like "panic", at least as the primary meaning of the word.<sup>175</sup> However, a Babylonian commentary published in recent years twice equates this word with "fear", *gilittu* and *puluhtu*.<sup>176</sup> And indeed, the word is so often mentioned in a context of fearful experiences that this translation cannot be doubted — whatever the original meaning of *hajjattu* may have been. We see it together with *gilittu* and *pirittu* in a context of fear caused by seeing "dead people".<sup>177</sup>

It is quite possible that the word *hajjattu* "fear" is the feminine form of *hajjātu*.<sup>178</sup> The other words for "fear" used in our texts are also feminine (*gilittu*, *pirittu*, *puluhtu*). This word *hajjātu* stands for an occupation and must be compared with *hā'itu* "night watchman", also used as an epithet of gods and demons. In fact, two texts speak of the demon *ha-a-a-tu ha-(a-a)-i-tu*<sup>179</sup> and another passage mentions in consecutive lines *ha-a-a-i-tu* and *ha-a-a-at (pī ša amēlūti)*.<sup>180</sup> Both occur in parallel lines in a "prophecy".<sup>181</sup> Its Sumerogram literally means "walking around at night" (reflected by *muttaggišu* in a late Akkadian lexical text). The verb *hātu* "to inspect, to look for, to probe" would then convey the idea of "watching (over)".

But the word also must have a more specific, technical, meaning. This is shown by Tablet XXVI (Chapter IV), where it is written with the Sumerogram LĀ; there a provisional translation "fit" is used. In other contexts *hajjattu* is followed by a substantive: "*hajjattu* of a Spirit — of fever — of sun-stroke". To take this as "fear of (...)" does not look good; it is better to translate "a fit caused by (...)". Let us investigate the examples.

A ritual prescribes how to make figurines of *ha-a-a-at-ti eṭemmi* "a fit caused by a Spirit (of the dead)".<sup>182</sup> The ritual takes place in the evening (*qiddat ūmi*). The figurines

<sup>174</sup> LAS, Commentary, p. 162; extracting CT 16 27–29; also M.J. Geller, *Forerunners to Uduh-Hul* (1985) 80 ff., lines 857 ff., with commentary. Cf. E. Ritter, *Studies Benno Landsberger* (1965) 319 f.

<sup>175</sup> WdO 3 (1964) 48–58 — a somewhat confusing article —, esp. 57 f.

<sup>176</sup> SpbTU I 32 rev. 10 f, 33:1, both commenting a line in TDP 66.

<sup>177</sup> KAR 234:21 f., see G. Castellino, *Or.* NS 24 (1955) 258 f.

<sup>178</sup> As *ha-a-a-ta-šu qer-bet* shows (BAM 5 471 II 26). But he is most often masculine; see for the problem W. Farber, *BID* (1977) 171 note 2 and J. Bottéro, *ZA* 73 (1983) 168, note 58 (under the ban of Landsberger). Texts and variants use both forms indiscriminately; as to the variants, compare *ha-a-a-at-tu* in BAM 4 338 rev. 8 with *ha-a-a-tu* in K. 8104 rev. 8 (MSL 9 105, c.), or within one text *-dam* and *-ta'm* in *BID* 185 f., lines 30 and 60; also p. 133 ff., lines 109 (*-ū*), 128 f., 162, 199 (all *-tu*).

<sup>179</sup> BAM 3 212:3 and CT 16 15 IV 40, with Landsberger, 57 n. 43; 60 below.

<sup>180</sup> W.G. Lambert, *Afo* 17 (1954–56) 314 D:12–13.

<sup>181</sup> R. Borger, *BiOr* 28 (1971) 5, "Marduk and Šulgi" 8–9: LĀ.MEŠ *ha-a-a-tu* DU.MEŠ KUR.MEŠ-ni LĀ *ha-i-tu* MU.DU-is KUR.KUR.MEŠ, "(Ich Marduk ...) der Wanderer (?), der Späher, der in den Gebirgen umhergeht, der Wandernde (?), der Späher, der die Länder betritt", after R. Borger; "(Ich bin Marduk ...), der Überhohe, der Späher, der die Gebirge durchstreift, der Hohe, der die Länder zerschmettert", after K. Hecker (and W. Sommerfeld), *TUAT* II/1 (1986) 65 (omitting *hā'itu*). Let me suggest that *hajjātu* is a gloss to LĀ.MEŠ (the plural stands for the "Gewohnheit") and that *hā'itu* is a gloss to LĀ.

<sup>182</sup> KAR 267:5, etc.; K. 3398 (copy in C. Bezold, *Catalogue*; joins *AMT* 97/1). Latest translation by W. Farber, *TUAT* II/2 (1987) 261 f. ("Geister-Schreck" — "Schreckensdämon"). Note *h. qāt eṭemmi* in BAM 5 469 rev. 35 (catch-line).

show that the "fit" was personalized as a demon and we learn from the prayer to be recited over the figurines that *hajjattu* "looks for" / "overcomes" (*hātu*)<sup>183</sup> the patient during the three watches of the night, so it is active at a time when Spirits are roving. This fit caused by a Spirit is a disease and is to be "eradicated" (*nasāhu*).<sup>184</sup> Several medical texts describe the symptoms of a patient "seized by a strange Spirit in waste land" as follows: "If a Spirit has seized a man and he is (now) hot, (now) cold, [...] his/its fit being close (*hajjattašu qerbet* [feminine !]), he does not come to rest by day or night, his voice is like the voice of a donkey".<sup>185</sup> It seems that *hajjatti eṭemmi* is one manifestation of a Spirit; "seizure" caused by a Spirit (*šibit eṭemmi*), widely attested, is another. A close relationship between *hajjattu* and Spirits is perhaps exemplified by the use of amulet stones of a special type, named *nēmedu*, as protection against both *hajjattu* (always three stones) and "Touch by the Hand of a Spirit" (always twenty-seven).<sup>186</sup>

A fit caused by "fever" (*hajjatti ummi*) is attested in this text: "If an 'Oath' has seized a man, he is hot, sweats a lot, time and again, the disease seizes him the one day and lets him loose the other day, he gets a 'fit of fever' time and again: a...-fever (*ummu la haḥḥaš*) has seized him and [...]".<sup>187</sup> An incantation addresses this "fit" as a feminine being and the ritual has to take place in the evening.<sup>188</sup> A "seizure" caused by fever is also known.<sup>189</sup>

A "fit" by sun-stroke (*šētu*) is attested only once.<sup>190</sup> We also know of "touch" (*liptu*) and "sickness" (*šil'itu*) caused by sun-stroke.<sup>191</sup>

Amulet stones again can be used against *hajjattu* "in order that it does not come near to a man".<sup>192</sup> As we observed, the figurines to be made suggest that *hajjattu* has the "personal" features of a demon. A Middle-Assyrian ritual is directed against this fit<sup>193</sup> and it is noteworthy that it was to be executed during the last days of the fourth month: during those three moonless nights the god Dumuzi/Tammuz emerges from the Netherworld; it is the time for the spirits of the dead, the best time for a "fit", so we presume. The ritual insists that Dumuzi takes the "fit" with him, down to his abode.<sup>194</sup> It is not always easy to distinguish "fit" from "fear" when the word occurs in formulaic

<sup>183</sup> KAR 267:19–20, dupl. LKA 85 rev. 12; see W. Farber, *TUAT* II/2 (1987) 261 ("mich nicht aus den Augen liess"); M.J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylone et d'Assyrie* (1976) 420 ("il me pénètre", following Landsberger).

<sup>184</sup> K. 3398 (C. Bezold).

<sup>185</sup> BAM 4 323:65–7, 5 471 II 26 f.; TDP 168:3.

<sup>186</sup> 3 NA<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ *ni-me-di ha-a-a-at-ti* (and variants), BAM 4 367:16, 375 II 47, 376 II 26; 2 183:33 ("stones" omitted), unpubl. 80–7–19, 109:7; 27 *ni-me-di lipit qāt eṭemmi* (TAG ŠU GUD), K. van der Toorn, *Sin and sanction* (1986) Plate 8 K. 3937:9; unpubl. K. 9762 II and DT 89 (*n. šā TAG ŠU GIDIM.MA*). Both dictionaries are undecided or on the wrong track in their interpretations of *nēmedu*. The translation "schwer lastende Ohnmacht" for *nēmedi hajjatti*, K. Yalvaç, *Studies Landsberger* (1965) 332b, is wrong. Note: 14 NA<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ *ni-me-du KÜ.MEŠ šā GÜ*, in W. 23279 III 16 (*SpbTU* IV), dupl. CT 51 89 16, compared with NA<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ GÜ KÜ.MEŠ in similar context, F. Köcher, *Afo* 20 (1963) 158 (*nēmedu* omitted).

<sup>187</sup> BAM 2 174 rev. 29 f (*ha-a-a-at-ti* NE). Cf. the incantation against it, with ritual, LKA 133 rev. 10.

<sup>188</sup> LKA 133.

<sup>189</sup> TDP 158:18.

<sup>190</sup> TDP 154:16, dupl. *SpbTU* II no. 44 rev. 8 (both times written *LÁ-ti UD.DA*).

<sup>191</sup> TDP 156:9, 168:102.

<sup>192</sup> BAM 2 194 VII 13 (written *ha-ja-a-tu*), 4 344:2.

<sup>193</sup> As W. Farber, *BID* (1977) 110, has discovered. The text is his Text A IIb (BAM 4 339).

<sup>194</sup> J. Bottéro, *ZA* 73 (1983) 193–6.



lists of demonic diseases. One text has *ha-a-a-at-tu* (var. *ha-a-a-tu*) after *bennu*, seizure (*šibtu*), and dizziness (*šidānu*).<sup>195</sup> Here, "fit" looks good.

What are the symptoms of this "fit"? Some more passages in the diagnostic handbook give information: flowing of saliva,<sup>196</sup> the bending of hands and feet,<sup>197</sup> confused speech,<sup>198</sup> "heavy" eye-sight and aching limbs,<sup>199</sup> fever and aching muscles.<sup>200</sup> It is a symptom of *an.ta.šub.ba*.<sup>201</sup>

We now have to discuss the Sumerogram for *hajjattu*. Most probably, this was *LÁ*, also used for the verb *hātu* "to weigh". Now, the *LÁ.ŠU* in lines 12–24 of the obverse of Tablet XXVI of the diagnostic handbook (see Chapter IV) poses a problem.

Passages in other diagnostic texts offer the enigmatic sequence UD *LÁ.ŠU LÁ.ŠU*.<sup>202</sup> B. Landsberger defined the first *LÁ.ŠU* as "Ohnmacht"; fainting; Akkadian *ha'attu*.<sup>203</sup> He saw the full form of the Sumerogram in *IGLÁ.ŠU*, literally "to look — to darken" ("schwarz vor den Augen werden"), once attested in the diagnostic texts: *IGLÁ.ŠU LÁ.ŠU UD (!) LÁ.ŠU LÁ.ŠU*.<sup>204</sup> An ancient commentary on this passage explains this *IGLÁ.ŠU* as *ha-a-a-at-tu*.<sup>205</sup> So there is no direct evidence for an equation *LÁ.ŠU* = *ha'attu* / *hajjattu*.

One passage in the diagnostic texts seems to offer *LÁ-ti* for *hajjatti*, in *hajjatti šēti* (written *LÁ-ti UD.DA*).<sup>206</sup> It means "fit caused by a sun-stroke", as we have argued above. If this reading is correct, we can consider reading *LÁ.ŠU* as *LÁ-šú*, *hajjattašu*, "his/its fit". This proposal is corroborated by the fact that after the section starting with *LÁ-šú* in Tablet XXVI, the following section begins with *DIB-su* "his/its seizure" (27 ff.). The word with suffix actually is attested a few times.<sup>207</sup> This would rid us of a lexically unknown Sumerogram *LÁ.ŠU*.

As to the second *LÁ.ŠU* in UD *LÁ.ŠU LÁ.ŠU*, the variant writing *DIŠ LÁ.ŠU LÁ-šum-ma* in Tablet XXVI obv. 12f. shows that we have to take *ŠU* as the suffix "(for) him"; read *LÁ-šú*. Other passages make clear that *LÁ* is here Akkadian *hātu* (Old Babylonian *hi'āṭum*), a verb that we provisionally translate as "to overwhelm". All this enables us to read *LÁ-šum* in Akkadian as *iḫṭaššu(m)*. As to the complex UD *LÁ.ŠU LÁ-šú*, Landsberger read *enūma hajjattu iḫṭaššu*, "wenn er in Ohnmacht fällt". He postulated the dative suffix (lit. "to him") but we would like to point out that *iḫṭušu* (with the accusative suffix "him") is by no means excluded. It is striking that in the *enūma* sentences in Tablet XXVI:14 ff. (and elsewhere) we never find an unequivocal dative *-šum*. In

<sup>195</sup> MSL 9 (1967) 105, group c), line 8; with C.B.F. Walker, *BiOr* 26 (1969) 77a. Cf. BAM 4 338 rev. 8; K. 8104 rev. 8 (the variant).

<sup>196</sup> Tablet XXVI (Chapter IV), lines 12, 14, 15.

<sup>197</sup> Tablet XXVI:13.

<sup>198</sup> TDP 124:25; 160:40.

<sup>199</sup> TDP 160:34–39.

<sup>200</sup> TDP 154:15.

<sup>201</sup> Tablet XXVI:12 f., 23.

<sup>202</sup> TDP 124:25 (read UD for DIŠ; copy CT 37 39:18); 160:34–5; SpbTU I 44 no. 37:14.

<sup>203</sup> WdO 3 (1964) 48–50, 59.

<sup>204</sup> TDP 124:25 (we read UD for DIŠ).

<sup>205</sup> GCCI 2 406:9.

<sup>206</sup> TDP 154:16, dupl. SpbTU II no. 44 rev. 8. Cf. Landsberger, WdO 3 49.

<sup>207</sup> BAM 4 323:66, and par. 5 471 II 26 (*ha-a-a-ta-šu qerbet*); STT 1 89:200 (UD-*ma ha-a-at-ti-šú*). Cf. Maqlu I 143 (*liprus ha-a-a-ta-ku-nu mār Ea*).

fact, we know that the illness *hajjattu* "overwhelms" a person, who is indicated in the accusative: an incantation says "May (*hajjattu*) not overwhelm me (*aj ihitanni*; var. *LÁ-an-ni*)".<sup>208</sup> Our text once offers *ihissu* (var. *LÁ-su*; obv. 8). Our conclusion is that the complex UD LÁ.ŠU LÁ.ŠU is to be read as *enūma* (UD) *hajjattašu* (LÁ-šú) *ihitušu* (LÁ-šú), with the provisional translation "at the time his/its fit overwhelms him".

The verb *hātu* is often used in an impersonal way: "it overwhelms him". Example: *ana itišu ihitāššu* (LÁ-šú) *u umaššaršu* (BAR-šú) "at the expected moment it overwhelms him and lets him go (again)".<sup>209</sup> The reading *ihitāššu*, with dative suffix, is confirmed by a syllabically written similar passage,<sup>210</sup> and by a form in the third person iterative *ihitāššu*, the last among symptoms of an.ta.šub.ba, again impersonal.<sup>211</sup> It seems as if the dative suffix is obligatory when the verb is used impersonally. A similar feature can be detected in *i-re-eh-he-šum* (for *\*irehhaššum*?), "it (sleep, etc.) pours upon him" (XXVI:19; and often).

Tablet XXVI:23 suggests a difference between *enūma ihitušu* (or *ihitāššu*?) at the beginning, "at the time it overwhelms him", and *arkānu ihitāššumma* (LÁ-šum-ma), in the middle, "later on, it overwhelms him". Two successive "fits"? Another diagnostic text indeed says "his face is darkened, it overwhelms him two times on one day".<sup>212</sup>

Our horizon is widened when we realise that a Sultantepe diagnostic-therapeutic text uses UD.DU for *hātu*.<sup>213</sup> It was Landsberger again who noted this. This text has some scribal features of its own: the Lugal-girra instead of Lugal-urra (as we saw earlier), and now UD-ma UD.DU-šú for *enūma ihitušu*.<sup>214</sup> Landsberger connects this with line 200 of this text, UD-ma *ha-a-at-ti-šú* (*ibakki*), "während des Ohnmachtsanfalls (he weeps)".

How do we arrive at the translation "to overwhelm" for the verb *hātu*? The basic meaning for LÁ is "to weigh", Akkadian *šaḡālu* and *hātu*. There is ample evidence that LÁ in our medical texts stands for Akkadian *hātu*; variant readings show this.<sup>215</sup> A prayer says that panic (*hajjattu*) "...ed me": LÁ-an-ni in two manuscripts of the text, *i-ḫi-ṭa-a[n-ni]* in the third manuscript.<sup>216</sup> Landsberger assumed that the basic meaning of the verb is "to enter" (the body of the patient), basing himself on a substantive derived from it, *taḫittu*, according to Landsberger the "enema" that "enters" the anus.<sup>217</sup> Studying the references for this word shows that it can indeed be an enema, under circumstances, but that in almost all cases the *materia medica* used is given in exact

<sup>208</sup> KAR 267:23 (cf. 20), dupl. LKA 85 rev. 16 (cf. 12); syllabic in AMT 97/1+32 (after J.A. Scurlock).

<sup>209</sup> SpbTU II 181 no. 44 rev. 8, dupl. TDP 154:15. Simple LÁ-šú in SpbTU I 46 no. 37:12, dupl. II 180 no. 44:8. Note SpbTU I 46 no. 37:12, "If it leaves him on the one day and it overwhelms him on the other day".

<sup>210</sup> BAM 4 416 rev. 8 (= IM 44568, as quoted by Landsberger).

<sup>211</sup> TDP 80:6.

<sup>212</sup> TDP 244 E 8, in UD.I.KAM 2-šú LÁ-šú.

<sup>213</sup> An unpublished text on an.ta.šub.ba, fragmentary, offers at the end of the incantation: [...]*a-a* UD.DU-an-ni (= *aj ihitanni*?) (K. 6320:4).

<sup>214</sup> STT I 89:103, 109, 113, 128, 133, 152, 155 (cf. Chapter V).

<sup>215</sup> Tablet XXVI:8; TDP 154:15, compared with IM 44568 = BAM 4 416 rev. 8, see WdO 3 49. Note DT 87:5, an (unpublished) commentary on TDP 80:5-6: LÁ = *ha-a-tu* LÁ = *na-ha-su*.

<sup>216</sup> KAR 267:23 (cf. 20), LKA 85 rev. 16, AMT 97/1+ (unp.). Diss. J.A. Scurlock (Chicago 1988) p. 255.

<sup>217</sup> WdO 3 55 f.; cf. E. Ritter, *Studies B. Landsberger* (1965) 314b.



measures.<sup>218</sup> It was weighed and "weighed portion" must be the basic translation of the word *tahitu*. So there is no evidence for "to enter".

The verb is often construed in the third person, impersonal, and followed by the dative, "for/to him" (-*aššum*), suggesting a literal translation like "it weighs upon him".<sup>219</sup> Only finite verbal forms of *hātu* are used which means that everything comes down on the patient (dative "for/upon him") in one moment. This is confirmed by the contexts that speak of "two, three (and more) times" (XXVI:4, 8), "at the expected moment" (7). The substantive and the verb seem to refer to a "fit". If our interpretation of XXVI:39 is correct, the aura can precede this fit. We prefer the free translation "to overwhelm" to "to weigh (heavily) upon". In our translation, we will use the word "fit" for the substantive, and "to overwhelm" for the verb.

Some passages suggest that *enūma iḫṭušu* is concomitant with seizure (*šabātu*): Tablet XXVI:39, and the passage "If on the one day it seizes him, on the other day it lets him go (again), at the time his / its *hajjattu* overwhelms him (UD LÁ-šú LÁ-šú), his limbs hurt him".<sup>220</sup> Landsberger wrote: "Verwandschaft der Phrasen (*ha'attu*) *iḫṭaššu* mit (*sibtu*) *išbassu* lässt sich leicht beobachten. Sie erscheinen im gleichen Zusammenhang (Epilepsie TDP 80:1-6; STT 89 und 91) und stehen im Verhältnis des Besonderen (*iḫṭaššu*) zum Allgemeinen (*išbassu*); das Ende des Anfalls wird durch *šibitsu* bzw. *ha'attašu u(ma)ššeršu* bezeichnet".<sup>221</sup> Lines 4 and 7f. of Tablet XXVI show that the same applies to *miqtu* "fall".

#### Incubus and Succubus

In common scholarly usage, incubus stands for a male demon conversing with a woman, succubus for a female demon submitting herself to a man, both with dire consequences for the human being involved. The ancients named such a male demon "Cupid", as we saw above, citing Soranus. These frightening delusions are just one form of nightmare and as such close to epilepsy. The Babylonians had for incubus the name *lilū*, for succubus its female form, *lilitu*, or *ardat lilī*, *kiskili*.<sup>222</sup> The central element in these names is Sumerian *LIL* "wind; phantasma".<sup>223</sup> To take one out of three examples from a chapter on epilepsy in the diagnostic handbook:

- If he, being apprehensive, gets up time and again, talks a lot and quivers all the time: for a woman (this means) incubus; for a man succubus.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>218</sup> BAM 2 159 II 48; 174 rev. 6 (dupl. 579 I 64 f.); 5 482 IV 8; 6 575 IV 50. Not weighed in 1 54:15.

<sup>219</sup> Here, we can adduce a similar form of the other verb "to weigh", *šaḡātu*, most unusual in also being followed by the dative: a number of demons and diseases "weighed for/upon me (*iš-qu-lu-nim-ma*) and they ... me daily", a literary prayer says (BAM 4 323:29f., dupl. Gray, *ŠRT* Plate XII K. 2132:11f; with M.J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières* (1976) 427). We suggest that they all "weigh upon" the patient. This can mean that they are a heavy burden for him.

<sup>220</sup> *SpbTU* I 46 no. 37:14.

<sup>221</sup> *WdO* 3 (1964) 55.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. W. Farber, *RLA* VII/1-2 (1987) 23 f.; see also J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *Studies B. Landsberger* (1965) 296b. — Surprisingly little has been said on this pair of demons as "incubus and succubus".

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Th. Jacobsen in *Studies in Honor of A.W. Sjöberg* (1989) 275 note 51, on the father of Gilgamesh, a *lil*: "the idea of impregnation by a *lil* ["spirit"] may have arisen from sexual dreams considered as in some sense real". J. Henninger, *Die Familie bei den heutigen Beduinen Arabiens und seiner Randgebiete* (1943) 145 f., wrote on genealogies starting with a male or female ghost.

<sup>224</sup> *STT* I 91:78 and dupl. (= Tablet XXVI rev. 24; Chapter IV). — The same differentiation in lines 28 and 45 (and dupl.).

A handbook on lucky and unlucky days (a hemerology) warns the man wishing to ascend to the roof on the second day of the seventh month that a succubus will "select him for marriage" (*hâru*).<sup>225</sup> We have already seen that the "Lord" and the "Lurker" of the roof are the demons of epilepsy; does this baleful female belong to the same pack? Some hemerologies tell us that on the same or the next day the man, when "approaching" a woman, is in danger of losing his potency through that woman.<sup>226</sup> A succubus can "seize" a man during two years<sup>227</sup> and some demon (text broken) can marry (*hâru*) "the mistress of the house".<sup>228</sup>

The Arab world is full of stories connecting the demon *jinn* with epilepsy; particularly when this demon is bound to the patient in "marriage".<sup>229</sup> There is a story from Palestine about "an epileptic servant who maintained that a female *jinni* was in love with him, and used to strike him half dead to the ground".<sup>230</sup> This problem was discussed by al-Šiblī (712-769 A.D.) in his book on the *jinn*, chapter 50 f.<sup>231</sup> Another Arab source tells us: "An epileptic who was ill for six months in the year and well for six was possessed by the daughter of the lord of the djinn; she explained that if his tribe tried to cure him she would kill him".<sup>232</sup> The Assyriologist is intrigued because this reminds him of the arrangement between Ištar and Tammuz.<sup>233</sup>

A word on this "marriage" is now in order. These demons are beings that have not found their natural destination (*šimtu*) in having no wife (this is the incubus), husband, nor children (the female succubus).<sup>234</sup> This explains the abnormal predilection of a succubus for young men.<sup>235</sup> From the male-oriented Babylonian incantation texts the danger of a succubus is best known to us. She survived as Lilith in Aramaic<sup>236</sup> and Hebrew folklore; the Arabs fear the *djinn* for this reason.<sup>237</sup> The Aramaic incantation bowls still preserve the memory of a male "Lilith" in speaking of "male and female

<sup>225</sup> CT 51 161 rev. 15 (succubus = KI.SIKIL.LİL.LÁ), KAR 177 rev. 1:5 (= HMA 176) (*ar-da-at li-le-e*), Iraq 21 (1959) 48:14 (*kis-ki-li-li*). And more often; also for the days 6 and 7. — Contrast with this differentiation between man and woman the formula "for man and woman (it means) the same (*istēn-ma*)", as in TDP 172:30, 178:7, 9; STT 1 89:204, 211.

<sup>226</sup> Day 6; P. Hulin, Iraq 21 (1959) 50:32; day 3: KAR 177 rev. 1:9 (HMA 176).

<sup>227</sup> CT 38 28:27.

<sup>228</sup> CT 38 25 K. 2942+ :3.

<sup>229</sup> G. van Vloten, WZKM 7 (1893) 234 f.; T. Fahd in *Génies, anges et démons* (= Sources orientales, 8) (1971) 191 ff. (193 f.: "rapports sexuels"). Cohabitation — even marriage — between a man and a female djinn is amply attested in Arab folk belief; cf. J. Henninger, "Geisterglaube bei den vorislamischen Arabern", in *Festschrift Paul J. Schebesta* (1963) 285–6, 292, 299. Cf. F. Leemhuis, "Trouw met een djinn", *Midden-Oosten en Islam Publicaties*. Witte Reeks, No. 14 (1989) 18–27, 168–170; esp. 22.

<sup>230</sup> R.C. Thompson, *Semitic Magic. Its Origins and Development* (1908) 70.

<sup>231</sup> O. Rescher, WZKM 28 (1914) 248.

<sup>232</sup> A. S. Tritton, JRAS 1934 722.

<sup>233</sup> A. Falkenstein in *Festschrift Werner Caskel* (1968) 107.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. the Old Babylonian incantations in Sumerian, G. R. Castellino, *Oriens Ant.* 8 (1969) 20:158 f.; M. J. Geller, *Forerunners to Uduh-hul* (1985) 143, Appendix 108 f.; B. Alster, *Dumuzi's Dream* (1972) 67, lines 115–116, combined with "Inanna's Descent" 284 ff., cited in Alster's commentary.

<sup>235</sup> R. Borger, JCS 21 (1967) 4:30 f.; cf. M. J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières* (1976) 225.

<sup>236</sup> K. Fr. Krämer, MAOG 4 (1928–9) 110–2 (in Syriac lit.). Lilith appearing in a dream: M. J. Geller, OLP 17 (1986) 107, note 1. Divorcing a Lilith by a *giṭṭā*: see our remarks in Chapter VI, on the magical rites in KAR 66 (p. 100f.).

<sup>237</sup> R.C. Thompson, *Semitic Magic* (1908) 68–77. Cf. above, note 229.



Liliths".<sup>238</sup> This reminds us of Babylonian "seizure by incubus and succubus".<sup>239</sup>

As can be expected, the male succubus (*lilū*) is the danger for the Babylonian woman; never *lilitu*. His typical activity is "selecting (women) for marriage" (*hāru*).<sup>240</sup> Our only source in the diagnostic handbook is the chapter on pregnant women. After the entry with the diagnosis that the woman has been "hit" by the Lord (or Lurker) of the Roof (= epilepsy) we read:

- If the woman is ill and her seizure seizes her time and again during the night: seizure by an incubus;
- If the woman is ill and her seizure seizes her time and again at nightfall, she throws off her cloth time and again: seizure by an incubus;
- If the woman's illness seizes her time and again during the night: seizure by an incubus.<sup>241</sup>

These attacks all take place during the night but do not necessarily have sexual intentions. Six lines later we hear that "the son of her (personal) god" "approaches" the woman during a sleepless night — here, the verb "to approach" can have sexual overtones.<sup>242</sup>

Babies have to fear only incubus, just like their mothers; never the female *lilitu*. Incubus can "seize" a baby right after birth<sup>243</sup> and a therapeutic text for a mother in labour appends prescriptions of *materia magica* to be used for a new-born baby "so that incubus does not come near to the baby".<sup>244</sup>

So far, the presentation sounds consistent, although the (male) baby, associated only with incubus, appears to be a flaw in the picture. When we read elsewhere that a man can also be seized by an incubus,<sup>245</sup> we see a problem and when Tablet XXVI of the diagnostic handbook (cited already) has the diagnosis "Hand of Incubus" seven times<sup>246</sup> — for a man — we wonder. Part of the solution may be sought in an argumentum e silentio: no other references for this diagnosis "Hand of Incubus" are attested outside this chapter, so one gains the impression that this "hand" is solely a form of epilepsy — as it seems to be with babies. We noticed a similar specialised meaning restricted to epilepsy for "Hand of the God" in the texts. Its counterpart, "Hand of Succubus", is less frequent and is also attested outside the epilepsy chapter.<sup>247</sup> The summary of remedies to be used by the conjurer gives in the entry on epilepsies and related diseases only incubus, not succubus<sup>248</sup> — if the latter omission has any meaning.

It is possible that an incubus harms a man in order to get hold of his wife himself;

<sup>238</sup> For example in M. J. Geller, *OLP* 17 (1986) 112 Aaron C:3. Incubus/succubus in Mandaean demonology is *humria*, see G. Furlani, "I nomi delle classi dei demoni presso i Mande'i", *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei — Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* Serie VIII, vol. IX (1954) 394.

<sup>239</sup> *CT* 51 142:13.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. A. R. George, *BSOAS* 50 (1987) 360, on *YOS* 11 19:8; *CAD* H 119 (c) and lex. section; M. J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières* (1976) 225:30 (= *HGS* 31, 60).

<sup>241</sup> *TDP* 214:12–14.

<sup>242</sup> Line 20; cf. *CAD* I/J 101a (top).

<sup>243</sup> E. F. Weidner, *Gestirndarstellungen*... (1967) 14; "Hand of the God" follows.

<sup>244</sup> *BAM* 3 248 IV 41 (LÚ.LÍL.LÁ), following after "Hand of the God"; see W. Farber, *Schlaf Kindchen schlaf*... 128 f. Lamaštu I 112 f. also gives incubus as a threat of babies, see W. Farber, *RLA* VII 23b.

<sup>245</sup> *KUB* 37 87:11 f. (LÚ.LÍL.LÁ).

<sup>246</sup> Tablet XXVI: 11, 15, 22 (with fever), 37, 45, rev. 6, 9 (with fever), 15.

<sup>247</sup> In the chapter: XXVI: 2, 35f., 43; elsewhere: *TDP* 34:21 (with fever), 160:40, cf. 80:13.

<sup>248</sup> *KAR* 44 rev. 10–12 with J. Bottéro, *Mythes et rites de Babylone* (1985) 83. Note that obv. 10, in another context, has both the male and female forms of this demon.

he can kill the young husband out of sheer jealousy. The most illuminating story can be found in the apocryphal Biblical book Tobias: the jealous demon Asmodeus kills every husband wanting to sleep with Sarah (Tob. 3:8); only fumigation can drive him away for good (6:19; 8:2 f.).<sup>249</sup> An interesting explanation of a passage in the Biblical book "Song of Songs" views chapter 3 verses 7–8 in this light, "Behold, it is the litter of Solomon! About it are sixty mighty men of Israel, all girt with swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh, against alarms at night". The "alarms at night" are incubus or succubus, ready to harm Solomon when he is in bed with his beloved, and the sixty "mighty men" are his paranymphs, prepared to defend him. This protection also is the original function of paranymphs.<sup>250</sup>

A final remark: according to the Sumerian myth on Inanna and the Huluppû-tree, "succubus" lived in the trunk of this tree.<sup>251</sup> This reminds one of the Roman incubus *faunus ficarius*, living in the fig tree (*ficus*), a danger for women.

# Madness

For the Greeks and Romans epilepsy and madness (*mania*) were very close.<sup>252</sup> Cambyses, the Persian king, suffering from the Sacred Disease, had a disturbed mind (Herodotus III 33). A superstitious person "shudders and spits in his bosom if he catch sight of a madman (*mainómenos*) or an epileptic (*epilēptos*)".<sup>253</sup> In a comedy of Plautus someone refers to "the disease that is spat upon (*insputari*)" and it becomes clear, some lines later, that a raving (*rabiosus*) slave is meant.<sup>254</sup> The Greeks viewed epileptics and madmen as "possessed" by gods like Pan or spirits of "heroes", mentioned already and to be discussed later. Medical authors tell us that "sometimes epilepsy brings the mind to madness"<sup>255</sup> and that those who are not attacked suddenly by madness have the same symptoms as persons living on the verge of epilepsy or apoplexy; "thus deep sleep, they say, is indicative of the coming of epilepsy; light and short sleep, on the other hand, of madness".<sup>256</sup> Black hellebore and the black seeds of peony are the remedies against epilepsy, madness and melancholy.<sup>257</sup>

Some manifestations of epilepsy indeed look like madness.<sup>258</sup> The Babylonian medical texts do not have many explicit references for "madness", literally "changing of the mind".<sup>259</sup> When we meet with this, it follows upon sections discussing *bennu* – oppress-

<sup>249</sup> Cf. Otto Böcher, *Dämonenfurcht und Dämonenabwehr* (1970) 124–137, for a general discussion.

<sup>250</sup> Thus S. Krauss, "Der richtige Sinn von 'Schrecken in der Nacht', HL III, 8", in *Occident and Orient. (Moses) Gaster Anniversary Volume* (1936) 323–330. Now M. Malul, "Susapinnu", *JESHO* 32 (1989) 241–278, esp. 262 ff.

<sup>251</sup> Cf. S. Lackenbacher, *RA* 65 (1971) 141 f., note 7.

<sup>252</sup> The book by Michael W. Dols, *Majnun. The madman in Medieval Islamic society* (Oxford 1992), had not yet appeared when these lines were written.

<sup>253</sup> Theophrastus, *Characteres* XVI 14.

<sup>254</sup> Plautus, *Captivi* 547–557.

<sup>255</sup> Aretaeus of Cappadocia III 4, 2 and 3, end (*es manien étrepse*; cf. *eis manian peritrépei*, said of St. Paul, Acts of the Apostles 26:24).

<sup>256</sup> Soranus and Caelius Aurelianus, *On Chronic Diseases* I 148; ed. Drabkin 536 f.

<sup>257</sup> W. H. Roscher, *Ephialtes*, 26 f.

<sup>258</sup> Tibetan texts also see the connection; see R. E. Emmerick, "Epilepsy according to the Rgyud-bzi", in: G. J. Meulenbeld, D. Wujastyk, *Studies on Indian Medical History* (1987) 63–90, esp. 72.

<sup>259</sup> Sumerian KA.HI.KUR.RA = Akkadian *šinūt tēmi*, lit. "changing of the mind"; also in Syriac, see C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (1928) 789 f. See W. Farber, *BID* 74 f. Symptoms in *BAM* 3 202:1–3.



ing panic – evil *alû* – quivering in bed, and it heads the group madness – seizure of the mouth – stroke – seeing dead people.<sup>260</sup> In another text it immediately follows upon *a.n.t.a.šub.ba* and *bennu*.<sup>261</sup> The diagnostic handbook and its commentaries speak of madness without naming it so explicitly. We have noted that there was something terribly wrong in the behaviour of a patient suffering of “Spawn of Šulpaea”: killing him was the only solution under certain circumstances. The explanation of “Hand of the God” as: “He curses the gods, he speaks insolence, he hits whom(ever) he sees”, according to Babylonian feeling must depict a madman.<sup>262</sup>

An interesting reference to madness can be found in a Sumerian literary text, the “Lamentation on the Destruction of Nippur”: “(The wind) changed (*kúr*) the path of its understanding (*dím.ma*), confounded (*sùh*) its reason (*umuš*), caused it to be stricken by the ghost *lil*”.<sup>263</sup> In the Arab world, *madjnūn* “mad” literally means “possessed by a djinn”. That ghosts can cause madness always has been common knowledge.

In Akkadian the verb indicating madness is *šehû*.<sup>264</sup> Neo-Assyrian slave sales contracts guarantee against *bennu* and “madness” (*šehû*); so far as is known it is primarily a woman’s disease (the slaves sold are female and it occurs in one gynaecological text).<sup>265</sup> Hysteria may be a possible explanation, a disease with features characteristic of those suffering from the Sacred Disease, according to Hippocrates.<sup>266</sup> It could be that the similarly sounding Akkadian verb *šegû*, used to indicate raving women, is just a by-form of *šehû*.<sup>267</sup> A word with the same basic meaning “madness” could be *ši-ḫi-tu* in an omen text: “There will be sickness, *šihitu* and *bennu* in the land”.<sup>268</sup> In the handbook on malformed births we read in one section that a woman can give birth to an anomaly (*izbu*) – wind (*šāru*) – a dead body – an idiot (*LÚ.LÍL*, *SALLÍL*) – persons with various bodily defects (lame, blind, etc) – ... (?) – “Spawn of Šulpaea” – ... (*Á.KAM*).<sup>269</sup> The last two cases are especially interesting; we have already identified “Spawn of Šulpaea” as a grave form of epilepsy bordering on madness, and a Babylonian commentary on the next word helps us by explaining Sumerian *Á.KAM* as *šehānu* “mad”, a word equated with *mahhū* “ecstatic”.<sup>270</sup>

<sup>260</sup> BAM 4 376 II 25 – III 9.

<sup>261</sup> STT 2 286 II 14, cf. 2 and 9. Cf. BAM 3 202.

<sup>262</sup> The passages are STT 1 89:174–186 (Chapter V) and BRM 4 32:2.

<sup>263</sup> S.N. Kramer, ASJ 13 (1991) 7, 16, lines 104–5.

<sup>264</sup> K. Deller, Baghdad. Mitt. 16 (1985) 375, who rightly compares Akkadian *šegû*, *šiqu* (also in BAM 4 379 IV 6) and Hebrew *šg’*.

<sup>265</sup> W. G. Lambert, Iraq 31 (1969) 29:18, 26. Meanwhile, I have been informed that the texts VAT 8754 and Ass. Fd. Nr. 9573a, cited by Deller, concern male slaves.

<sup>266</sup> Hipp., *Mul.* II 151; Littre VIII 326. Cf. the discussion by E. Baumann, 226–236. On hysteria, cf. B. Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece* (1978) 238–268, who sees in this disease a reaction of the Greek woman against sexual repression.

<sup>267</sup> N-stem; CT 39:21:157 and dupl. 33:37: raving wives kill their husbands with weapons. As to the word *šegû*, one is reminded of the Hebrew root *šg’* “to have a fit of madness”.

<sup>268</sup> V. Scheil, RA 14 (1917) 144:4. The commentary on an *Izbu* text could be relevant here: “Ecstasies will seize the land = *še-e-ḫu* will seize the land”; E. Leichty, *Šumma Izbu*... (1970) 231 W 365d.

<sup>269</sup> E. Leichty, *Šumma Izbu*... 35–8, *Izbu* I 47–69.

<sup>270</sup> E. Leichty, 213:34, on line 69, *Á* *a-ka* *KAM* = *še-ḫa-nu*; cf. 231 W 365d, *KUR ma-ḫi-a(!)-tum* DIB.MEŠ = *KUR še-e-ḫu i-šab-bat*. Now confirmed by a commentary on TDP 4:30, *mah-ḫa-a*: *lú.gu[b.a] = še-ḫa-a-nu* (J. M. Durand, RA 73 [1979] 163 § 12; A.R. George, RA 85 [1991] 150, 31).

## Possession

"Ecstatic" is the usual translation of *mahhū*, and this leads us to "ecstasy", the condition of a human being seized or possessed by a god. Greek literature is full of material on the triad epilepsy — mania — possession. The description of a woman in a fit giving the impression to bystanders of "suffering from the wrath of Pan or another god" looks very much like that of an epileptic attack. We quote a passage from a tragedy by Euripides:<sup>271</sup>

- She changed colour; she staggered sideways, shook in every limb. She was just able to collapse on to a chair, or she would have fallen flat. Then one of her attendants, an old woman, thinking that perhaps the anger of Pan or some other god had struck her, chanted the cry of worship (*ololugē*). But then she saw, oozing from the girl's lips, white froth; the pupils of her eyes were twisted out of sight; the blood was drained from all her skin. The old woman knew her mistake, and changed her chant to a despairing howl.

The first symptoms seen by the woman are those of being *panólēptos*, "seized by the god Pan"; the victim was "seized" (*-lēptos*) by the god. Other passages say that a person can be "hit" (*-plēktos*) by a god; or, he or she could be possessed by the god (*éntheos*, *kátōchos*). The god is mostly Pan or Hecate, or a "hero", that is to say, a spirit of the dead.<sup>272</sup> — The symptoms were modelled on epileptic fit, though in this tragedy actually a poisoned cloak was its cause.<sup>273</sup>

Possession and epilepsy are linked here only implicitly. The only passage that is explicit about it can be found in Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease*; we quote again: "If he suffers at night from fear and panic (...), they talk of attacks of Hecate and the assaults of the Heroes".<sup>274</sup> The Heroes are spirits of the dead; one can meet them on lonely and gloomy places and when hit by them, one contracts paralysis on the right side of the body.<sup>275</sup> Little known is the story of a girl unwilling to work in a brothel, told by Xenophon of Ephesus in his novel *Ephesiaca* (2nd cent. A. D.). She feigns an epileptic attack; in Xenophon's words: "she imitates those suffering from the disease named after (*ek*) the gods". When she comes by she tells the following remarkable story: once, as a child, during a vigil (*pannuchís*), she had stumbled over the grave of somebody who had died recently. Jumping to her he tried to possess (*katéchein*) her. Only at daybreak he let her loose and struck her on the chest and thus he inflicted

<sup>271</sup> Euripides, *Medea* 1167–77 (translation by Philip Vellacott). Note that in his tragedy *Hippolytus* Euripides makes the chorus mistake Phaedra's behaviour as that of a person "possessed by Pan or Hecate ..." (141–4).

<sup>272</sup> The lit. is enormous; see first of all E. Rhode, *Psyche, Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* II (1907) 2 ff.; furthermore art. *Katochos* (by Ganschietz) and *Daimonismos* (by F. Pfister) in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie* Band X/2 (1919) and Supplementband VII (1940); art. *Besessenheit* (by J. H. Waszink) and *Ekstase* (by F. Pfister) in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* II (1954) and IV (1959). Cf. Ph. Borgeaud, *Recherches sur le dieu Pan* (1979) 156–171.

<sup>273</sup> Thus, independently, W. H. Roscher, *Ephialtes* (1900) 77 note 232, and Ph. Borgeaud, *Recherches sur le dieu Pan* (1979) 158.

<sup>274</sup> Ed. Littré VI 362, Grensemann 66, Jones 148. Cf. G. Lanata, 32–37, writing on *daímones*; cf. 33 note 69.

<sup>275</sup> Aristophanes, *Aves* 1482–93, with comm. by J. van Leeuwen (1902) 227.



(*embállō*) her with epilepsy.<sup>276</sup> — This story must have sounded plausible to the bystanders: a spirit can inflict man with epilepsy.

Spirits of the dead (*etemmū*) are omnipresent in Babylonian magical literature and the diagnosis "Hand of a Spirit" is the most frequent of all "hands"; the chapters on epilepsy are no exception to this rule.

Generally speaking the spirit is that of a person who has met death unnaturally or has not been buried orderly.<sup>277</sup> The multifaceted problem of how the Babylonians tried to come to terms with those spirits cannot be studied here; it deserves a separate book.<sup>278</sup> But one aspect is of interest: can a human being be "possessed" by a spirit? According to the Babylonians, a spirit of the dead can indeed enter the human body through the ears causing trouble in the head,<sup>279</sup> but this is hardly possession. Normally, a spirit "reaches" or "seizes" a human being and he is closest when he is "tied" to his victim.<sup>280</sup> There is no evidence that he enters and settles in his body.<sup>281</sup> Demons and diseases "overthrow" the patient, or "cover" him like a garment.<sup>282</sup>

So far as I am aware there is no Babylonian evidence for possession at all; what has been said about spirits of the dead also applies to demons. "Marrying" a human being seems to be the closest a demon can get at him.<sup>283</sup> The term "exorcism" presupposes possession; the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "exorcist" as "One who drives out evil spirits by solemn adjuration, etc." If possession was not known to the Babylonians, the word "exorcist" is less apt as the translation of Akkadian *āšipu*; we prefer "conjurer".

An important article on possession in the Greek world has been written by W. D. Smith: his opinion is that possession was unknown to the Greeks in their Classical period or in later Hellenism.<sup>284</sup> The standard example for possession is the divinely inspired Pythia of Delphi, but we find this theory only in the late author Plutarch who rejects it as unsound "Oriental" imagination. Demons only "attack" and affect human life "from without". They are just "precipitating causes of disease" and there is no demonic entry and possession. Only the New Testament and the later Syrian writer Lucian speak of demons entering the body<sup>285</sup> and the exorcist expelling them.<sup>286</sup> The New Testament names the human body "an empty house", open to any unclean spirit (Matthew 12:43–45), and epilepsy ("lunacy") is due to a demon (17:14–18).

<sup>276</sup> *Ephesiaca* V, 7, 4–9. See the German translation by B. Kytzler, *Im Reiche des Eros* I (1983) 153 f.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. G. Castellino, *Or.* NS 24 (1955) 243–5, the opening lines; for similar beliefs in the Greek world, see J. N. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (1983) 89 ff.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. the important article by J. Bottéro, "Les morts et l'au-delà dans les rituels en accadien contre l'action des 'revenants'", *ZA* 73 (1983) 153–203.

<sup>279</sup> R. Labat, *RSO* 32 (1957) 110 f.; *SpTU* 1 49:33–36.

<sup>280</sup> Bottéro, *ZA* 73 163. "Obsession" is the key-word for Bottéro; not possession.

<sup>281</sup> B. Landsberger, *WdO* 3 (1964) 56 note 38: "Insbesondere ist dem Sum.-Bab. die Vorstellung fremd, dass die Krankheit in den Menschen eindringt".

<sup>282</sup> N. M. Waldman, *JANES* 19 (1989) 161–170. "The prevailing Babylonian imagery has the action of the demon on the outside" (p. 165).

<sup>283</sup> Cf. *ana minma lemni hi-ra-ku* "Dem (Dämon) 'Jegliches Böse' bin ich angetraut", W. R. Mayer, *Or.* NS 59 (1990) 471:13 (*KAR* 297 and dupls.).

<sup>284</sup> W. D. Smith, "So-called possession in Pre-Christian Greece", in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965) 403–426. — For *engastrimuthos* discussed by him on p. 425 f., see now H. Rouillard and J. Tropper, *Ugarit-Forschungen* 19 (1987) 241–4, 249 f.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. H. van der Loos, *The miracles of Jesus* (1965) 348.

<sup>286</sup> Lucianus, *Philopseudes* 16: a "Syrian from Palestine" expels a demon from an epileptic. Cf. Flavius Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* VIII 46–48, for a similar story. Cf. D. C. Duling in *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985) 1–25.

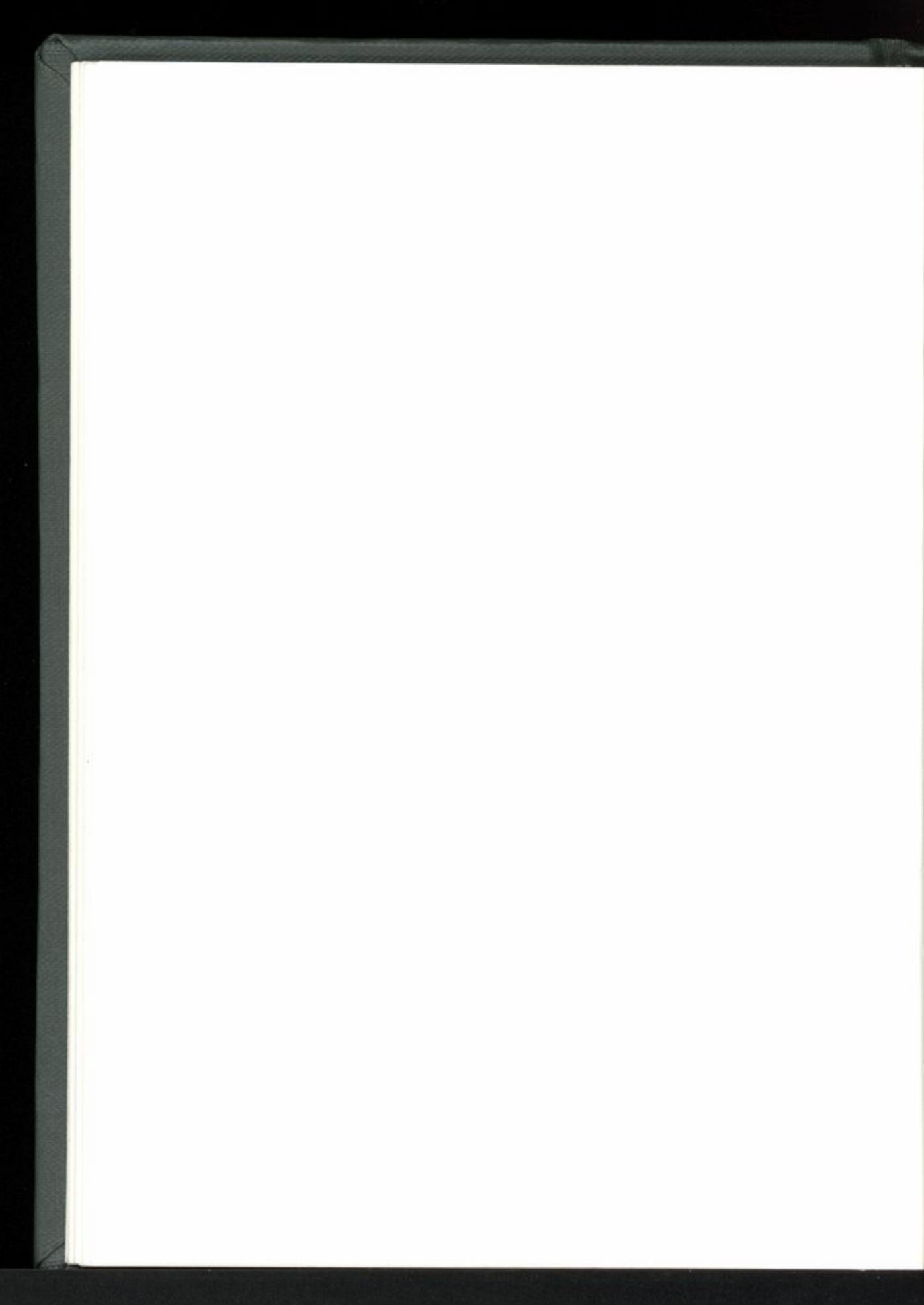
In the Greek world, therefore, possession as the explanation for epilepsy would originally be an Oriental superstition.<sup>287</sup> The theory needs checking by more qualified scholars<sup>288</sup> but its origin cannot be sought in Babylonian-Assyrian beliefs. Divine inspiration, ecstasy and related states of the mind ("shamanism") were experiences on the margins of their world; we hear of them only occasionally from outlying cities like Mari and Arbela.<sup>289</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Accepted by O. Temkin, *The Falling Sickness* 86, 87 note 14, following Smith.

<sup>288</sup> A miracle story from Epidauros may suggest that they actually believed in a demon living in the patient's body: the god presses his signet-ring on his [mouth, nose and ears]; see R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros* (1931) 32 f., W(under) 62, with p. 109–111; cf. H. Heintel (see the Bibliography), 17.

<sup>289</sup> J. Bottéro in J. P. Vernant, *Divination et rationalité* (1974) 95.





#### IV THE DIAGNOSTIC HANDBOOK

A most interesting source for our knowledge of eleptoid diseases is the handbook of the Babylonian conjurer named, after its first line, "When the conjurer is going to the house of a patient". In Babylonian catalogues it has the short title *sakikkū*, "Symptoms", a word that is derived from Sumerian *s.a.g.i.g.*, "diseased veins/muscles". The modern editor of this handbook, René Labat, named it "Traité akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics médicaux". Its purpose is to identify the cause of the disease — most often supernatural — and to give a prognosis about the outcome, often "he will die", or "he will get well". According to Babylonian standards, this approach to disease is "scientific", both in form and purpose. It is part of the large corpus of their "scientific" omen literature.<sup>1</sup> The handbook does not give any therapy; other compilations of a different nature took care of that. Therapy was based on the diagnoses made in this handbook. But there are a few magical prescriptions in the diagnostic handbook; and they happen to occur within the "chapters" on epilepsy (Tablets XXVIII, XXIX; also XXX ?). Other texts on epilepsy do this systematically but their relation with the handbook cannot be clarified as yet.<sup>2</sup>

The diagnostic handbook was an important tool in medical science over the centuries. The oldest texts date to the Old and Middle Babylonian periods and during the reign of king Adad-apla-iddina (1067–1046 B.C.) the renowned scholar Esagil-kīn-apli grouped the existing traditions together in a standard series of forty tablets ("chapters") that remained canonical and was still used in Persian times. We know about this ancient scholar's work thanks to a "colophon" added to a catalogue giving the incipits of the forty tablets.<sup>3</sup> The catalogue — preserved in two manuscripts — also gives the number of lines for each tablet (in which they sometimes diverge) and, more interestingly, divides the handbook into six sections. Clearly its ancient editor Esagil-kīn-apli was behind this thematic organisation.

The fourth section, mainly on epilepsy, runs as follows; we add after each entry the number of the tablet ("chapter") in capitals, following the numeration of the catalogue:<sup>4</sup>

- 60 If *miqtu* falls upon him and (XXVI)
- 60 If a man's face has been struck by palsy (XXVII)
- [60] If the Hand of a Spirit turns for him into a n.t a.š u b. a (XXVIII)
- 144 If Lugal-ūr.ra is born with him (XXIX)
- 84 If he is ill and opens his mouth all the time (XXX)
- (Subscription) Total: 500 [+ ..] (lines) "If *miqtu* falls upon him and";
- Symptoms (of ?) a n.t a.š u b. a; according to length (?).

<sup>1</sup> Introductory essays: R. Labat, *TDP* (1951), "Introduction"; A.L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (1964) 223f., 290f.; J. Bottéro, *Annuaire Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes*, IVe Section, 1969/1970 p.95–99; M. Stol, "Diagnosis and therapy in Babylonian medicine", *JEOL* 32 (1991–92).

<sup>2</sup> *STT* 1 89 (an older, independent tradition; Chapter V); the unpublished Lugal-urra tablet "XXIX".

<sup>3</sup> The two manuscripts of the catalogue were published by J.V. Kinnier Wilson and I.L. Finkel; see Finkel in *A Scientific Humanist. Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs* (1988) 143–159.

<sup>4</sup> Finkel, 147 A 32–37.



The tablet numbering is different in the colophons of the individual texts that actually have been found which can be explained by a scribe who some time wrote two "chapters" on one tablet, thus establishing a new tradition;<sup>5</sup> for example our XXVII and XXVIII were also written on one clay tablet. Here the catalogue numeration will be followed, which gives the title of each of the forty tablets and must remain the standard for that reason.

The full text of the five chapters is not preserved. We have XXVI-XXVIII; of XXIX there exists only an unpublished, fragmentary, version with therapeutical prescriptions.<sup>6</sup> Its colophon indicates that it was followed by XXX but this tablet is not known to us.

#### TABLET XXVI

This tablet was not known to R. Labat, the editor of the diagnostic handbook (1951). One manuscript, rather fragmentary (B), was excavated in Sultantepe, Turkey, and published by O.R. Gurney (1957); it belonged to a library in an Assyrian provincial town. The other manuscript (A) is a Neo-Babylonian tablet in the British Museum, rather well preserved. A photograph of its reverse was published by J.V. Kinnier Wilson in 1982 and a translation with discussion was given by him and E.H. Reynolds in 1990 (see the Bibliography).

The translation will be as literal as possible and in an attempt to render Akkadian terminology in a "concordant" way, that is to say, the same English words for the same Akkadian words. The phraseology of a "technical" text like this one is consistent and should be translated with the same consistency. The result is an awful and wooden style inexcusable in literary translation. The LÁ.ŠÚ in this tablet was discussed in the section on *Hajjattu*, and there an impression of the difficulties one has in understanding the terminology was given. Akkadian lexicography still is in its infancy in defining the exact meanings of medical terms. Thus, we do not know exactly which part of the body *talammu* is. Another very relevant example are the many words for "paralysis": the verbs *šamāmu*, *amāšu*, and the substantive *rimūtu*. We hardly know what distinguishes them. This situation makes our translations provisional.

Manuscripts: A. BM. 47753, Neo-Babylonian. Photos of both sides: J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *Medical History* 34 (1990), after p.186. Photo reverse: J.V. Kinnier Wilson in Tomoo Ishida, *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and other Essays* (Tokyo 1982) 352. Copy by M.J. Geller: in this book. B. STT 1 91+2 287, Neo-Assyrian. We follow the line-numbering of A and add between brackets that of B.

The entire obverse and first part of the reverse discuss "fall" (*miqtu*), "fit" (?) (LÁ, *hajjattu*), and "seizure" (*šibtu*). It is possible that this order reflects successive stages of the disease, or that it ascends from milder to more severe forms. Generally speaking in each section first the concomitant symptoms are described, introduced by "and" (*-ma*), then the subsequent symptoms, introduced by "at the time that" (UD=*enūma*).

<sup>5</sup> "Zusammenziehung"; H. Hunger, ZA 65 (1975) 67.

<sup>6</sup> For XXIX, see provisionally Finkel, 147 note 29. The colophon appears at the end of BM.42310+.

The first section deals with "fall". As we have seen in Chapter II, "fall" (*miqtu*) is something unexpectedly falling down on a patient. The diagnoses of this first section are: Hand of... – Hand of Succubus – *bennu* – a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a – Hand of a Spirit – Hand of Incubus. One gets the impression that not the symptoms, but these diagnoses determine the order of the omnia. We will notice the same principle in Tablet XXVII. The scribe intends to give the symptoms of "fall" as related to the main forms of epilepsy.

1 (0) [DIŠ *miqtu* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma)...] UD [ŠU]<sup>d</sup> x x[(x)]

"If a fall falls upon him and... [Hand] of...".

We can supply the beginning of the first line because it is given as an incipit in the Nimrud catalogue. Uninscribed space after UD in manuscript A suggests that the description of the symptoms ends here; at the end of the line (broken away in A) followed the diagnosis. B (STT 2 287:0') shows two damaged signs introduced by "god". The "hand" of a supernatural being is meant.

2 (1) [DIŠ *miqtu* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma) *enūma* (UD) *imqutu*]ŠU (ŠUB-š)Ú) *pānūšu* (IGLMEŠ-[šú]) *sāmū* (SA<sub>5</sub>) *arqū* (SIG<sub>7</sub>)[*qāt*] *ardat-lilī* ([ŠU] KLSIKILL[İL.LÁ. EN.NA])

"If a fall falls upon him and at the time it has fallen upon him his face is red (and) yellow/green: Hand of succubus".

The beginning of lines 2 and 3 was supplied with help from the parallel passage 35–36, on "seizure". "Yellow/green": Semitic languages have one word covering both colours; Akkadian (*w*)*arqū*.

3 (2) [DIŠ *miqtu* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma) *enūma* (UD) *imqutu*]ŠU (ŠUB-š)Ú) *an-nu-ú šu-ú i-qab-bi be-en-nu ša-i-du išbassu* (DIB-su) *uš-t[e]-zeb*

"If a fall falls upon him and at the time it has fallen upon him he says 'It is he (again)!': the roving *bennu*-epilepsy has seized him; he will be saved".

Lines 3–5 also appear in a much older diagnostic text from Emar published by D. Arnaud.<sup>7</sup> Line 3 is formulated in the Emar text, lines 7–8, as follows:

– [BE *mī*]-*iq-tum* ŠUB-su-m[a] *e-nu-ma* ŠUB-š *i-te an-nu-ú* [...] [*b*]-*e-en-nu ša-i-d[u]* DIB-su *u[š-te-zeb]*. What *i-te* means, is not clear.

The "roving" character of *bennu* implies that normally it is a more regular visitor. The qualification is found only here. To be "saved" seems to mean that the patient recovers without any help. A conjurer "rescues" (*eṭēru*) a patient, as will be seen in the prescriptions of Tablet XXVIII.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: "It is he again" implies an aura.

4 (3) [DIŠ *miqtu* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma)] *ina* UD.1.KAM 2-šú 3-šú *inakkiršumma* (KÚR-šum-ma) (B: *iḫṭaššumma* (LÁ-šum-ma)) *ina šēr-ti sām* (SA<sub>5</sub>) *ina šimetān* (AN.USAN) *arūq* (SIG<sub>7</sub>) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA

"If a fall falls upon him and two, three times a day it changes for him (variant: "it overwhelms him") and in the morning he is red, in the evening he is yellow/green: a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a".

The beginning is partly preserved on the text from Emar. We again translated *arūq* as "yellow/green" in order to retain the parallelism with line 2 but add that "livid" is also

<sup>7</sup> Copy: *Recherches au pays d'Aštata. Emar* VI.1 (1985) 301 Msk.74122a; translit., transl. *Emar* VI.4 (1987) 315 no.694, lines 7–10.



possible.<sup>8</sup> The variants “changes – overwhelms him” in the manuscripts are disturbing. The older Emar text has an easier and better reading: *imaqqussu* (ŠUB-su), “falls upon him”.

5 (4) [DIŠ *miqtī* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma) *ina* U]D.1.KAM 2-šú 3-šú *išabbassu* (DIB-su; also in B: coll. STT 2 p. 24) *u i-ri-iq irrikma* (GÍD-ma) *ina miqtī* (ŠUB-ti) x x (B: TAB.TAB-šú)

“If a fall falls upon him and two, three times a day it seizes him (variant: “falls upon him”) and he becomes yellow/green(?): it will last long and it will always begin (?) for him in a fall”.

“Livid” instead of “yellow/green” is perhaps better. “It” may refer to the a.n.t.a.š.u.b. b.a of the preceding line. If we are correct in singling out the verb “to begin” (*šurrū*) as the appropriate reading for TAB.TAB in manuscript B,<sup>9</sup> we point out that this verb is used for a beginning a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a (Tablet XXVII:17).

6 (5) [DIŠ *miqtī* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma) *ina* [u<sub>4</sub>]-mi šu-a-tum 7-šú *uš-tar-de-ma* (B: *uš-ter-de-ma*) *išabbassu* (DIB-su) *uš-te-zeb* BE-ma (B: *šum-ma*) 8-šú NU *imaqqutaššu* (ŠUB-aš-šú) *ul uš-te-[zeb]*

“If a fall falls upon him and seizes him repeatedly seven times on that (same) day: he will be saved. If it does not fall upon him the eighth time, he will not be saved”.

We observe that “seizing” can follow “falling”. Why does the text not speak of “seizing” but “falling” at the eighth time? Why do we find here “not”? One is inclined to disregard this “not” (preserved in ms. A): “If it falls upon him the eighth time, he will not be saved”.

Eight clearly is an unlucky number. A bird, shouting seven times, is favourable; eight times spells doom.<sup>10</sup>

7 (6) [DIŠ *miqtī* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-s)u-ma) MU.1.KAM *imaqqutaššumma* (ŠUB-šú-ma; var. B: RI-ma) *ana ittišuma* (IGL.DUB-šú-ma) *iḫittaššu* (LÁ-šú) *na-kid* AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *ina ma-šal u<sub>4</sub>-me* (B: -mi) *uš-ta-qar-rab-šu* (B: -šú)-ma *kabissu* (DUGUD-su)

“If a fall falls upon him and it falls<sup>11</sup> upon him every year and it overwhelms him at the (expected) time: it is serious; a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a; it will come very close to him in the middle of the day and it will be heavy for him”.

“Every year”: based on the parallel “daily” in *ūmišamma ana ittišu i-ḫi-ṭ-ṭ[a-aš-šú]*, BAM 4 416 rev. 8 (= IM 44568). Landsberger’s study of “at the expected moment” (*ana ittišu*) in diagnostic texts does not help here.<sup>12</sup> The same time, every day/year? A.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a in the middle of the day is bad for the patient (cf. 23, rev. 12–13). Line 4 suggested that its symptoms are normally expected in the morning and the evening. “In the middle of the day”: cf. 23, 38, rev. 12, 13; a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a and a Spirit are the cause (38).

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: “diurnal patterns do occur in epilepsy”.

8 (7–8) [DIŠ *miqtī* (ŠUB-ti) *imaqqussuma* (ŠUB-su-ma) *ina u<sub>4</sub>-mi* (B: UD) *šu(B: šú)-a-tum* 7-šú *uš-tar-di-ma* (B: *uš-ter-di-ma*) *iḫissu* (LÁ-su; B: *i-ḫi-is-su*) *e-nu-ma um-*

<sup>8</sup> AHW 1463b “gelbgrün, fahl sein, werden”.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. MSL 9 (1967) 132f. (equations of TAB), line 465. Cf. BAM 2 222:9 (TAB-ma TI) ?

<sup>10</sup> F. Reschid, *Sumer* 34 (1978) Arabic section, 62:39, 40.

<sup>11</sup> Var. in B unexplained. Cf. EN.TE.NA RI-šum-ma, TDP 184:20.

<sup>12</sup> WdO 3 (1964) 49, 65(D).

taš-ši-ru-šú i-ti-ib qāt (ŠU) DINGIR (B omits DINGIR) šag-ga-ši imât (GAM)

"If a fall falls upon him and it overwhelms him repeatedly, seven times on that (same) day; after it has released him he feels good: Hand of a murderer; he will die".

"He feels good" (verb *tiābu*) is one possibility. One can also derive it from the verb *edēpu* "to blow (away)", with an unclear meaning here; possibly "be bloated": "he is bloated". "Murderer" is preceded by the sign "god" in A. That sign is also omitted in TDP 174:4(!). Perhaps the spirit of a murderer; see the next line.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Serial fits deteriorating to status.

9-10 (9-11) [D1]š kīma([G1]M) miqti (ŠUB-ti) imtanaqqussu (ŠUB.ŠUB-su) ināšu (IG1.MEŠ-šú; B: IG1<sup>II</sup>-šú) dama (ÚŠ) malā (DIRIG.MEŠ) // ināšu(IG1<sup>II</sup>-šú) ipette (BE-te) u ikattam (DUL-am) usukkašu (TE.UNU<sup>II</sup>-šú; B: isāšu([M]E.ZÉ-šú)) nu-uš-šá (10) qātātušu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) u šēpāšu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) tar-ša ina sa-naq a-ši-pi 'i-a-bat šá iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) ina-tal qāt eṭemmi (ŠU GUD) šag-ga-ši

"If something like a fall falls upon him time and again and his eyes are full of blood (variant: "he opens and closes his eyes"), his cheeks are shaking, his hands and feet are stretched, he collapses (?) when the conjurer arrives, he sees who has seized him: Hand of the spirit of a murderer".

Also translated by F. Köcher in *Festschrift für Heinz Goerke* (1978) 28f.; instead of "he collapses" for 'i-a-bat, he translates "er völlig apathisch ist". — There now are repeated attacks. "Something like a fall": "something like a n.t a.š u b a", "something like sleep", "something like the staff of Sin", "something like the seizure by a Spirit", "something like the Hand of a Spirit" are also attested.<sup>13</sup> For "cheek", manuscript A offers the Sumerogram of Akkadian *usukku*, ms. B of *isu*. Cf. *i-sa-šú nu-uš* (STT 1 89:208) and ME.ZÉ-šú nu-uš-šú(!) (SpbTU I 31:8, possibly comm. on TDP 48 E I 3, or 5).

"He sees who has seized him": in a dreamy state the patient believes he sees the attacking demon. Similarly, he can see his "providing spirit", or the "Provider-of-Evil" when suffering from a stroke (TDP 180 = Tablet XXVII:4).<sup>14</sup> Rev. 10 can be translated as "he sees the illness that has seized him". Lines rev. 9, 14 show that the patient "talks" with whom he sees. Our text displays a troubling variation in terminology for this "seeing": two verbs for "to see", *naṭālu* (10, rev. 9, 14) and *palāsu* N (40, 44), and "who seized him" (10, rev. 9 [emended]) next to "his seizing/seizer" (40, 44, rev. 14). A parallel for "seizer" (*šābitu*) is "hitter" (*māḥiṣu*).<sup>15</sup> Both words are rare. In our translation we followed Köcher: "das was ihn überwältigt hat, sieht er". Kinnier Wilson suggests "he looks at the person who is holding him", "most probably the sign that the patient was again fully conscious" (p. 187). In that case, *ša ukallušu* is expected.

Line 18 speaks of the Hand of the spirit of a person murdered, not a murderer.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: The situation in these lines is again close to status.

<sup>13</sup> R. Labat, *Semitica* 3 (1950) 11 AO 7760 III 7 (= RA 73 [1979] 65); Kinnier Wilson, *Iraq* 19 (1957) 40 ND 4368:5, 26; TDP 190:17 (GIM!) (antašubba); TDP 190:23 (sleep); BAM 5 471 II 21 (staff of Sin); KAR 211:6, cf. TDP 22:37, 24:49, 26:71 (seizure by a spirit); BAM 1 3 IV 12, R. Labat, *RA* 53 (1959) 16 rev. 18 (GIM šá ŠU), 22 (GIM ŠU) (Hand of a Spirit; in the ears). Cf. "something like the seizure by Lamaštu seizes (the baby) daily", TDP 224:58.

<sup>14</sup> Seeing supernatural beings: *sahḫiru* (TDP 4:37 with A.R. George, *RA* 85 [1991] 158), Provider-of-Evil (CAD M/2 184b), a god (STT 2 300 rev. 9 f.).

<sup>15</sup> In CT 39 46:62, "his hitter will change for him".



11 (12) [DIŠ] *kīma*([GIM]) *maqātišu* (?) (ŠUB -šú) *i-ri-iq-ma ma-gal i-ši-iḫ u šēpāšu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *i*(B: *it*)-*ta-nak-na-an-na* // *qātātušu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpāšu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *qāt lili* (ŠU LÍLLÁ.EN.NA)

"If, as soon as it falls (?) upon him, he becomes yellow/green and he laughs much and his feet are contorted all the time (variant: "his hands and feet"): Hand of incubus".

"Yellow/green", or: "livid". The variant is written in A lower and in a smaller script.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Gelastic epilepsy; generally rare in children and adults but more common in children.

A **ruling** follows and a new section starts, on being "overwhelmed" by a fit (*hajjattu*). See the remarks in Chapter III, on *Hajjattu* (p. 42–46).

12 (13) [DIŠ] *hajjattašu* (L[Á]-šú) *iḫṭaššumma* (LÁ-šum-ma) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *ru'tašu* (ÚḪ-šú) (B: ÚḪ) *illak* (GIN-ak) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA

"If his fit overwhelms him and in / from his mouth flows his saliva: a n.t a.š u b.b a".

Lines 14–15 have another word order: "his saliva flows in/from his mouth". The -šu shows that we need the form *ru'tašu*, not normal *ru'ssu*.

*Illātu*, the other word for saliva, normally is said to "flow" (*alāku*); ÚḪ = *illātu* seems to be excluded here because we would expect the plural *illakā/ū* (GIN.MEŠ). There is, however, some confusion; see p. 8–9.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Entries 12ff. may be described as serial pathognomonic observations relating to *grand mal* seizures.

13 (14) [DIŠ] *hajjattašu*([L]Á-šú) *iḫṭaššumma* (LÁ-šum-ma) *qātātušu*(ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpāšu*(GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ana kišadišu* (GÚ-šú) *ik-tab-ba* (B: *ik-tap-[p]a*) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA

"If his fit overcomes him and his hands and his feet curve<sup>16</sup> towards his neck: a n.t a. š u b.b a".

14 (15) [DIŠ] *enūma* ([U]D) *iḫṭaššū* (LÁ-šú) *a-šiš-tum iṣabbassu*(DIB-su) *ru'tušu* (ÚḪ-šú; B: ÚḪ) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *illak* (GIN-ak) *ikrib abišu* (KAXŠU AD-šú) *iṣbassu* (DIB-su) *imāt* (GAM)

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, a depression seizes him, his saliva flows in/from his mouth: a vow of his father has seized him; he will die".

The word *ašišum* is taken as a by-form of *ašūšum*, appearing as Sumerogram (Z1.IR) in Tablet XXVII: 29. The "vow" (*ikribu*) was an unfulfilled vow made by the patient's father. Such vows are referred to in the tablet on baby diseases in the diagnostic handbook:<sup>17</sup> these vows obviously had been pledged on behalf of the newborn child. Our entry implies that the father never met his promise; meanwhile, the child may have become a grown man.

Note that *ašišum* among the symptoms can in Babylonian language be heard as a dialectical by-form of *aširtum* "a pious gift to the gods" (a vow). The Babylonians used this kind of "philology" as one of their scientific methods for linking widely different matters.

15 (16) [DIŠ *enūma* (UD)] *iḫṭaššū* ([L]Á-šú) *ultu* (TA) *iš-šab(!)-tu-šú* (B: *iš-šab-tu-šu*) *ru'tušu* (ÚḪ-šú; B: ÚḪ) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *illak* (GIN-ak) *qāt lili* (ŠU LÍLLÁ.EN.NA)

<sup>16</sup> Variant *kabūbu* for *kapāpu* also in *SpbTU* II 181 no. 44 rev.17 (hands and feet *ik-tab-ba*).

<sup>17</sup> Refs. in *CAD* I/J 65a.

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, after it had seized him, his saliva flows in/from his mouth: Hand of incubus".

The scribe differentiates UD (*enūma*) and TA (*ultu*), "at the time" – "after". The "it" in "after it ..." refers to the "depression" of the preceding line: here, the flowing of saliva comes later.

16 (17) DIŠ *enūma* (UD) *iḥṭaššu* (LÁ-šú) *minātušu* (UB.NIGIN.NA-šú) *i-šaḥ-ḥu-ḥa libbašu* (ŠĀ-šú) *išsanabbassu* (DIB.DIB-su) *qerbūšu* (ŠĀ.MEŠ-šú) *ušeššerūšu* (SĪSĀ.MEŠ-šú) *qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD)

"If, at the time it overcomes him, his limbs are dissolving, his innards seize him time and again, his bowels move: Hand of a Spirit".

Also translated by F. Köcher in *Fs. Goerke* 29. The "limbs" (*miniātu*) do not include the arms and legs, so it seems.<sup>18</sup> "His bowels move" means that he defecates.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Bowel incontinence is rare in epilepsy, but, when present, does usually occur with nocturnal attacks. It is surprising that no reference is made in the Tablet to urinary incontinence, which occurs more commonly.

17–18 (18–19) DIŠ [*enūma*] (U[D]) *iḥṭaššu* (LÁ-šú) *minātušu* (UB.NIGIN.NA-šú) *i-šam-ma-ma-šú pānūšu* (IGI.MEŠ-šú) *išsanundū* (NIGIN.MEŠ-du) *libbašu* (ŠĀ-šú) *i-šaḥ-ḥu-uh u mim-ma šā ana pišu* (KA-šú) *šaknu* (GAR-nu; B: GAR-[ár]) (18) *ina u<sub>4</sub>-me-šú* (B: <<DIŠ>> *ina UD-šú*) *ma-ti-ma ina šuburrišu* (DÜR-šú) *nadišu* (?) (SUB-šú; B: [na]-[di-šú] ?) *qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *šā ina šag-gaš-ti imūtu* (GAM)

"If, at the time it overcomes him, his limbs are paralysed, his head spins, his innards are dissolving and whatever has been put into his mouth is always on that (same) day thrown out through his anus (?): Hand of a spirit that has died through murder".

Also translated by F. Köcher in *Fs. Goerke* 29. It was he who suggested our translation of line 18: "und all das, was durch seinen Mund als Speise [...], stets am selben Tag seinen Anus (wieder) verlässt". That food is put into the mouth of the patient could suggest that he is a baby or child.

19–22 (20–23) DIŠ [*enūma*] (U[D]) *iḥṭaššu* (LÁ-šú) *minātušu* (UB.NIGIN.NA-šú) *i-šam-ma-ma-šú i-re-eh-ḥe-šum-ma ramānšu* (NĪ-šú) *i-maš-ši enūma* (UD) *ir-te-ḥu-šú* (20) *ināšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *SAR DA pānūšu* (IGI.MEŠ-šú) *sāmū* (SA<sub>5</sub>) // *suh<sub>4</sub>-ḥu-ru* (B: ŠAH-ḥu-r[u]) *šer'ānušu* (SA.MEŠ-šú) *tebū* (ZĪ.MEŠ) *u i-leb-bu* (21) *ap-pat ubānāt* (U.MEŠ) *qātātūšu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpišu* (GĪR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ka-ša-a marša šu'ati* (GIG.BI) *āšipu* (MAŠ.MAŠ; B: MAŠ.GIŠ ?) *ú-šad-bab-šú-ma* (22) *ša ú-šad-ba-bu-šú i-qab-bi enūma* (UD) *un-deš-ši-ru-šú* (B: -šú) *šā id-bu-bu la idē* (NU ZU) *qāt lili* (ŠU LÍL.LÁ.EN.NA) *la-'bi*

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his limbs are paralysed, it [unconsciousness] is pouring over him and he forgets himself, after it has poured over him his eyes are ..., his face is red (variant: "turned away"), his veins stand up and he makes noises, the tips of his fingers and toes are cold; if the conjurer makes that patient 'talk', and he says what he has been made to 'talk'; after it has released him he does not know what he had 'talked': Hand of incubus of fever (?)".

The verb "to pour out" (*rehū*) is used for commencing sleep<sup>19</sup> or lapsing into a state of unconsciousness. Among the epilepsies, it is typical of a.n.ta.š.u.b.a and there the durative form often is used, indicating a slow process. It can be used without

<sup>18</sup> Cf. CAD M/2 87 f. and below, line 49.

<sup>19</sup> R. Frankena, *JEOL* 16 (1959–62) 46, ad Erra I 82. Cf. Hebrew *zāram* in Psalm 90:5–6, as explained by Th. Booij, *Biblica* 68 (1987) 393–6.



subject, "impersonal", meaning that the person loses his consciousness. — The conjurer can let a patient pronounce an incantation text; we have one example in a ritual against a n.t.a.š u b.b a and related diseases, studied in Chapter VI.<sup>20</sup> A conjurer "recites" (*manû*) such texts according to the rules; a patient just "talks" (*dabābu*) when trying to do the same. See also rev. 6, where the conjurer is addressed as "you" and the diagnosis is Hand of incubus.

The same diagnosis, also with "fever (?)" added, in rev. 9. In TDP 34:21 "Hand of succubus of fever (?)" both are "explained" in the commentary *SpbTU* I 30:6.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds on 17–22: Todd's paralysis.

23 (24–25) DIŠ [enū]ma ([U]D) iḫḫassu (LÁ-šú) ta-lam-ma-šú kabissu (DUGUD-su) u ú-zaq-qat-su arkānu (EGIR-nu) iḫḫaššumma (LÁ-šum-ma) ramānšu (NÍ-šú) i-maš-ši AN.TA.ŠUB.BA ina ma-šal u<sub>4</sub>-mi kabissu (DUGUD-su)

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his torso (?) is heavy for him and gives him sharp pains; later on it overwhelms him and he forgets himself: a n.t.a.š u b.b a; it will be heavy for him in the middle of the day".

It is a problem that "overwhelm" (LÁ) is mentioned here twice, "at the time" and "later on". Has the beginning of the line been mechanically repeated? In our discussion of *Hajjattu* we thought of two successive fits. — Kinnier Wilson suggests instead of "torso" (*talammu*) "half of the body". This fits a number of references but in others his translation does not help.<sup>21</sup> For the middle of the day, see also lines 7, 38, rev. 12–13. Line 38 shows that we cannot take a n.t.a.š u b.b a as the subject of the verb: there, "it will be heavy for him in the middle of the day" is a sentence without a subject.

24–25 (26–27) DIŠ enūma (UD) iḫḫaššu (LÁ-šú) nakkapātušu (SAG.KI<sup>II</sup>-šú) ikkalāšu (KÚ.MEŠ-šú) libbašu (ŠÀ-šú) iḫteneppešu (GAZ.MEŠ-šú) arkānu (EGIR-nu) qātātēšu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) u šēpēšu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) ú-kap-pár (25) nabalkut (?) (BAL.BAL-ut) ru'tašu (ÚH-šú) la išu (NU.TUKU) // it-ta-nag-ra-ár miqtu (ŠUB-tu) // ḫa-mi-tum (B: ḫa-[m]e-tum) qāt Ištar (ŠU<sup>d</sup>XV) itebbe (ZI-bé)

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his temples hurt him, he is in a state of melancholy; later on he rubs his hands and feet, he is turned over (?), he does not have saliva<sup>22</sup> (variant: "he is rolling over"); fall (variant: "goose-flesh"); Hand of the Goddess; it will go away".

Line 25 is difficult. BAL.BAL (*nabalkutu*) can refer to a patient "rolling over"; for example, in his bed;<sup>23</sup> other examples are less clear.<sup>24</sup> Instead of the translation "he is rolling over" for *ittanagar*, "he is made frightened" could be possible, deriving the form from the verb *garāru* with this meaning.<sup>25</sup> The first diagnosis, "fall", is surprising. We find it, with a verbal form, again in line 48. The second, *ḫamītu*, obviously a disease, is relatively new to us. We find it elsewhere in these lists: malaria – 'disease'

<sup>20</sup> KAR 66:18 (p. 99).

<sup>21</sup> STT 1 89:142 (p. 94); TDP 78:71–2.

<sup>22</sup> Possibly to be emended in ND 4368 I 4 (*Iraq* 19 40): "his eyes are wide open (*pal-ka*), he does not have saliva, he does not move his hands, feet (or) himself".

<sup>23</sup> "His saliva flows while he is sleeping, he turns over (BAL.BAL-*ar*), he has a hard time (*uštannah*)", BAM 3 231:8; cf. TDP 158:19, 164:63.

<sup>24</sup> TDP 40:25 (DUL.DUL u BAL.BAL), 42:28 (u šu-ú BAL.BAL), 132:63 ([BA]L.BAL-ut MAN-ni), 136:64 ([.. B]AL-ut u KU LUH(?) KUR-šú), 182:41 f. (DIŠ UL<sub>4</sub>.GAL BAL.BAL DUL.DUL-tam / u ŠA.GAL) (CAD N/1 17a, "to change mood"; not in AHw).

<sup>25</sup> *SpbTU* II 166 no. 39:3 (*ga-ra-ru* = *pa-la-hu*), cf. *libbašu ig-da-na-ru-ur* in BAM 2 145:9.

– feverish shivering – *ha-mi-tum* – roaming spirit;<sup>26</sup> ‘disease’ – malaria – [*ha-m*]e-tum – restlessness.<sup>27</sup> Our translation “goose-flesh” was inspired by Landsberger; see the note on Tablet XXVII:25. “Fall” and *hamitu* are alternatives here. Note that the plant *kamantu* is effective against both *himitu* (with *i*; von Soden, *AHw*, reads *himittu*!) and *miqtu*, “fall”.<sup>28</sup>

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: The condition described was probably not epilepsy. Unless the translation deceives, it was hysteria or “simulated epilepsy”.

26 (28) DIŠ enūma (UD) iḥḫaššu (LÁ-šú) qātātēšu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) ittaplas (IGI.BAR-as) pūš inīšu (BABBAR IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) nabalkut (BAL-ut) u damū (ÚŠ) ina pišu (KA-šú) illakū (GIN-ku) ana sinniṣti (SAL) līlū (LÍLLÁ.EN.NA) ana zikari (NITA) lilitu (SALLÍLLÁ.EN.NA)

“If, at the time it overwhelms him, he watches his hands, the white of his eyes is rolling and blood flows in/from his mouth: for a woman: incubus; for a man: succubus”.

Cf. “watching the arms” in *TDP* 88:5; according to Kinnier Wilson “looking sideways”.

A ruling follows and the section on “seizure” (*šibtu*) comes now. According to Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds this is the section on nocturnal epilepsy.

27 (29) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) iṣṣanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) šibit eṭemmi (DIB GUD)

“If his seizure always seizes him in the evening: seizure of a Spirit”.

“His” seizure is a little surprising from the stylistic point of view; cf. “his fit” (12 f.). In a quite different entry another text has “If a seizure has seized him at (*kīma*) the evening” (and he hears voices).<sup>29</sup>

28 (30) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) iṣṣanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su)(B: KL.MIN) rēš libbišu (SAG ŠĀ-šú) ittanappaḥ (SAR.MEŠ-aḥ) (B: SAR.MEŠ) u (B omits) šēpāšu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) na-šá-a (B: ÍL-a) šibit eṭemmi (DIB GUD)

“If his seizure always seizes him in the evening, his epigastrium always is feverish and his feet are raised: seizure of a Spirit”.

Manuscript B will not repeat the beginning of lines 27–32, but simply say “If, ditto”. For “feverish”, another possible translation is “swollen”; Akkadian *napāhu*.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: The epigastric aura of lines 28f., and the auditory hallucinations of lines 30f., are both features of temporal lobe epilepsy.

29 (31) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) iṣṣanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) (B: KL.MIN) qerbūšu (ŠĀ.MEŠ-šú) ittanappaḥū (SAR.MEŠ-ḥu) (B: SAR.ME) adi (EN) qablīti (EN.NUN.MURUB<sub>4</sub>.BA) id-lip šibit eṭemmi (DIB GUD)

“If his seizure always seizes him in the evening, his bowels are feverish, he is wide awake until the middle watch: seizure of a Spirit”.

30 (32) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) iṣṣanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) (B: KL.MIN) pānūšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú; B: IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) ur-ru-pu (B: -p[a]) u znāšu (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú) iṣtanassā (GÜ.DÉ.MEŠ) šibit eṭemmi (DIB GUD)

“If his seizure always seizes him in the evening, his eyes are clouded, his ears ring: seizure of a Spirit”.

<sup>26</sup> CT 51 142:4–5.

<sup>27</sup> W.G. Lambert, *Afo* 19 (1959–60) 58:125 (not read by Lambert).

<sup>28</sup> BAM 4 379 IV 10.

<sup>29</sup> STT 1 89:180; Chapter V.



31 (33) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) išsanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) (B: KL.MIN) <<u>> (B omits) uznāšu (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú) ištānassā (GÜ.DÉ.MEŠ) šibit eṭemmi (DIB.GUD)

"If his seizure always seizes him in the evening, his ears ring: seizure of a Spirit".

In lines 31–33 the scribe of manuscript A continued writing *u*, the first element of IGI in the preceding line, always in the same position on the line. Although *u* can mean "and", this *u* looks like an error due to automatism with the scribe. Not in B.

32 (34) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) išsanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) (B: [K]L.MIN) <<u>> uznāšu (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú) i-šam-ma-ma-šú šibit eṭemmi (DIB.GUD)

"If his seizure always seizes him in the evening, his ears are paralysed: seizure of a Spirit".

Being paralysed, said of ears, sounds strange. Note TDP 70:13, DIŠ GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú i-šag-gu-mu-ma UGU-šú i-šam-ma-am-ma-šú ŠU<sup>d</sup>XV, "if his ears buzz and his skull is paralysed: Hand of the Goddess". Or is the upper part (*muḥḥu*?) of the ear meant here?

33 (35) DIŠ šibissu (DIB-su) ina šimetān (AN.USAN) išsanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) <<u>> putušu (SAG.KI-šú) ikkalšu (KÜ-šú) šibit eṭemmi (DIB.GUD)

"If his seizure always seizes him in the evening, his forehead hurts him: seizure of a Spirit".

34 (36) DIŠ KL.MIN enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) ummu (NE) ultu (TA) barārīti (EN.NUN.AN.USAN) adī (EN) qablīti (EN.NUN.MURUB<sub>4</sub>.BA) id-da-lip-šú šibit eṭemmi (DIB.G[UD])

"If, ditto, at the time it has seized him, a fever keeps him wide awake from the first until the middle watch: seizure of a Spirit".

Here, we have to assign to *dalāpu* a transitive meaning. Contrast line 29.

35 (37) DIŠ KL.MIN enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) an-nu-ú šu-ú i-qab-bi qāt ardat līl[ī] (ŠU.KI.SIKIL.LİL.[Ā.EN.NA])

"If, ditto, at the time it has seized him, he says 'That is him (again)!': Hand of the *ardat līl* succubus".

Cf. line 3.

36 (38) DIŠ šā šabāti (DIB) išsanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) pānūšu (IGI.MEŠ-šú) sāmū (SA<sub>5</sub>) u arqū (SIG<sub>7</sub>) qāt ardat līl[ī] (ŠU.KI.SIKIL.LİL.[Ā.EN.NA])

"If that-of-seizing seizes him time and again, at the time it has seized him, his face is red and yellow/green: Hand of the *ardat līl* succubus".

Cf. line 2. "That of seizing", presumably Akkadian *ša šabāti*, is known only from this text. Line 39 offers a variant by adding "his", so "what is going to seize (him)" looks like a better translation.

37 (39) DIŠ šā šabāti (DIB) išsanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) qātātušu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) u šēpāšu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) arqā (SIG<sub>7</sub>.MEŠ) qāt līl (ŠU.LİL.Ā.EN.[NA])

"If that-of-seizing seizes him time and again, at the time it has seized him, his hands and his feet are yellow/green: Hand of incubus".

38 (40) DIŠ šā šabāti (DIB) išsanabbassu (DIB.DIB-su) enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) qātātēšu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) u pānūšu (IGI.MEŠ-šú) ū-maš-šad eṭemmu (GUD) ša ina mē (A) imūtu (BAD) iṣbassu (DIB-su) ina ma-šal u<sub>4</sub>-mi kabissu (DUGUD-su) // (B: KL.MIN) rābiš nāri (MAŠKIM ID) imḥassu (SIG-s[u])

"If that-of-seizing seizes him time and again, at the time it has seized him, he rubs

his hands and his face: the spirit of someone who has died in water has seized him; in the middle of the day it will be heavy for him; variant: the Lurker of the river hit him".

Cf. *TDP* 78:75, "If he rubs his face: the spirit of someone who has died in water has seized him". The spirit of a drowned man is also seen active in Tablet XXVII:31. — The middle of the day was associated with a n.t a.š u b. b a in lines 7 and 23. Instead of //, "variant", manuscript B offers K1.MIN "ditto" (*STT* 2 287:40). For the Lurker of the river, see Tablet XXVII:24–5: he is a threat after man's bathing in a river. Our entry also associates him with water.

**39–40** (41–42) DIŠ šā šabātišu (DIB-šú) šu-te-eq-ru-ub enūma (UD) iḥḫaššu (LÁ-šú) qātātēšu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) kīma (GIM) šā ku-uš-šú iḥbatušu (DIB-šú) i-ḥe-es-s[i] (40) šēpīšu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) itarraš (LÁ-aš) ma-gal igallutma (LUḥ-ut-ma) ina-aḥ šābissu (DIB-su) ittaplas (IGI.BAR-as) qāt (ŠU) 'e-e-li

"If his that-of-seizing (or: that-of-seizing-him) is very close to him, at the time it overwhelms him, he wrings his hands just as someone whom cold has seized, he stretches his feet, also, he quivers much but acquiesces (again), he watches his seizer: Hand of the Binder".

Note the suffix "his" going with the "that-of-seizing"; the freer translation "what is going to seize him" imposes itself. Being "very close" is a rare expression used only here and in line 7. Being "close" is also said of *hajjattu* (*qerbet*).<sup>30</sup> In our entry everything points to the symptoms of an aura immediately preceding the epileptic fit. — "Wringing" hands: *ḥesū* literally means "to press", as has been shown in recent discussions.<sup>31</sup> The patient is able to observe (*palāsu* N) "his seizer"; see the remarks on line 10. "Binder" (*e'ēlu*) is the name of a demon, known from long lists of demons<sup>32</sup> but not found in the diagnostic parts of medical texts. His "hand" is attested only here.

An Old Babylonian letter tells us that disease "seizes" a person, that he recovers (*šalāmum*) but after two months the disease "is bound (*e'ēlum*) upon" him (*eliḫa etten'il*).<sup>33</sup>

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Clinical description of a tonic attack, there being no clonic features.

**41–43** (43–46) DIŠ ina qabliti (EN.NUN.MURUB<sub>4</sub>.BA) šā šabāti (DIB) iḥḫaššu (DIB.DIB-su) enūma (UD) iḥbatušu (DIB-šú) qātātēšu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) u šēpāšu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) ka-ša-a (B: ŠED<sub>7</sub>-a) ma-gal u-te-te-eṭ-te pišu (KA-šú) iptenette (BE.BE-te) (42) pānūšu (IGI.MEŠ-šú) sāmū (SA<sub>5</sub>) u arqū (SIG<sub>7</sub>) qablātišu (MURUB<sub>4</sub>.ME) (B: MEŠ-šú) ittanaddi (ŠUB.ME-di; B: ŠUB.ŠUB-di) qāt ardat lili (ŠU K1.SIKILL.LIL.LÁ.EN.NA) irrikma (GID-ma) imāt (GAM) (43) // ana sinništī (SAL) lilū (LIL.LÁ.EN.NA) ana zikari (NITA) lilitu (SALL.LIL.LÁ.EN.NA)

"If during the middle watch that-of-seizing seizes him time and again, at the time it has seized him, his hands and his feet are cold, he is much 'darkened' time and again, he opens his mouth time and again, his face is red and yellow/green, he lets down his hips time and again: Hand of the *ardat lili* succubus; it will last long and he will die. Variant: for a woman: incubus, for a man: succubus".

<sup>30</sup> "Er ist der Ohnmacht nahe"; Landsberger, *WdO* 3 50 (top), quoting *TDP* 168:3, *BAM* 4 323:66.

<sup>31</sup> B. Landsberger; lastly, S. Lackenbacher, *Syria* 59 (1982) 143. See also *AbB* 5 74, ob. Rand 4, and *CT* 51 136:1, commenting on *TDP* 32:1–4. The equation with *tepū* in this commentary must perhaps be compared with *ma-gal iṭ-tē-nē-pi* as symptom of Hand of a Spirit in the "definition" of *BRM* 4 32:3.

<sup>32</sup> As in *CT* 51 142:15.

<sup>33</sup> *AbB* 7 144:16.



"To be darkened" (*etû*; here Dtn) can be said of the eyes, but not here. [...] *ú-te-né-et-* is a symptom of the epilepsy *miqit šamê*.<sup>34</sup> "Letting down" the hips also in *TDP* 106 III 40. The last line looks like an addition, taken from line 26.

**44–45** (47–48) *DİŠ ina šal-lu-ti-šú iṣbassuma* (DIB-su-ma) *šābissu* (DIB-su) *ittaplas* (IGI.BAR-as) *i-re-eh-ḥe-šum-ma ramānšu* (NĪ-šú) *i-maš-ši kīma* (GIM) *šá id-ku-šú ipar-rud* (MUD-ud) *ittenebbe* (ZĪ.ZI-bé) (45) // *enūma* (UD) *id-de-ku-šú re-[hū]* *qāt lili* (ŠU LĪL.LĀ.EN.NA) *SAR r[u]* *ana sinniṣti* (SAL) *lilū* (LĪL.LĀ.EN.NA) *ittenebbe* (ZĪ.ZI-bé)

"If it seizes him in his sleep and he watches his seizer, it [=unconsciousness] is pouring over him and he forgets himself, as soon as they wake him up, he is apprehensive: it will always go away; variant: at the time they have woken him up he is 'poured over': Hand of incubus ... For a woman: incubus; it will always go away".

Lines 46–47 (!) in *STT* 2 287 (ms. B). The "It will always go away" at the end of line 44 looks out of place here; possibly taken from the end. For the end, cf. rev. 24, end.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Post-ictal fear and confusion in the case of a child patient.

**46** (49) *DİŠ ina qiddat ūmi* (UD.GAM.MA) *šibissu* (DIB-su) *iṣṣanabbassu* (DIB.DIB-s[u]) *enūma* ([U]D) *iṣbatušu* (DIB-šú) *ummu* (NE) *la* (NU) *ma-dam-ma u zu'tu* (IR.M[EŠ]) *putašu* (SAG.KI-šú) *inīšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *i-se-'a u libbašu* (ŠĀ-šú) *ikkalšu* (KÚ-šú) *qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD)

"If in the late afternoon his seizure seizes him time and again, at the time it has seized him, a fever — not much — (?) and sweat press on (?) his forehead (and) his eyes, and his innards hurt him: Hand of a Spirit".

**47–48** (50–51) *DİŠ la-am šabātišu* (DIB-šú) *ru qiš kīma* ([GIM]) [x x x x x] *KI it-[tap]-la-as kīma* (GIM) *it-tap-la-su da-da-nu-šú* (48) *ikkalūšu* (KÚ.MEŠ-šú) *ba-mat-s[u ...]* *x miqti* ([ŠUB-ti]) *imtanaqqussu* (ŠUB.ŠUB-su) *qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *šag-ga-ši imāt* (GAM)

"If, before it seizes him, he watches ..., as he watches, his neck muscles hurt him, his chest [...]: a fall has fallen upon him, time and again; the Hand of the spirit of a murderer: he will die".

In *ruqiš* the sign is KĪŠ rather than UG. Perhaps *šup- <šú>-qiš* "with great difficulty". We see the *ba-mat-s[u]* in *STT* 1 91:50 (ms. B).

A **ruling** follows and we are almost at the bottom of both manuscripts. Unfortunately, much is broken away at this juncture.

**49–51** (52–54?) *DİŠ la-ma šabātišu* ([DIB]-š[ú]) *IGI.M[E]š(?)...* *iṣṣanahḫiṭū* (GU<sub>4</sub>.UD.MEŠ) [x x x x x] *u ne-ḥu qātātušu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpāšu* (GĪR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *am-šá mi-na-tu-šú i-ta-ma-a* (50) *x[...]* *ŠU* (KĪ.SIKIL) *LĪL.LĀ.EN.NA* *la-'a-bi šum-ma enūma* (UD) *iṣbatušu* (DIB-šú) [x x x] (51) [...]

"If, before it seizes him, his face(?)[...] jump, [h]is ... are quiet, his hands and feet are bended, his limbs make circular movements [...: it is ...] fever. If, at the time it has seized him, [...]: that disease [...]"

See the notes to rev.12.

After a **ruling**, only a few top traces of line 52 are visible in manuscript A (obverse, bottom). We do not see any ruling in B (reverse, top) and are not sure which line

<sup>34</sup> *TDP* 234:25.

duplicates line 52 of A; perhaps B 55. B 55 (?) – 57 bridges the gap between A 52 and A rev. 1 (=B 58). We give what is visible of these lines in B. Many readings are not certain.

B 55. [... SAG.K]I.MEŠ-šú [i]-[tar]-ru-ra x x x x DA ina ta-ra-ni x[...]

B 56. [...] šá TUKU-ma i-ra-'u-ub EN x x šú [x] x ha ru DIB-su ina [...]

B 57. [...] šú KÚ.MEŠ-šú-ma la [i-šal-lal]ŠU G[UD ...]

The reverse of manuscript A opens with a new entry.

rev. 1–3 (58–59) [DIŠ enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) kīma (GIM) áš-bu-ma inšu (IGI-šú) i-šap (B: ša)-par šapassu (NUNDUN-su) ip-paṭ-ṭar ru' tašu (UH-šú) ina pišu (KA-šú) illak (GI[N]-ak) (2) qāssu (ŠU-su) šēpšu (GIR-šú) ta-lam-ma-šú šá šumēli (CL) kīma (GIM) im-meri (UDU.NITA) ta-ab-ḥi i-nap-pa-aš AN.TA.ŠUB.B[A] (3) šum-ma enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) libbašu (ŠA-šú) e-er innassaḥ (ZI-aḥ) šum-ma enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) libbašu (ŠA-šú) la (NU) e-er la (NU) innassaḥ (ZI-aḥ)]

"If, at the time it has seized him, as he is sitting, his eye squints, his lip is 'loose,' his saliva flows in/from his mouth, his hand, his foot, his torso(?) of the left side kick like a slaughtered ram: a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a. If, at the time it has seized him, his heart is awake: it will be eradicated. If, at the time it has seized him, his heart is not awake: it will not be eradicated".

Squinting is a symptom of facial palsy (*mišitti pāni*), says a therapeutic text.<sup>35</sup> The text speaks of eye, lip, in the singular, so only one side is meant. Line 2 speaks of the hand, foot, and torso(?) of the left side. — This definition of a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a here has a precise parallel in *STT* 1 89:141–3 (Chapter V), with the extra information that it "has seized him"; that text continues with other symptoms which have a similarity with animal behaviour. That passage offers *DUG-āt (paṭrat)* instead of *ip-paṭ-ṭar*, said of the lip. "Kicking" is again a symptom of a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a in rev. 10–11. As to the alternatives, "awake – not awake", we found them also, with the same prognostications, in the chapter on "the neck" (etc.) in the diagnostic handbook.<sup>36</sup> "Conscious" and "unconscious" are meant. As we have remarked before, a.n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a is the only form of epilepsy that is "eradicated" (*nasāhu*).

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: Jacksonian epilepsy, although the spread or "march" is not also remarked.

A ruling follows in manuscript A.

rev. 4–6 (60–61) DIŠ enūma (UD) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) lib-bi lib-bi iṣtanassi (GÜ.GÜ-si) inšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) ipette (BE-te) u ikattam (DUL-am) umma (NE) li-'ba i-šu (5) reš appišu (SAG KIR<sub>4</sub>-šú) u-lap-pat ap-pat ubānāt (ŠU.SI.MEŠ) qātātīšu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) u šēpišu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) kašā (ŠED<sub>7</sub>-a) (6) marša (GIG) šu(B: šú)-a-tu tu-šad-bab-šú-ma la ip-pal qāt lili (ŠU LÍ.LÁ.EN.NA)

"If, at the time it has seized him, he shouts time and again 'My belly, my belly!', he opens and closes his eyes, he has the *li'bu*-fever, he scratches the tip of his nose, the tips of his fingers and toes being cold; if you make that patient 'talk' and he does not respond: Hand of incubus".

<sup>35</sup> *SptTU* I 46:16, with comm. in no. 47:7–9.

<sup>36</sup> *TDP* 80:3, *libbašu ēr* — *ramānšu la idē* (p. 8).



The fever *li'bu* is a severe one (*ummu dannu*).<sup>37</sup> The conjurer tries to make the patient pronounce incantations. Before, in line 21, he did the same with a patient having cold finger- and toetips and he succeeded; the diagnosis was: Hand of incubus of fever (?).

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds on 4–9: Temporal lobe epilepsy; the aura of the belly-pain is not difficult to define; it is likely to be the “epigastric rising sensation”.

A **ruling** follows in manuscript A.

rev. 7–9 (62–64) *DIŠ enūma* (UD) *iṣbatušu* (DIB-šú) *lib-bi lib-bi iṣtanassi* (GÜ.GÜ-si) *inīšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ipette* (BE-te) *u ikattam* (DUL-am) *umma* (NE) *li'-ba i-šu* (8) *rēš appišu* (SAG KIR<sub>4</sub>-šú) *ú-lap-pat ap-pat ubānāt* (ŠU.SI.MEŠ) *qātātišu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpišu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ka-ša-a* (B: ŠED<sub>7</sub>.MEŠ) (9) *muṣu* (GIG; B: GI[G]-šú?) *iṣbatušu* (DIB-šú) *ina-ṭal ittišu* (KI-šú) *idabbub* (KA.KA-ub) *u ramānšu* (NÍ-šú) *ut-ta-na-kar qāt lili* (ŠU LÍL.LÁ.EN.NA) *la'-ba* (B: -bi)

“If, at the time it has seized him, he shouts time and again ‘My belly, my belly!’, he opens and closes his eyes, he has the *li'bu*-fever, he scratches the tip of his nose, the tips of his fingers and toes being cold, he sees the illness that has seized him, he talks with him and ‘changes’ himself time and again: Hand of incubus of fever (?)”.

“He sees the illness that has seized him”: see the note on obverse, line 10. The syntactical construction seems to be *muṣu iṣbatušu*, or else we have to insert <šá>. Then one would translate “the patient sees who (again šá added) has seized him”, but the addition “patient” in this interpretation sounds unusual and redundant. The -šú after the very compact (?) GI[G] in ms. B cannot be explained; is it the last part of GIG? — “He changes himself”, also in line 15, seems to imply that he is not himself, acting strangely. The same diagnosis in line 22.

A **ruling** follows in manuscript A.

rev. 10–11 (65–66) *DIŠ enūma* (UD) *šittu* (U<sub>6</sub>.DI, for Ū.DI) *i-re-eh-ḫu-šu* (B: -šú) *ubānāt* (U.MEŠ) *qātātišu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpišu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *i-nap-pa-ša* (B: *i-na-[pa-ša]-ni*) (11) *AN.TA.ŠUB.BA ina ni-du-ti KI.MIN ina túb-qí iṣbassu* (DIB-su)

“If, at the time sleep is pouring over him, his fingers and toes ‘kick’: a n.t a.š u b.b a has seized him in an uncultivated plot or (?) in a corner”.

For sleep (Sumerian *ù.s á*), see also Tablet XXVII:20–23. That passage discusses the possibility that “(something) like a sleep seizes him time and again”; diagnosis: Hand of the Evil Alú. — Kicking as symptom of a n.t a.š u b.b a: rev. 2, with dupl. *STT* 1 89:143. KI.MIN, “ditto”, cannot be translated here otherwise that “or”; error for *u lu*? This entry on “sleep” looks out of place and its diagnosis is unique in differentiating the place of the attack. In any case, a n.t a.š u b.b a is viewed here as a demon, looking for victims in deserted places. Cf. “*bennu* has seized that man; it has seized that man either in the gate, or in the cattle compound, or in the river”.<sup>38</sup>

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds on 10–13: Prodromal symptoms and auras.

<sup>37</sup> As *BAM* 2 147:1, compared with 5 (cf.12) proves. Not in in *CAD* or *AHW*.

<sup>38</sup> *STT* 1 89:194–5; in Chapter V.

In both manuscripts a **ruling** follows and the movements of the limbs (*miniātu*) will be the next topic.

**rev. 12.** (67) DIŠ *minātušu* (UB.NÍGIN.NA-šú) *i-tar-ru-ra i-ṭa-ma-a u pānūšu* (IGI.MEŠ-šú) *iššanundu* (NIGIN.MEŠ-du) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *ina ma-šal u<sub>4</sub>-mi kabissu* (DUGUD-su)

"If his limbs tremble (and) make circular movements, and his head spins: a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a; in the middle of the day it will be heavy for him".

The "limbs" do not include arms and legs; see note on line 16. "To make circular movements" is a reading (*ṭamū*, not *damū*) and meaning established by B. Landsberger.<sup>39</sup> A.n.t.a.š.u.b.a in the middle of the day: see the notes on lines 7 and 23. In the chapter on "the face" of the diagnostic handbook we find an entry with exactly the same symptoms, but there "his head spins" is the first symptom — and the most important, we presume. The diagnosis is there "Hand of Lugalgirra and Meslamtaea, variant: Lugalbanda".<sup>40</sup> In the preceding entries we see Hand of a Spirit as diagnosis.

**rev. 13** (68) DIŠ *minātušu* (UB.NÍGIN.NA-šú) *i-šam-ma-ma-šú ú-zaq-qa-ta-šú u pānūšu* (IGI.ME (B: ME[š])-šú) *iššanundu* (NIGIN.ME (B: [M]EŠ)-du) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *ina ma-šal u<sub>4</sub>-mi kabissu* (DUGUD-su)

"If his limbs are paralysed (and) give him sharp pains, and his head spins: a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a; in the middle of the day it will be heavy for him".

**rev. 14–15** (69–70) DIŠ *minātušu* (UB.NÍGIN.NA-šú) *kīma* (GIM) *šá bal-ṭi ne-ḥa inīšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *iptenetteṣma* (BAD.MEŠ-ma) (half erased UD) *šābissu* (DIB-su) *ina-ṭal* (15) *ittišu* (KI-šú) *idabbub* (KA.KA-ub) *u ramānšu* (NÍ-šú) *ut-ta-na-kar qāt lili* (ŠU LÍL.LÁ.EN.NA) *mār* (DUMU) *šip-ri šá ilišu* (DINGIR-šú)

"If his limbs are quiet like those of a healthy man, he opens his eyes time and again and sees his seizer, he talks with him and (then) 'changes' himself: Hand of incubus; the messenger of his god".

"Like a healthy man": cf. R. Labat, *Syria* 33 (1956) 124, line 15 (*ki-ma TIL.A*).

"He changes himself": see note on rev. 9.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds on 14–17: The after-effects of a generalized fit.

**rev. 16** (71) DIŠ *minātušu* (UB.NÍGIN.NA-šú) *kīma* (GIM) *šá bal-ṭi ne-ḥa* (B adds -šú) *pišu* (KA-šú) *šabitma* (DIB-ma) *la* (NU) *idabbub* (KA.KA-ub) *qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *šag-ga-ši // qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *qa-li-i*

"If his limbs are quiet like those of a healthy man, his mouth being seized he does not talk: Hand of the spirit of a murderer; variant: Hand of the spirit of someone burned (to death in a fire)".

Lines 16–17 were translated by Köcher in *Fs. Goerke* 29. — A comparison of this and the next diagnosis with the preceding one is interesting: not speaking (16) and silence (17) are indicative for Hand of a Spirit. In contrast, seeing one's "seizer" and speaking with him point to incubus (14–15). We can perhaps expand the latter picture by paying attention to more symptoms of incubus and succubus. Often the patient's behaviour shows that in his "sleep" his mind is extremely active: he laughs (11), he speaks (21–22, 35, rev. 9, 23; *TDP* 160:40), he opens his mouth from time to time (41–42), he is apprehensive (44–45, rev. 23–25). Even when he does not respond to the conjurer, he shouts "my belly!", blinks with his eyes and scratches his nose (rev. 4–6).

<sup>39</sup> *WdO* 3 (1964) 51 note 27. On our passage: "die Glieder des Epileptikers wenden sich in Schüttelkrämpfen mit drehenden Bewegungen".

<sup>40</sup> *TDP* 76:64–5.



Any outsider sees that something very exciting is going on. Even though there are less speaking symptoms of incubus and succubus like red and yellow/green eyes (2, 36, 42), yellow/green hands and feet (37) or flowing saliva (15), these may be preliminary symptoms.<sup>41</sup>

Diagnosis: Enkidu informed Gilgamesh that the spirits of those burned in a fire are not in the Netherworld.<sup>42</sup>

rev. 17 (72) DIŠ *minātušu* (UB.NÍGIN.NA-šú) *kīma* (GIM) *šá bal-ti ne-ḥa-ma i-qá-al* (B: *i-qal*) *u mim-ma la i-lem qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *šag-ga-ši šá-niš qāt eṭemmi* (Š[U] G[U]D)[*qa-l*]-[*i*]-[*i*] (B: //*qa-li*-[*i*])

"If his limbs are quiet like those of a healthy man and he is silent but does not taste anything: Hand of the spirit of a murderer; variant: Hand of the spirit of someone burned (to death in a fire)".

Instead of "variant", two small slanting wedges (/), manuscript A offers *šaniš*, "otherwise". In both of the last entries the marked silence of the patient seems to be indicative for the Hand of these spirits.

A ruling follows in manuscript A. Ms. B incorporates the following, isolated, entry into this group.

rev. 18 (73) DIŠ *u<sub>8</sub>-a a-i ištānassi* (GÜ.GÜ-si) *i-leb-bu ru'tušu* (U<sub>8</sub>-šú; B: U<sub>8</sub>) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *illak* (GIN-ak) (B adds *u*) *kišassu* (GÜ-su) *ana šumēli* (CL) *zi-ir* AN.TA.ŠUB.B[A]

"If he shouts 'Woe! Ah!' time and again, he makes noises, his saliva flows in/from his mouth, his neck is twisted to the left: a n.t a.š u b. b a".

"Woe!" (*ū'a, ūja, ū'i*, here followed by *ai*) are normal outbursts of sorrow in Babylonian literature.<sup>43</sup> Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds see in this "woe" the epileptic cry. The left side was also associated with a n.t a.š u b. b a in rev. 1. Elsewhere, however, turning (*šahāru*) the neck to the right side is one of its symptoms and turning to the left side is that of "a n.t a.š u b. b a, Hand of Šin".<sup>44</sup>

In both manuscripts a ruling follows and three entries are the next section. They speak of dressing and undressing and give clear predictions for life or death. The ends of the lines are only preserved in ms. B.

rev. 19–20 (74–75) DIŠ *i-te-ner-ru-ub šubassu* (TUG-su) *ittanaddi* (SUB.SUB-di) *iš-ta-na-su ma-gal ida[bbub]* (K[A.KA-ub])(20) *akala* (NINDA) *u šikara* (KAŠ) *la* (NU) *itārma* (GUR-ma) *ikkal* (KÚ) *u la i-šal-lal qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup> XV) [*iballu*] ([T1]) (B: ŠU [d[(x)]x] GAR [T1](?))

"If he, time and again, gets into (and) throws away his garment, he ... time and again, [talks (?)] much, he does not eat bread or beer any more and he does not sleep: Hand of the Goddess; he will live".

Getting in and out of one's clothes is clearly an "automatism" going with an epileptic attack. Elsewhere it is diagnosed as "Hand of the Twin Gods; he will die".<sup>45</sup> Those twin

<sup>41</sup> More refs. are obv. 26, TDP 34:21 with comm. SpbTU I 30:6; 80:13.—A man who sees something like the ... of a male god, was seized by incubus; if he sees it of a female deity, by succubus; CT 38 28:26f.

<sup>42</sup> Sum. Gilg. XII 302; see J. Bauer, *Studies A.W. Sjöberg* (1989) 23–4.

<sup>43</sup> AHW 1398a and 23b. Combined in BWL (1960) 52:13. Both taken together, in the singular, in YOS 10 54 rev. 28, *ū-i-a ū-a-i-a rakis[sum]*.

<sup>44</sup> TDP 80:1,4–6 (p. 8). For "twisting" (*zāru*), see line 11.

<sup>45</sup> TDP 182:46 (reverse order).

gods must be Lugalgirra and Meslamtaea. — The verbal form *iš-ta-na-su* cannot be derived from *šasû* “to shout”. Can one read *iš-ta-na-kuš*, from *šakāšu*? “To be wild (?), brutal (?)” (CAD).

rev. 21 (76) DIŠ KL.MIN *īnīšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ú-zaq-qap māhissu* (PA-su) *ina rēšīšu* (SAG-šú) *izzaz* (GUB-az) *imât* (GAM)

“If, ditto, he makes his eyes protrude: his hitter will stand at his head; he will die”.

An evil demon stands at the head of the patient, cf. rev. 28. This expression normally has a positive connotation: to stand ready to assist a person, to attend to him.<sup>46</sup> But it also is said of demons.<sup>47</sup> One is reminded of the ambiguous *mukil rēši*, a substantive having a similar meaning. “His hitter” as translation of PA-su (PA = SĠG = *mahāšu*) is a possibility but is rather unique.<sup>48</sup> A lexical text offers the equation <sup>d</sup>SĠG.GA = <sup>d</sup>Šu-lak.<sup>49</sup> If we may translate the first, Sumerian, name as “The Hitter”, we could identify our “hitter” as the demon of the bathroom, Šulak, feared as a cause of stroke; see below, Tablet XXVII:11–13.

rev. 22 (77) DIŠ *i-ta-nar-ra-ar īnīšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ú-zaq-qap māhissu* (PA-su) *ina rēšīšu* (SAG-šú) *izzazma* (GUB-ma) *imât* (GAM)

“If he is trembling all the time, he makes his eyes protrude: his hitter will stand at his head and he will die”.

Cf. the remarks on the preceding line.

A ruling follows in both manuscripts. The next section deals with patients who are apprehensive (*parādu*).

rev. 23–24 (78) DIŠ *pa-rid-ma it-te-né-et-bi ma-gal idabbub* (KA.KA-ub) *u i[g]-[d]a-[na]-al-lu-[ut]* (24) *ana sinništi* (SAL) *lilû* (LĪLL[Á].EN.NA) *ana zikari* (UŠ) *lilitu* (SAL.LĪLL.LÁ.EN.NA) *ittenebbe* (ZI.ZI-bé)

“If he, being apprehensive, keeps getting up time and again (?), talks much and quivers time and again: for a woman: incubus; for a man: succubus. It will always go away”.

“Getting up and kneeling/sitting down” are accompanying *parādu* in TDP 158:23 f. which suggests “restlessness” as a mark of this kind of apprehension. “It will always go away”: in lines 44–45 we found the same phrase. “To go away” (*tebû*) is a known expression for diseases leaving the patient.<sup>50</sup> For the patient himself “getting up” (again *tebû*) the non-medical omen texts have the standard formula *maršu šû arhiš itebbe*. We do not exclude this possibility here. Kinnier Wilson assigns to the iterative form a distributive meaning: not “always”, but “in either case”, and translates “In either case he/she will recover”.

Kinnier Wilson and Reynolds: The texts seem to be probably describing a case of inter-ictal confusion, with agitation and restlessness.

rev. 25 (79–80) DIŠ *ina* (B: *ana*) *muršīšu* (GIG-šú) *iptanarrud* (M[UD].MUD-ud) *u rapšātušu* (GIŠ.KUN.ME-šú) *našâ* (ĪL.MEŠ) *û ardat lilī* (KĪ.SIKIL.LĪLL.LÁ.EN.NA) *ina* [x (x)]x

<sup>46</sup> AHw 973–4.

<sup>47</sup> W.G. Lambert, *Afo* 17(1954–56) 314 D:14; below, rev. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. CT 38 46:62.

<sup>49</sup> MSL 12 (1969) 109 Lu I, Excerpt II:176.

<sup>50</sup> TDP 154:14 (*ina muši imqussu*... ŠU<sup>d</sup> XV ZI-bi); YOS 10 41 rev. 54 (*benniša imqudu* [cf. 53] *i-te-bi*); note the Š of *tebû* in BAM 5 480 II 64 (with Köcher, p. XXIV), 6 543 IV 52, cf. 54.



TAG *ma be-en-nu* (in small script, between the lines, the gloss: *ina eršišu* (KI.NÁ-šú) *iptanallut* (LUH.LUH))

"If he is constantly apprehensive in (variant: "because of") his disease and his loins are raised, also, the *ardat lili* succubus in[...]... and *bennu* epilepsy".

Manuscript A adds a gloss below MUD.MUD-*ud* GIŠ.KUN, in smaller script: "in his bed he is constantly quivering". The same gloss, again in smaller script, appears in ms. B on a separate line (80), in about the same position. It has a nice parallel in the following description of a symptom of sorcery: "In his bed he is constantly quivering — otherwise (*šaniš*): He is constantly apprehensive".<sup>51</sup> The gloss intends to explain the "he is constantly apprehensive". It is hard (for us) to differentiate between *parādu* "to be apprehensive" and *galātu* "to quiver" — thus our provisional translations of both words. Note *iptanallut* *ù* *iptanarrud* in STT 1 89:193–4 (p. 97).

As to the second half of the line, several restorations are possible. One is that the patient "sees" a succubus, and is "touched", reading *ina-[ta]l lapitma* (TAG-*ma*). A man can also be "touched" by the bird *muttillu*, see rev. 28. One also can think of a verbal form ending in *-šum-ma*, "... for him and", or even *šum-ma* "if"; "either". In any case, the end "and/either *bennu*" is abrupt. "Quivering in bed" (the gloss) is a well known symptom of *bennu* or closely related to it. — The use of the sign *ù* instead of normal *u* surprises.

rev. 26 (81) DIŠ *iptanarrud* (MUD.MUD-*ud*)(erasure?) *qāt Uraš* [...] (ŠU <sup>d</sup>Ur[*aš*...]) (B: [Š]U <sup>d</sup>UR BI LI TI)

"If he is constantly apprehensive: Hand of Uraš ...; he will live (?)".

The copy of B is clear; is Ištar of Arbela (*Urbilītu*) meant?

A ruling follows in both manuscripts and the last section of Tablet XXVI will discuss "wailing voices" (*ikkillu*) heard by the patient. As to its sound: this wailing voice is also typical of babies.<sup>52</sup> It can be heard at graves.<sup>53</sup>

rev. 27–28 (82–83) DIŠ *ik-ki-lu išanassišu* (GÜ.GÜ-šú) *u šu-ú i-ta-<sup>3</sup>nap-pal-šú enūma* (UD) *išanassišu* (GÜ.GÜ-šú; B: -šú) *at-tú man-nu iqabbi* (DUG<sub>4</sub>.GA) (28) *mu-ut-til(!)-lu MUŠEN lapitma* (TAG-*ma*) *ittišu* (KI-šú) *rakis* (KEŠDA) *ina rēšišu* (SAG-šú) *izzaz* (GUB-az) *imāt* (GAM)

"If a wailing voice cries out at him and he responds to it every time (and), at the time it cries out to him, he says 'Who are you?': he is touched by and tied to a *muttillu* bird; it will stand at his head; he will die".

Responding to a wailing voice is also one of the many symptoms of the epilepsy "Spawn of Šulpaea".<sup>54</sup> We learn more about these voices from the handbook of omens *Šumma Alu*. The crying<sup>55</sup> of a wailing voice (*ikkillu*) follows "seeing a *muttillu*" in a city or field.<sup>56</sup> As to the bird-like demon *muttillu*, written KIN.GALUD.DA, we read:

- If a *muttillu* cries out (GÜ.GÜ-*si*) in the middle of a city: the hand of the enemy will conquer ("reach") that city;

<sup>51</sup> STT 2 256:4.

<sup>52</sup> K. Watanabe, *Assur* 3/4 (July 1983) 28–30.

<sup>53</sup> KAR 300 rev. 11, *arki mītim ana bīt kimahhi išanassi rigimšu ik-ki-li (!)*.

<sup>54</sup> STT 1 89:181; Chapter V.

<sup>55</sup> KA.KA = *šasū*, as the complement -*si* in CT 38 5:138; 39 33:60–1, shows.

<sup>56</sup> CT 38 5:136–140.

- If a *muttillu* cries out at him and he responds every time, (but) its (hiding) place is not seen: that man will acquire goods and say “Where shall I store them?”<sup>57</sup>

The determinative following this word (relatively clear in manuscript B) shows that the demon is a “bird”. In this respect it can be compared with the demon Luḫušū,<sup>58</sup> attested in about the same context.<sup>59</sup> It normally is “seen” in the city or in the (cultivated) fields, as the preceding lines show.

A person can be “touched by and tied to” a demon or any evil.<sup>60</sup> For the demon’s “standing at the head”, see the remark on rev. 21 f. and note “The Lurker is tied to him (and) stands at his head”, TDP 242:16.<sup>61</sup>

**rev. 29** (84) DIŠ ik-kil-lu iṣtanassišu (GÜ.GÜ-šú) u šu-ú i-ta-nap-pal-šú itebbe (Z1-bé) u ikammis (DU<sub>10</sub>.GAM-is) rābiš (MAŠKIM) ḫur-ba-ti iṣbassu (DIB-su)

“If a wailing voice cries out at him and he responds to it every time, he stands up and he kneels down: the Lurker of the waste lands has seized him”.

The “Lurker of the waste lands” reminds us of the diagnosis in a medical text against seizure by a spirit while a fit, *ḫajjattu*, is near (*qerbet*): “a strange (*aḫū*) spirit has seized him in the waste lands”.<sup>62</sup> In a broken passage we read of “a roa[ming] spirit of the waste lands”.<sup>63</sup> Note that the “bird” of the preceding entry had its place in cities and fields; this Lurker, in contrast, roams in inhabited places.

**rev. 30–31** (85–86) DIŠ ik-kil-lu iṣtanassišu (GÜ.GÜ-šú) enūma (UD) iṣtanassušu (GÜ.GÜ-šú; A: KA-šú) šu-ú i-ta-nap-pal-šú it-ta-na-as-pak itebbema (Z1-m)a i-kāš-šú-uš (31) itebbe (Z1-bé) u ikammis (DU<sub>10</sub>.GAM) murussu (GIG-su) uš-te-zeb rābišu (MAŠKIM) mur-tap-pi-du iṣbassu (DIB-su)

“If a wailing voice cries out at him, at the time it cries out to him, he responds to it every time, he . . . every time; he stands up and . . ., he stands up and kneels down: his illness will be saved; a roaming Lurker has seized him”.

The meaning of the verb *sapāku* is unknown; see the dictionaries and the commentaries on the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon, line 589 (most recently, by K. Watanabe). Both manuscripts offer the same form and nothing calls for an emendation. Of the second problematical verb, *kašāšu* (B or II), we can only say that it describes a typical activity after waking up (*tebū*, a verb literally translated as “stand up”).<sup>64</sup> “His illness will be saved” sounds strange; it is the patient that is saved according to other passages.<sup>65</sup> To our feeling, “his illness will leave him (*izzibšu*)” would be better.<sup>66</sup> A “roaming spirit” is well known in the magical texts; he seizes his victims in the plains (*šēru*).<sup>67</sup> We will meet with him again in line 36 of Tablet XXVII. A “roaming Lurker”

<sup>57</sup> CT 39 33:60–61, dupl. CT 40 47:13–15.

<sup>58</sup> E. Leichty, *Šumma Izbu* (1970) 56, on Izbu III:27.

<sup>59</sup> CT 38 5:125–6, cf. 25:16.

<sup>60</sup> “Tied to”: AHw 946a, *rakāsu* G 7, with only a few refs. Cf. TDP 158:12, the Lurker; 166:92, *majjātānu*. In a positive way: MAŠKIM SILIM itti amēli rakis, CT 39 2:98 (contrast 99).

<sup>61</sup> Manuscripts: Labat, Pl. XXIII K. 2274:11, LKU 93:16.

<sup>62</sup> BAM 4 323:67, dupl. 471 II 28, cf. TDP 168:4.

<sup>63</sup> AMT 85,2:5. Note “The demon (?) of the ruins ([i(x)] x ša ḫa-re-be-em) will seize his mouth and his hindquarters”, in an inscription of Erišum, A.K. Grayson, *RIMA* 1 (1987) 40, Erišum I no. 1:40f.

<sup>64</sup> W. von Soden, *OLZ* 70 (1975) 461: “als krankhafter Vorgang nach dem Aufstehen”.

<sup>65</sup> Obv. 3, 6; cf. TDP 84:28.

<sup>66</sup> CT 38 39:21, GIG.BI GIG-su TAG<sub>4</sub>-šú.

<sup>67</sup> CAD M/2 227 f.; add LKA 88:8 and note the commentary *SpbTU* I 49:38 f., “a spirit moving about (*šēgū*), one whose spirit has not been taken care of”.



is new to us. We observe that a thin line divides the Lurkers from the spirits of the dead. A wailing voice may be typical of the specific demons of this section; "shouting" (*šisītu*) was typical of spirits and ought to be "stopped".<sup>68</sup>

A **ruling** follows in both manuscripts. This was the last line of Tablet XXVI and below the ruling we read as the catch-line the first line of Tablet XXVII. The colophon follows; one reads in ms. A and B that tablet XXIV counted [59] entries. The number XXVI was assigned to this tablet on the basis of the catalogue discussed at the beginning of this chapter; the number "XXIV" in this colophon reflects another tradition. Here is the catch-line of A and B and the colophon of A:

rev. 32 DIŠ mi-šit-ti pa-ni ma-šid ta-lam-ma-šú i-šam-ma-am-šú KIN mi-šit-ti GIG (B omits GIG)

(blank space)

rev. 33 [...]tu ŠUB-su-ma DUB.2[4].[KAM E-nu]-ma ana É GIG KA.PIRIG GIN-ku SA.GIG [5]9 AM MU.DIDLI

(blank space)

rev. 34 [...] x (x) ana DIN ZI.MEŠ-šú

For the colophon of B, see H. Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone* (1968) 114 no. 368 (read [5]9 AM).

#### TABLETS XXVII-XXVIII

Manuscripts: A. AO 6680, *TDP* II Plates XLVIII f. (lines 1–49, 53–85); B. A. 3441, *TDP* II Plates L f. (lines 22–80); C. W. 22743/1, *SpbTU* III 303 no. 89 (lines 16–62. The ancient scribe was confronted with many "breaks" in his original).

All three manuscripts are Late Babylonian and share a number of particular readings and even errors (see the notes on lines 34, 42, 53, 58, 73, 75). They probably all originate from Seleucid Uruk but go back to much older originals.<sup>69</sup> — Lines 1, 5–13 are paralleled by *AMT* 77,1:1–10, an Assyrian therapeutic text from Nineveh.<sup>70</sup>

Transliteration, translation: R. Labat, *TDP* I (1951) 188–199 (lines 1–85); E. von Weiher, *SpbTU* III (1988) 137–141, no. 89 (lines 16–62).

#### TABLET XXVII

The tablet opens with a section on forms of stroke (*mišittu*), ascribed to a variety of supernatural agents (lines 1–13).

1 (*TDP* p. 188) [DIŠ amēlu (NA) mi-šit-ti pa-ni m]a-šid-ma ta-lam-m[a]-šú i-šam-ma-am-šú šipir ([K]IN) mi-šit-ti

"If a man has been struck by a stroke of the face and his torso (?) is paralysed: the 'work' of a stroke".

<sup>68</sup> Cf. I.L. Finkel, *Afo* 29–30 (1983–84) 11:10, etc.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. J. Oelsner, *Materialien zur babylonischen Gesellschaft und Kultur in hellenistischer Zeit* (1986) 175 f., with 430, note 657.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. M. Stol, *JEOL* 32 (1991–92).

The broken beginning of this line can be restored with the title entry in the Nimrud catalogue and the catch-lines of the preceding text.<sup>71</sup> The catch-line and a parallel text<sup>72</sup> show that there followed no prognostication (like "he will die" or "he will recover"). The word *talammu* is usually rendered as "torso (?)"; cf. the note on Tablet XXVI:23. Facial palsy (*mišitti pāni*) affects this patient; some concomitant symptoms are described in the therapeutic text *AMT* 76, 5:11, dupl. *SpbTU* I no. 46:16 f.: "If a man has facial palsy (*mišitti pāni išu*), he squints his eye, he stays awake (?) day and night without lying down". *SpbTU* I 47:7 ff. comments on the magical treatment of this facial palsy. The word *mišittu* may be translated here correctly as "stroke"; other texts show that the Babylonians also knew of *mišittu* of the cheek, neck, hips, trunk, arms or feet.<sup>73</sup> "Work" of this "stroke" is a well known expression in the therapeutic texts: "effects" is perhaps a better translation.

2-3 *DIŠ m[i-šit-ti im]-šid-su-ma ib-ta-luṭ putušu* (SAG.KI-ŠU) *iššanabbassu* (DIB.DIB-su) *u iptanarrud* (MUD.MUD-[u]d) (3) *m[u-ki]l rēšišu* (SAG-ŠU) (!) *la* (NU) *pa-ṭir*

"If a stroke had struck him and he had recovered again, but his forehead seizes him all the time and he is apprehensive all the time: (it is) his providing spirit; it will not be released".

4 *DIŠ mi-šit-ti im-šid-su-ma putušu* (SAG.KI-ŠU) *iššanabbassu* (DIB.DIB-su) *mu-kil rēšišu* (SAG-ŠU) *ina-ṭal* // *mukil rēš lemuttu* (SAG.HUL.HA.ZA) *inaṭṭal* (IGI) *imāt* (GAM)

"If a stroke had struck him and his forehead seizes him all the time, he sees his providing spirit; variant: he sees the Provider-of-Evil; he will die".

The variant tradition offers "Provider-of-Evil" (*mukil rēš lemuttu*) as alternative for "providing spirit" (*mukil rēš*).

5-7 *DIŠ mi-šit-ti im-šid-su-ma lu imna* (XV) *lu šumēla* (CL) *maḥiṣ* (SĠG-iš) *uppi aḥiṣu* (MUD.Ā-ŠU) *la* (NU) *pa-ṭir* (6) *ubānātišu* (ŠU.SI.MEŠ-ŠU) *ittanarraṣ* (NIR.NIR-aš) *qāssu* (ŠU-su) *u-šaq-qā u itarraṣ* (NIR-aš) *šēpšu* (GĠR-ŠU) *i-kan-na-an u itarraṣ* (NIR-aš) (7) *akala* ([NIND]A (!)) *u šikara* (KAŠ) *la* (NU) *iprus* (TAR-us) *šibit eṭemmi šeri* (DIB GUD DIŠ (!) EDEN) III KAM *iballuṭ* (NI ŠI)

"If a stroke had struck him and he is being hit either on the right or on the left side, his upper arm not moving freely (?), he stretches his fingers all the time, he puts up (?) his hand and stretches it, he contorts and stretches his foot, he does not ... bread or beer: seizure by a Spirit of the Plains; three ... he will recover".

Paralleled by *AMT* 77, 1:2-4. "Upper arm" is *uppi aḥi* in Akkadian; see M. Stol in *Ugarit-Forschungen* 18 (1986) 109. The Spirit is a spirit of the dead roaming in the plains, cf. line 36. The NI ŠI at the end is a pseudo-ideogram for *iballuṭ*; it goes back to *i-ni-aš* attested in Old Babylonian medical texts; verb *ni'āšum*, later obsolete.<sup>74</sup>

8 *DIŠ k[a-b]it-ma lu qāssu* (ŠU-su) *lu šēpšu* (GĠR-ŠU) *ik-ta-na-an mi-šit-ti im-šid-su iballuṭ* (DIN)

"If he, being heavy, contorts either his hand or his foot: a stroke has struck him; he will recover".

Paralleled by *AMT* 77, 1:5. *CAD* K 15a explains "heavy" as "lethargic".

<sup>71</sup> *Studies A. Sachs* 147 A 33 and *STT* 1 91:87, Tablet XXVI rev. 32 (above).

<sup>72</sup> *AMT* 77, 1:1.

<sup>73</sup> *AMT* 79, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Also in *TDP* 26:76 and *AMT* 77, 1:4. The pseudo-ideogram is already attested in MB as NI-eš, *BAM* 4 395:4; 396 II 24, III 20, IV 25; in MA i-GIŠ, *BAM* 2 157 rev. 9, 11.



9 DIŠ imittašu (Z[A]G-šú) tab-kát mi-šit-ti rābiši (MAŠKIM) iballuṭ (DIN)  
 "If his right side is let down: stroke (inflicted by) a Lurker; he will recover".

Paralleled by AMT 77, 1:6.

10 [DIŠ] imitti ([ZA]G) pagrišu (LÚ.BAD-šú) ka-lu-šú-ma tab-kát mi-šit-ti rābiši  
 (MAŠKIM) arkatu (EGIR-tú) mahiṣ (SĠG-iṣ)

"If the right side of his body is in its entirety let down: stroke (inflicted by) a Lurker; he has been hit at the rear".

Paralleled by AMT 77, 1:7. Being hit at "the rear" (*arkatu*) seems to refer to the rectum; cf. CAD A/2 275b (voiding blood; add TDP 182:38); the parallel text speaks in the next section of being "touched" at the rear, again in connection with stroke (AMT 77, 1:11). Cf. the tumours of the Philistines who were "smitten in the hinder parts" according to Psalm 78:66, as explained in the light of 1 Samuel 5:6-9.

11 [DIŠ] šumēl ([GÜ]B-šú) tab-kát qāt (ŠU) <sup>d</sup>Šu-lak

"If his left side is let down: Hand of Šulak".

Paralleled by AMT 77, 1:8. The demon Šulak is actually the "Lurker" in the bathroom (lit. "washing-water", *rābiṣ musāti*); cf. the next lines 12-13. See CAD M/2 234b and note the commentary SpbTU I 47:1-5, with the warning "He should not enter the bathroom: Šulak will hit him!" The "Hitter" in Tablet XXVI rev. 21-22 could be Šulak. Exposed as he is in the bathroom, man can easily fall victim to demons. This was common knowledge among Jews, Arabs and Europeans before and in the Middle Ages.<sup>75</sup> The Babylonian Talmud says: "After coming back from the lavatory (*bet ha-kissē*), one should wait (some time) before sexual intercourse, as the demon of the lavatory accompanies him. If he does not wait, the offspring will be epileptic" (Gittin 70a).<sup>76</sup>

12-13 DIŠ šumēl ([GÜ]B) pagrišu (LÚ.BAD-šú) ka-lu-šú-ma tab-kát miḥra (GABA.RI) mahiṣ (SĠG-iṣ) qāt (ŠU) <sup>d</sup>Šu-lak (13) rābiṣ (MAŠKIM) mu-sa-a-ti āšipu (MAŠ.MAŠ) ana balātišu (DIN-šú) qība (ME.A) la (NU) išakkan (GAR-an)

"If the left side of his body is let down in its entirety: he has been hit at the front; Hand of Šulak, Lurker of the bathroom. A conjurer shall not make a prognosis for his recovery".

Paralleled by AMT 77, 1:9-10. The "rear" and "front"<sup>77</sup> of the body are exposed in the lavatory; see the note on line 11. The left side of the body gives less hope of recovery. Recommending not to make a prognosis (*qību*) is a bad sign, according to E. Ritter, *Studies B. Landsberger* (1965) 303, sub 4; but cf. M. Stol in a forthcoming article in JEOL 32 (1991-92). We find this advice again in a passage concerning a fit, STT 1 89:136; Chapter V.

A much earlier version of omens 10-13 is found in two joining fragments of a diagnostic text found in the Hittite capital, Hattuša:<sup>78</sup>

[...]x ta-ab-ga-at ŠU <sup>d</sup>Šu-la-[ak] // e-mi-it-ta-šu ta-ab-ga-at me-še-t[i]  
 [...]pa-ag-ri-šu ka-la-a-ma ta-ab-ga-at da-pa-pa la-a i-le-'e-e [

<sup>75</sup> H.P. Duerr, *Nacktheit und Scham* (= *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess*, 1) (1988) 217-219. This book is directed against Norbert Elias.

<sup>76</sup> As quoted by Kottke (see the Bibliography), 5.

<sup>77</sup> Refs. in CAD M/1 76a, below; add this ref. and TDP 40:5 f.

<sup>78</sup> KUB 34:6:2-5, joining KBo 36 50:7-10. Join by G. Wilhelm. See also R. Labat, *Syria* 33 (1956) 120 note 4.

# Tablet XXVII

[... ]e-'e-e šu<sup>d</sup> šu-la-ak x [(x)] x me-še-ti ma-ḫi-iš LÚ a-ši-pu a-n[a  
[qí-ba l]a-a i-ša-kán (rest erased)

After lines 12–13, a **ruling** follows on the tablet and with line 14 a new section begins. The paralleling therapeutic text also has a ruling here and goes other ways after this point. We observe that the diagnoses now all point to one cause, seizure by Evil (lines 14–19).

**14–15** (TDP p. 190) DIŠ amēlu (NA) si-mat pānišu (IGI.ME-šú) ittanakkir (KÚR.KÚR-ir) ināšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) it-ta-*nap-ra-ra* šaptišu ([NUNDUN]-šú) zu-qat-su (!) ú-lap-pat (15) damu (ÚŠ) ina pišu (KA-šú) illaka (GIN-ka) la (NU) par-su amēlu šú (NA.BI) lemnu ([HUL]) išbassu (DIB-su)

"If the features of a man's face are changing all the time, his eyes are wandering all the time, he touches his lip(s) (and) chin, blood flows from his mouth (or: "nose") without being stopped: Evil has seized that man".

Paralleled by *Iraq* 19 (1957) 40 ND 4368 I 10–12, where a therapy involving the plant *ankinutu* is added; see also S. Parpola, *LAS* Comm. (1983) 246 f., who prefers "nosebleed". Cuneiform writing does not distinguish between the Sumerograms for "mouth" (KA), "nose" (KIR<sub>4</sub>), "tooth" (ZÚ). "Without being stopped" (*la parsu*): the parallel text offers *la i-kal-lu-u*.

**16–17** [DIŠ] amēlu ([N]A) ina a-la-ki-šú ana pānišu (IGI-šú) imqutma (ŠUB-ma) ināšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) ip-pal-ka-ma tur-ra [la i]-da-a (17) qātātišu ([Š]U<sup>II</sup>-šú) šēpišu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) ra-man-šú la ú-na-aš amēlu šú (NA.BI) lemnu (HUL) išbassu (DIB-su) kīma (GIM (!)) AN.TA. ŠUB.BA uš-tar-ri-šú

"If a man, when walking, had fallen on his face and his eyes became wide open<sup>79</sup> and they [i.e., the eyes] do not know (how) to turn back (to normal), he does not move his hands, feet (or) himself: Evil has seized that man; (something) like a n.t a.š u b.b a has begun (to overcome) him".

Paralleled by *Iraq* 19 (1957) 40 ND 4368 I 3–5, offering some interesting variants: "If a man, when walking on the street, falls on his face (and), while his eyes are wide open, has no saliva (?), he does not move his hands, feet (or) himself: Evil has seized that man; (something) like a n.t a.š u b.b a is steadily pouring upon him". A lengthy prescription for "eradicating" the Evil follows. As we have seen in our discussion of passages in Tablet XXVI (line 19, etc.), "pouring down" is a well known expression for a commencing state of sleep or epilepsy. Our passage in Tablet XXVII uses the verb "to begin" (*šurrū*), a word that can be used for the onset of an illness.<sup>80</sup> A shortened version of our symptoms is found in AO 7760 III 7–8, "If something like a n.t a.š u b.b a is steadily pouring on a man he does not move himself [...]: Evil [has seized] that man".<sup>81</sup> Line 12 of that text, *ana lem-nu ana amēli la tēhē*, shows that *lemnu* is the reading of HUL.

Falling "on the face" is *buppānišu maqātu* in behavioural omina about a healthy man who simply falls by accident.<sup>82</sup> — "Something like": the author wants to say that

<sup>79</sup> CAD N/1 17 f. emends: *ib-bal-ka-<ta>-ma* "his eyes roll back". But the parallel ND offers *pal-ka*.

<sup>80</sup> E. Leichty, *Afo* 24 (1973) 84 rev. 13 (commentary on a diagnostic text about "fall"); G. Meier, *ZA* 45 (1939) 208 V 25; *STT* 1 89:43, 196.

<sup>81</sup> Published both by R. Labat, *Semítica* 3 (1950) 11, and J. Nougayrol, *RA* 73 (1979) 65.

<sup>82</sup> CT 37 46:2, 5. Follow: backwards (*purqidam*); to his right; to his left.



the symptoms are very much like those observed at the beginning of an epileptic fit, a n.t a.š u b.b a.<sup>83</sup> He will speak of real a n.t a.š u b.b a in the next entry.

18 [DIŠ] *amēlu* ([N]A) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *ir-te-ne-eḫ-ḫi-šú qātātišu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *u šēpišu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ramānšu* (NÍ-šú) *la ú-na-aš amēlu šú* (NA.BI) *lemnu* (HUL) *išbassu* (DIB-su)

"If a n.t a.š u b.b a is steadily pouring upon a man, he does not move his hands, his feet (or) himself: Evil has seized that man".

19 [DIŠ *amēlu* (NA)] *imrašma* (?) (A: [GI]G(?)*-ma*; C: [... m](?)*a-ma*) *inaṭṭalma* (IGI-*ma*) *šubassu* (TÚG-su) *it-ta-na-as-su-uk ú-rap-pad inišu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ú-ma-ḫa-aš amēlu šú* (NA.BI) *lemnu* (HUL) *išbassu* (DIB-su)

"[If a man is ill] (?) and he sees and he throws off his garment time and again, he runs around (?), he severely hits his eyes: Evil has seized that man".

The restoration at the beginning and the translation are not certain. A restoration [DIŠ NA *re*]-*ḫi-ma* "if (a n.t a.š u b.b a) is pouring down upon a man" looks attractive, but in the duplicate, *SpbTU* III no. 89:6 (ms. C), *re-ḫi-ma* is excluded. Perhaps it is to be read [DIŠ NA GI]G-*ma* in the main text and [DIŠ NA *ma-ri-i*]-*ḫi-ma* in the duplicate, meaning "If a man is ill and ...". "Seeing" seems to imply that the man is conscious, or does he see a supernatural being (cf. 4) ? "Throwing off the garment", however, is clear and looks like an automatism in fits.

A ruling now follows on the tablet. The next section names "Evil *Alû*" as the cause (lines 20–23).

20 [DIŠ NA ...] *x ḫa šu šu iš-du-ud-ma ēm* (NE-em) *u ramānšu* (NÍ-šú) *la* (NU) *idē* (ZU) *ina šipti* (ÉN) *inīšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *iz-qup qāt alī lemni* (ŠU A.LÁ HUL)

"If a man draws out his ... and is hot and (also) does not know himself (= is unconscious) (and) raises (?) his eyes at an incantation: Hand of the evil *Alû*".

A reading *kir-šu-šú* at the beginning is perhaps possible. We have seen that the demon *Alû* appears during the nights and throws the patient down (*saḫāpu*) (Chapter III; p. 41). Is ÉN an error for ŠÚ.ŠÚ = *saḫāpu*?

21–22 [DIŠ] [*kīma*] ([GIM]) *šitti* (Ù.DI) *iššanabbassu* (DIB.DIB-su) *minātušu* (UB.NIGIN. NA-šú) *iš-šap-pa-ka uznāšu* (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ištanassā* (GÜ.<DÉ>.MEŠ) *pišu* (KA-šú) *šabitma* (DIB-ma) (22) *la* (NU) *idabbub* (KA.KA-ub) *qāt alī lemni* (ŠU A.LÁ HUL)

"If (something) like a sleep seizes him time and again, his limbs hang down, his ears ring, his mouth is seized so that he does not talk: Hand of the evil *Alû*".

"Fainting" or "swoon" for Ù.DI (Sumerian ù.sá, *kūru*) was suggested by Landsberger; rather than "(deep) sleep".<sup>84</sup>

23 DIŠ *kīma* (GIM) *šitti* (Ù.DI) *iššanabbassu* (DIB.DIB-su) *enūma* (UD) *išbatušu* (DIB-šú) *uznāšu* (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ištanassā* (GÜ.DÉ.MEŠ) *pišu* (KA-šú) *šabitma* (DIB-ma) *la* (NU) *idabbub* (KA.KA-[ub]) *qāt alī lemni* (ŠU A.LÁ HUL)

"If (something) like a sleep seizes him time and again (and) at the time it seizes him, his ears ring, his mouth is seized so that he does not talk: Hand of the evil *Alû*".

Manuscript B helps us in restoring the beginning (*TDP* II Plate L, line 2).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *Iraq* 19 43 f. Not "aura", as B. Landsberger misinterprets Kinnier Wilson; *WdO* 3 (1964) 60.

<sup>84</sup> *WdO* 3 (1964) 52–54, with note 30. The much earlier Ebla texts plead for an original meaning "sleep" for Ù.DI; see M. Krebernik, *ZA* 73 (1983) 40 no. 1131; P. Fronzaroli, *Studi Eblaïti* VII (1984) 176, 182. For ù.sá, see A.W. Sjöberg, *JCS* 34 (1982) 73.

A ruling follows and the section with "Hand of the evil Alū" as sole diagnosis ends here. The next group, having only two entries on a man emerging from the river or canal and overcome by fainting, names the "Lurker of the River" as cause.<sup>85</sup>

24 DIŠ *mê* (A.MEŠ) *ina ramākišu* (TU<sub>5</sub>-šú) *ultu* (TA) *nāri* (ID) *ina elišu* (DUL.DU-šú) *išūdma* ([NIGIN-*ma*]) *imaqqut* (ŠUB-ut) *rābiš nāri* ([M]AŠKIM ID) *imhassu* (SĠG-[s]u (?))

"If, when washing himself in water, he comes up from the river, is dizzy and falls: the Lurker of the River has hit him".

25 DIŠ *ultu* (TA) *mê* (A.MEŠ) *ina elišu* (DUL.DU-šú) *pagaršu* (LÚ.BAD-šú) *iḫ-mi-šu-ma* (NIGIN-*ma*) *imaqqut* (ŠUB-ut) *rābiš nāri* (MAŠKIM ID) *imhassu* (SĠG-[s]u (?))

"If, when coming up from the water, his body is goose-flesh and he is dizzy and falls: the Lurker of the River has hit him".

The last sign in both lines is not clear. We read -[s]u in view of syllabic *ra-bi-iš na-a-ri im-ḫa-su* in KBo 9 49:9.<sup>86</sup> Both entries 24 and 25 appear in syllabic Akkadian in the extract tablet Ni. 470 published by F.R. Kraus, ZA 77 (1987) 197, Omen 7 and 8. Line 25 was translated by Landsberger, WdO 3 (1964) 50; note in Ni. 470 the verbal form *iḫ-mu-šu-ma*, with *u*.<sup>87</sup> In lines 11–13 we have met with the Lurker hiding in the bathroom. Here, we have to do with the Lurker of the rivers and canals; Landsberger: "der Wassermann". "Seizure" by this Lurker is attested in a broken context.<sup>88</sup>

A ruling ends this two-line section on some evil effects of bathing in a river or canal. The following ten lines name the Spirits of the Dead (GUD = *eṭemmu*) as the cause of derangement (lines 26–36).<sup>89</sup> Often it is specified how the dead person had died; magical texts distinguish the spirits according to the way of death.<sup>90</sup>

26 DIŠ *ip-ru-ur-ma uš-ḫa-ri-ir maršu šū* (GIG.BI) *eṭemmi* (GUD.MEŠ) [NA x]

"If he becomes powerless and sits motionless: that sick person ... Spirits. ..."

At the end the reading could be, by emendation, IGI (!) GAM: the sick man "sees Spirits; he will die".

27–28 DIŠ *uz-zu-ub mê* (A.MEŠ) *itenerriš* (URU<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ-iš; var. A omits *iš*) *ummu* (NE) *mit-ḫar šer-ānū qātātišu* (SA.MEŠ ŠU<sup>11</sup>-šú) *illakū* (GIN-k[u]) (28) *ultu* (TA) *taš-rit muši* (GE<sub>6</sub>) *adi* (EN) *mišil maššarti* (BAR EN.NUN) *i-leb-bu qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD)

"If he is ..., wants (to drink) water all the time, (his) fever remaining the same, the veins of his hands move, he makes sounds from the beginning of the night to the middle of the watch: Hand of a Spirit".

Köcher, Fs. Goerke 28: "Wenn er sich immer wieder weigert, Wasser zu trinken (...)", must be wrong. — The middle of the first of the three watches is perhaps meant. Some features in this entry remind us of TDP 118 II 13: "If his belly is soft (*narub*),<sup>91</sup> he strongly wants (to drink) water, his fever remaining the same, his disease (keeps

<sup>85</sup> Cf. B. Landsberger, WdO 3 (1964) 50, with notes 19–21.

<sup>86</sup> See also R. Labat, Un calendrier ... (1965) 92:14; 228:5.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. libbi li-iḫ-mu in the Gilgamesh Letter, with MSL 9 (1967) 88 ad 166, "my heart should be awe-struck"; li-iḫ-mu-ū (var. lu-ū ḫa-mu-ū) UZU.MEŠ-šú, STT 2 280 II 14 with R.D. Biggs, Šaziga (1967) 44, "let his flesh tingle".

<sup>88</sup> TDP 58:12, after the copy of K. 11858:3, on Plate XI.

<sup>89</sup> F. Köcher, Festschrift für Heinz Goerke (1978) 28, translated lines 27–37, 40, 56.

<sup>90</sup> LKA 84:22 ff. gives an interesting list; see E. Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier (1931) 145 and M.-J. Seux, Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie (1976) 422. M.J. Geller, Forerunners to Udug-Hul (1985) 36ff., lines 311 ff. is earlier.

<sup>91</sup> DIG-ub; CAD N/1 350a narbu; AHw narābum.



him) wide awake (?)<sup>92</sup> from the beginning of the <...> to the beginning of the night: a hit by the Lurker; variant: he is hit by a Spirit; he will die".

**29–31** (TDP p. 192) *DIŠ ašūštu* (ZLIR) *imtanāqussu* (ŠUB.ŠUB-su; var. B: ŠUB-su) *mām-ma šā im-ma-ru ú-šal-la minātušu* (UB.NIGIN.NA-šú) *umma* (NE) *u zu'ta* (IR) *u<sub>4</sub>-mi-šam-ma irašši* (TUKU-ši) (30) *a-na* (!) *zu-za-a bi-bil libbi* (ŠA) *ma-dam-ma irtanašši* (TUKU.MEŠ) *adi* (EN) *ú-bal-lu-niš-šú libbu* (ŠA) *i-ḥa-[ḥu]* (31) *enūma* (UD) *ú-bal-lu-niš-šú ippallasma* (IGI.BAR-ma) *la i-lem qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *šā ina A PA* (?) x

"If depression falls upon him all the time (var. omits "all the time"), he beseeches whomever he sees, his limbs daily have fever and sweat, he now and then gets a great craving (for food) until they bring it to him, (then) he is disgusted; at the time they bring it to him he looks (at it) but does not taste (it): Hand of a spirit of one who [...] in water".

"Depression": Akkadian *ašūštu*. "He is disgusted": lit. "the heart/belly vomits".

Köcher refers us to similar symptoms of craving and disgust alternating in a patient "chased" by the Hand of a Spirit, according to a therapeutic text.<sup>93</sup> The spirit seems to be one of a person who has drowned; cf. Tablet XXVI:38.

MS. C notes many "breaks" in its Vorlage and offers an aberrant version for line 30:  
<sup>18</sup> *a-zu-za-a* [...] <sup>19</sup> [x] ŠU GIDIM.MA DINGIR.MEŠ EN *ú-bal-lu-niš-šú*.

**32–34** *DIŠ tu-gu* (C: *qu*)-*un-šú ú-zaq-qat-su uznāšu* (GEŠTU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ištanassā* (GÜ.DÉ.MEŠ) *šārat zumrišu* (SÍG SU-šú) *ittanazzaz* (GUB.GUB-a[z]) (33) *kal pagrīšu* (LÚ.BAD-šú) *kīma* (GIM) *kal-ma-tum i-ba-šú-ú i-nam-muš u qāssu* (ŠU-su) *ub-bal-ma* (34) *la i-ba-āš-šú // la ig-gi-ig qāt eṭemmi* (ŠU GUD) *šēti* (?) (UD.DA) *amēlu* (LÚ) *kīma* (GIM) *ḥaṭṭi* (GIŠ.NIG.PA) *šā Sīn* (dXXX) *šēp qāt eṭemmi* (GIR<sup>II</sup> ŠU GUD; C: GIR-šú ma)

"If his ... hurts him, his ears ring, the hair of his body stands up all the time, his entire body is activated as if there were lice and he puts his hand (there), and there are none; variant: he does not scratch: Hand of a Spirit (hit by) sun-stroke. A man (something) like the staff of Sīn ... Hand of a Spirit (after emendation: "(Something) like the staff of Sīn has been laid upon the man)".

The first word not translated is *tuqnu*, here hardly a kind of head-gear. There also is a word *tugānu*, an ailment in the epigastric region. The diagnosis presents many problems.<sup>94</sup> We suggest one emendation for all three manuscripts (thus correcting an ancient error in this tradition): read not GIR<sup>II</sup>, but *as* and emend <GAR>-*as-su*(!)-*ma* (!) = *šaknassuma*. One could now think of the translation: "Hand of a Spirit (of) (?) sun-stroke; (something) like the staff of Sīn has been laid upon the man". As we will see in the next line, "the staff of Sīn has been laid upon him" is a well known diagnosis. Our emendation has an immediate parallel in [L]Ú GIM GIŠ.PA *šā* dEN.ZU GAR-šum-ma (BAM 5 471 II 21'). "Something like the staff of Sīn ...", at the end of line 34, looks like an addition, preluding to the real staff in line 35.<sup>95</sup>

"Sun-stroke", literally "hot weather" (*šētu*), can be the name of a disease caused by too much sunshine. We take "Spirit of hot weather" as the spirit of a man who has died by sun-stroke. Indeed there is a reference to "a Spirit of one who died in the heat of hot

<sup>92</sup> Cf. above, Tablet XXVI:34.

<sup>93</sup> AMT 76,1:4–7.

<sup>94</sup> Skipped by Köcher.

<sup>95</sup> The prophet Elisha ordered his servant Gehazi to lay his staff on the face of a child that had died of sun-stroke; 2 Kings 4:29, 31.

weather (*himiṭ [šē]ti*).<sup>96</sup> In an earlier chapter we studied *hajjatti šēti*, translated as “fit caused by sun-stroke” (p. 43). Note that in one interpretation our patient’s head-gear (*tuqnu*) hurtled!

**35–36** DIŠ *haṭtu* (GIŠ.NÍG.PA; var. in B: GIŠ.PA) *šá Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX) *šaknassuma* (GAR-su-ma) *šēpšu* (GIR-šú) *i-kap-pap u i-tar-ra-aš* (36) *i-ram-mu-um u ru’tu* (ÚH) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *illak* (GIN-ak) *eṭemmu* (GUD) *mur-tap-pi-du ina šēri* (EDEN) *išbassu* (DIB-su)

“If the staff of Sîn is laid upon him and he bends and stretches his leg, he roars and saliva flows from/in his mouth: a roaming Spirit in the plains has seized him”.

This entry is clearly the continuation of the obscure variant at the end of the preceding one. A passage in a therapeutic text with prescriptions against spirits of the dead takes both together in speaking of “something like the staff” but giving the symptoms of the real staff:

– [DIŠ L]Ú GIM GIŠ.PA *šá* <sup>d</sup>EN.ZU GAR-šum-ma G[IR]-šú *i-kap-pap u i-tar-ra-aš* [*i-ram-mu-um*] [*u ru’-u-tú*] [*ina K*]A-š[ú] G[IN]-ak GIDIM *mur-tap-pi-du ina* EDEN DIB-su,

“If (something) like the staff of Sîn is laid upon a man and he bends and stretches his leg, he roars and saliva flows in/from his mouth: a roaming Spirit in the plains has seized him”.<sup>97</sup>

If this is an independent tradition, we gain some insight in the redactional work of the editor of the diagnostic handbook. — The “staff” of several gods are known as designations for diseases: the staff of “his god”, Sîn, Šamaš and Ištar.<sup>98</sup> The exact meaning is not clear. The “roaming spirit” in the plains is a well known one; see the remarks on Tablet XXVI rev. 31, where a “roaming Lurker” was found.

The Hands of the various Spirits, diagnosed in this section, will be taken up in the first line of the following division of this tablet.

## TABLET XXVIII

A **ruling** follows and the second half of the tablet now begins, first detailing how the “Hand of a Spirit (GIDIM)” and other “Hands” can change into epilepsies, and vice versa. Its first line, “If the Hand of a Spirit changes into a n.t.a.š.u.b.a”, is listed in the Nimrud catalogue as the third tablet of the sub-series “If a fall ...” That is why we name the second half of our tablet “Tablet XXVIII”, starting here.<sup>99</sup> Our three manuscripts have XXVII and XXVIII on one tablet, but the unusual double “If” (DIŠ BE-ma) at the beginning of line 37 shows that something new begins here.

That one affliction can “change into” (*tāru*) another is not often found in the texts.<sup>100</sup>

The first section, on “changing into” (lines 37–56), is highly exceptional for the dia-

<sup>96</sup> LKA 84:27, following B. Landsberger, *WdO* 3 (1964) 54, (f). Cf. M.J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières* (1976) 422.

<sup>97</sup> BAM 5 471 II 21–22; previously AMT 94, 2 II + 96, 8:2–3.

<sup>98</sup> CAD H 155a, c; AHw 337b. Add TDP 64:54, 172:31, 244:12 (cf. 168:2), and our references.

<sup>99</sup> Already seen by B. Landsberger, *WdO* 3 (1964) 59, “c”.

<sup>100</sup> In the Middle Babylonian letter PBS 1/2 72:25 (S. Parpola, *LAS* Comm. 495 f.), where a girl is in danger of developing Hand of an Oath after colic; in the medical text BAM 2 174 rev. 25, sun-stroke changes into Oath; in BAM 6 543 I 53, a disease of the mouth changes into *šinnahtiru*; and *ašitu* changes into “shadow”, BAM 5 510 II 17, dupl. 514 II 28 (eye diseases); cough into colic, BAM 6 574 I 1; Hand of a Spirit into *dikšu*, AMT 96,1:14; ... into fever, TDP 70:19 (read É.MEŠ = *ummu*). See also TDP 144:46, KUB 37 192, AMT 15:5:6.



gnostic handbook. Firstly, no symptoms are given: the characteristics of every "Hand" is supposed to be known to the reader. Secondly, almost all entries add a recipe, each of which has a ruling at the end. It is normal in therapeutic texts that every separate recipe is "boxed" this way. We do not have therapeutic texts giving prescriptions for epilepsy; but this section may provide them, filling the gap. The length of the prescriptions is gradually decreasing and in the last case no prescription is deemed necessary as the case looked hopeless. So, as noticed in Tablet XXVII, the apodosis seems to determine the order of the text. In the protasis there is some concatenation between the Hands visible; Hand of the Goddess is present almost everywhere, in one way or another.

37-39 DIŠ šumma (BE-ma) qāt eṭemmi (ŠU GIDIM.MA) ana AN.TA.ŠUB.BA itâršu (GUR-šú) amēlu šū (LÚ.BI) qāt il ālišu (ŠU DINGIR URU-šú) mariš (GIG) (38) ana (C; A and B omit) ina qāt il ālišu (ŠU DINGIR URU-šú) eṭērišu (KAR-šú) šir (UZU (C; A and B omit) nammašši (A.ZA.LU.LU) ubānu (ŠU.SI) šeheru (TUR; C: LÚ.TUR) mīti (LÚ.ÚŠ) rāšu (I.SUMUN) lem-nu erū (URUDU) (39) ina mašak unīqi (KUŠ.SAL.ĀŠ.GĀR) la petīti (UŠ NU ZU) ina šer'ān (SA) arrabi (PÉŠ.ŪR.RA) tašappi (DŪ.DŪ; C adds -pī) ina kišadišu (GÚ-šú) tašakkanma (GAR-ma) iballuṭ (TLLA) (C: GÚ.BA GAR-an-ma AL.TI)

"If the Hand of a Spirit changes into a n.t.a.š.u.b.a: that man is ill with the Hand of his city-god. In order to rescue him from the Hand of his city-god, you wrap in a leather bag (made of the hide) of a virgin she-goat, using a string (made of) the sinew of a . . . mouse: flesh of a wild animal, the little finger of a dead man, bad old oil, copper; you put (it) on his neck, and he will recover".

The redundant DIŠ BE-ma at the beginning, both meaning "if", can be seen as a marker of the new text division.

The *materia medica* in the leather bag is to our understanding purely magical. Of all kinds of mice, the . . . mouse (*arrabu*) and parts of it are most often used in Babylonian magical lore.<sup>101</sup> For "old oil", Akkadian *rāšu* rather than *lušū*, see M. Stol, *JAOS* 111 (1991) 627 f. The leather bag is obviously meant to ward off the more severe "Hand of his city-god". Leather bags are apotropaic, as we will see in Chapter VI,1.

40-42 DIŠ AN.TA.ŠUB.BA ana qāt eṭemmi (ŠU GIDIM.MA) itâršu (GUR-šú) mukil rēš lēmutti (SAG.ĤUL.ĤA.ZA) irtanašši (TUKU.TUKU-šī) qāt Ištar (ŠU dINANNA; B: dXV; C: dIštar) qāt rābiši (ŠU MAŠKIM) (41) ana eṭērišu (KAR-šú) hašū (Ú ĤAR.ĤAR) zēr ušī (NUMUN GIŠ.KAL) šubat dami (TÚG ÚŠ) sinništī (SAL) maḥištī (SĪG; C omits) ešemti (GĪR.PAD. DU) nammašši (A.ZA.LU.LU) (42) mašak unīqi (KUŠ.SAL.ĀŠ.GĀR) la petīti (UŠ NU ZU) tašappi (U.ME.NI.DŪ.DŪ) ina kišadišu (GÚ-šú; C: GÚ.BA) tašakkanma (GAR-ma) iballuṭ (AL.TI)

"If a n.t.a.š.u.b.a changes into Hand of a Spirit: he gets the Provider-of-Evil all the time; Hand of the Goddess, Hand of the Lurker. In order to rescue him, you wrap in a leather bag (made of the hide) of a virgin she-goat: (the plant) *hašū*, ebony (?) seed, the (sanitary) towel of a menstruating woman, the bone of a wild animal; you put (it) on his neck, and he will recover".

Here, we seem to have the reverse situation of the foregoing omen. Note, however, that this a n.t.a.š.u.b.a probably was not a stage following Hand of a Spirit, but "independent". — Sanitary towel: lit. "clothing of blood of a woman who was hit".

<sup>101</sup> R.D. Biggs, *Šaziga. Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (1967) 4, with note 25; M.L. Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien* (1987) 42 f., 80. Skin: *BAM* 3 311:55; fat: 249 II 1; sinews: 230:19, dupl. 295:10. Etc.

"Hit by the weapon" was a euphemism for a menstruating woman.<sup>102</sup> — "You wrap" (*tašappi*) is now written with a Sumerian verbal "prospective" form known from ritual instructions in incantations. All three manuscripts have this unusual form<sup>103</sup> here — a sign that they belong to the same strain of tradition. There is evidence for a Sumerian "translation" of the diagnostic handbook — or parts of it — traces of which are found in the present Akkadian text.<sup>104</sup>

43-46 (line 44: TDP p. 194) DIŠ AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *ana qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup> INANNA) *itāršu* (GUR-ŠU) *qāt mamīti* (ŠU NAM.ERÍM; A, B omit NE in NE.RU = ERÍM) *qāt il ālišu* (ŠU DIN-GIR URU-ŠU) KI.MIN *qāt Ištar ālišu* (ŠU<sup>d</sup> INANNA URU-ŠU) (44) *ana eṭērišu* (KAR-ŠU) *šubat dami* (TÚG ÚŠ) *sinništi* (SAL) *šá zikara* (UŠ) TE SIG<sub>5</sub> (?) (C: ŠI) *in mīti* (IGI LÚ.BAD) *lišān kalbi* (Ú EME-UR.KU) *šarat kalbi šalmi* (SÍG UR.KU GE<sub>6</sub>) (45) *zumbi* (NIM) *kalbi* (UR.KU) *ummi mē* (AMA A) *šarat* (SIG; B, C: SÍG) *uqūpi* (UGU.DUL.BI) *zikari* (UŠ) *u sinništi* (SAL) *šur-ši balti* (GIŠ.NIM) *u ašāgi* (GIŠ.Ú.GÍR) (46) *šá eli* (UGU) *kimahhi* (KI.MAH) *imbu tāmti* (KA-A.AB.BA) *nikiptu* (ŠIM-<sup>d</sup> NIN.URTA) *ina mašak unīqi* (KUŠ SAL.ÁŠ.GÁR) *la petīti* (UŠ NU ZU) (C adds *ina* KUŠ) ŠU.BI.DIL.ĀM

"If a n.t a.š u b.b a changes into Hand of the Goddess: Hand of an Oath, Hand of his city-god — ditto — Hand of his city-goddess. In order to rescue him, in the leather bag (made of the hide) of a virgin she-goat: the (sanitary) towel of a woman who has given birth to (?) a male child, the eye of a dead man, (the plant) cynoglossum, the hair of a black dog, the fly of a dog, a dragon-fly, the hair of a monkey, male or female, the root of camel-thorn or *shok* that (grows) on a grave, sea-weed, (the plant) *nikiptu*; — the same".

This entry is beset with problems. First, to what does "ditto" refer? The "he gets all the time" (*irtanašši*) of line 40?

As to the *materia magica*, the first item, the "sanitary towel", reminds us of the preceding entry. Literally, the text offers: "clothing of blood of a woman who ... a male". The signs TE SIG<sub>5</sub> (?)<sup>105</sup> are incomprehensible — already the scribe of manuscript C could not read them well — and we surmise that these signs are an early corruption of Ú.TU (*aldar*). This emendation was suggested by a medical text naming as one ingredient for a leather bag "urine of an unclean woman who has given birth to a male" (UŠXA SAL.Ú.KA *šá* NITA Ú.TU).<sup>106</sup> The next item is a part taken from a dead body (cf. the little finger in line 38). "Cynoglossum" literally means "dog's tongue". The hair of a (black) dog, now following (and cf. 48), is not unknown as *materia magica* in the Ancient Near East.<sup>107</sup> Combined with the hair of a male or female monkey, it is effective against Hand of a Spirit.<sup>108</sup> The association of dogs and Netherworld is universal. "Dragon-fly" (*ummi mē*) is unique in magical context. Monkey hairs and bones are used in magic against dangers generated by spirits of the dead.<sup>109</sup> The roots of the

<sup>102</sup> CAD M/1 74b, BAM 2 159 I 9; etc.

<sup>103</sup> Also, and fuller, in BAM 5 476 rev. 4-8. Cf. W. Farber, ZA 63 (1973) 59 ff.

<sup>104</sup> As in TDP 244:13-15, with comm. SpbTU I 38:5-8. See also E. von Weiher, SpbTU III no. 86, and A. Cavigneaux, NABU 1988/24.

<sup>105</sup> Consult the copies in TDP II Plates XLIX:44 and L:23; SpbTU III no. 89 rev. 9.

<sup>106</sup> BAM 5 476:11. — Note in line 8 "dust from the house of a woman who has stopped (*parsat*) bearing children"; also in CT 4 6 rev. 1 (SAL *šá* TU KUD) ?

<sup>107</sup> D. Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24e campagne (1961)* (1988) 68-71, on the Ugaritic text KTU 1.114:29 (= *Ugaritica* V no. 1).

<sup>108</sup> W. Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, schlaf* (1989) 74, ad 251, and comm. SpbTU I 49:7.

<sup>109</sup> Most of the material collected by S. Dunham, ZA 75 (1985) 252-257, belongs to this realm.



thorny shrubs *baltu* and *ašāgu* (*shok*) growing on a grave, prescribed next, also have a gloomy shine over them. Of the last plant, *nikiptu*, the Babylonians distinguished a male and a female variety.

47–49 DIŠ *qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>INANNA) *ana* AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *itâršu* (GUR-šú) *qāt Sîn* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>XXX) // *qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>XV; C offers only ŠU<sup>d</sup>INANNA) *ana* (A, B omit) *eṭērišu* (KAR-šú) *riḫūt amēlūti* (A.RIA LÚ.NAM.LÚ.U<sub>x</sub>.LU; B, C omit the first LÚ) (48) *imbu tām̄tim* (KA-A.AB.BA) *ḫuli api* (PÉS.ḪUL GIŠ.GI) *šā šārta* (SÍG) *la-aḫ-mu zappi* (KA-pi) *kalbi šal̄mi* (UR.KU GE<sub>6</sub>) (49) *šārat* (SÍG) *kalbati* (SAL+UR; B; C: SAL) *šalimti* (GE<sub>6</sub>) *šārat* (SÍG) *zibbat* (KUN) *kalbi* (UR.KU; C omits KU) *šal̄mi* (GE<sub>6</sub>) *ina* (C omits) *šārat unīqi* (SÍG SAL.ÁŠ.GÀR) *la petīti* (UŠ NU ZU) *pešītu* (BABBAR) *u šalimtu* (GE<sub>6</sub>) *ina maški* (KUŠ) ŠU.BI.DIL.ĀM

"If the Hand of the Goddess changes into a n.t a.š u b.a: Hand of Sîn; variant: Hand of the Goddess. In order to rescue him, in a leather bag, using the hair of a virgin she-goat, white or black: human semen, sea-weed, a hairy . . . -mouse, a tuft hair of a black dog, the hair of a black bitch (?), the hair of the tail of a black dog: the same".

Manuscript C only gives the second variant, Hand of the Goddess. The hair of the she-goat serves here the same purpose as the sinew of the *arrabu*-mouse in line 39: tying the leather bag. Among the materia magica we now find the hair of a mouse (*ḫulū*) of a variety living in the reed swamps (*apu*). For KA PI we prefer the reading *zap<sub>x</sub>-pi* to KA GEŠTU, *appi uzni*, "tip of the ear": one would in that case expect GEŠTU<sup>11</sup>, not simple GEŠTU, for "ear". Another unusual writing for *zappu* "bristle" is KU-pu (*zāp-pu*).<sup>110</sup> The context requires hair. As to the hair of a "bitch" (?), we preferred SALUR to Ū = *agālu*, an equid, because this would interrupt the "canine" context.

Note that "hair" is predominant in this prescription.

50–52 DIŠ *qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>INANNA) *ana* Bēl-ūri (LUGAL-ŪR.RA) *itâršu* (GUR-šú) *qāt Šamaš* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>UTU) *ana eṭērišu* (KAR-šú) *šuruš baltu* (SUḪUŠ GIŠ.NIM) *šuruš ašāgi* (SUḪUŠ GIŠ.Ū.GÍR) (51) *šuruš* (SUḪUŠ) Ū *u<sub>5</sub>-ra-nu-um* (C omits -um) (C adds NUMUN GIŠ.MA.NU) *zēr šakirū* (NUMUN GIŠ.ŠAKIR; C: NUMUN Ū ŠAKIR) *šubat dami* (TÚG ŪŠ) *sinništi* (SAL) *nikiptu* (ŠIM-<sup>d</sup>MAŠ; C: ŠIM-<sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA) *ina mašak unīqi* (KUŠ SAL.ÁŠ.GÀR) (52) *la petīti* (UŠ NU ZU) ŠU.BI.DIL.ĀM

"If Hand of the Goddess changes into Lord of the Roof: Hand of Šamaš. In order to rescue him, in a leather bag (made of the hide) of a virgin she-goat: the root of camel-thorn, the root of *shok*, the root of (the plant) *urānum* (var. adds: "the seed of *er'u*"), seed of (the plant) *šakirū*, the (sanitary) towel of a woman, (the plant) *nikiptu*: the same".

"Lord of the Roof" is the main demon of epilepsy. The plants *urānu* and *šakirū* are important plants in the pharmacopaea against epilepsies, as we will see in Chapter VI, "Leather bags". One of them, *šakirū*, has the nick-name "Plant of Šamaš". All four plants are used in two leather bag recipes "for eradicating a n.t a.š u b.a".<sup>111</sup>

53–54 DIŠ Bēl-ūri (LUGAL-ŪR.RA) *ana* AN.TA.ŠUB.BA (C adds GUR-šú) *ana qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>INANNA) *itâršu* (GUR-šú) *qāt Ištar* (ŠU<sup>d</sup>XV; C: <sup>d</sup>Iš-tar) *ana eṭērišu* (KAR-šú) *dam* (?) *raqqi* (UŠ BAL.GI.KU<sub>6</sub>) (54) *zēr* (NUMUN) Ū *u<sub>5</sub>-ra-nu-um* *nikiptu* (ŠIM-<sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA) *zikari* (UŠ) *u sinništi* (SAL) *ina maški* (KUŠ) ŠU.BI.DIL.ĀM

<sup>110</sup> KU-pi of a dog: I. Finkel, *Afo* 29–30 (1983–4) 10 BM. 36703 III 17; cf. 10 (b):5, with note 34. Cf. W. Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, schlaf* (1989) 80 f. In one text alternately written KU-pi, *zap-pi* and *a-za-pi*: *BAM* 5 503 I 29; 12, 18; 35. Cf. *BAM* 5 506:5 (KU-pi) with the parallel 508 IV 2 (*zap-pi*).

<sup>111</sup> *BAM* 3 311:73, 76.

"If Lord of the Roof (var. adds: "changes") into a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a, into Hand of the Goddess changes: Hand of the Goddess. In order to rescue him, in a leather bag: blood (?) of a turtle, seed of (the plant) *urānu*, (the plant) *nikiptu*, male or female; the same".

"Blood" requires the sign *úš*, not *uš*. Ms. B and C share this error. Cf. SIG for *šig* in 45 (ms. A).

55 *DIŠ Bēl-ūri* (<sup>d</sup>LUGAL-ÜR.RA) *rihūt Šulpaea* (A.RIA <sup>d</sup>ŠUL-PA.Ē.A; A, B add an extra A) *ana AN.TA.ŠUB.BA itâršu* (GUR-šú) *qât ilišu* (ŠU DINGIR-šú; C: DINGIR URU-šú) *ana eṭērišu* (KAR-šú) KIMIN

"If Lord of the Roof, Spawn of Šulpaea, changes into a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a: Hand of his god (variant: "his city-god"). In order to rescue him: ditto".

"Spawn of Šulpaea", a severe and almost hopeless form of epilepsy, is considered here a by-form of "Lord of the Roof". Happily enough, it changes into the curable a.n.t.a.š.u.b.a.

56 *DIŠ Bēl-ūri* (<sup>d</sup>LUGAL-ÜR.RA) *ana* (A, B omit) *qât Ištar* (ŠU <sup>d</sup>INANNA) *itâršu* (GUR-šú) *rihūt Šulpaea* (A.RIA <sup>d</sup>ŠUL-PA.Ē.A) *ana* (A omits) *qât eṭemmi* (ŠU GIDIM.MA) *itâršu* (GUR-šú) *la* (NU) *i-ke-šir*

"If Lord of the Roof changes into Hand of the Goddess, Spawn of Šulpaea changes into Hand of a Spirit: he will not end well".

We are back at the Hand of a Spirit with which this section began. Here ends the remarkable section of epilepsies and related diseases, changing and interchanging, and always followed by magical prescriptions to ward off the evil. The last entry could not promise any avail (*la i-ke-šir*, lit. "he will not succeed").<sup>112</sup> This prognosis links this section with the following two. They introduce "seeing" an ox or a horse, and this, in its turn, was for the redactor an incentive to add a large section on "seeing" other animals, and other natural phenomena.

The entire following section (57–79) looks like an addition. Already the unusual introductory *BE-ma* for *DIŠ* marks a break (cf. line 37); moreover, quite another matter is discussed now: visual hallucinations, as in dreams. One is reminded of the therapeutic text K. 2418+ (*AMT* 77–79), about "stroke" and aphasia: the catch-line at the end of that tablet gives as the first line of the next one, "If a man repeatedly sees [...] in his dream". "Stroke" is related to epilepsy. Do our diagnostic text and that therapeutic text treat the same range of symptoms in the same order?

57 *BE-ma mukil rēš lēmutti* (SAG.HUL.ĦA.ZA) *maṣṣma* (GIG-ma) *ki-ma alpi* (GUD) *šēpa* (GİR; B: GİR<sup>II</sup>) *mahrīta* (IGI) *immaru* (IGI) *immar* (IGI.LÁ) (C: GIM GUD GİR<sup>II</sup>-pi IGI.LÁ) *maṣṣu šū* (GIG.BI) *la* (NU) *i-ke-šir*

"If he, suffering from the Provider-of-Evil, sees that an ox looks at (its) front foot: that patient will not end well".

Manuscripts A and B add a **ruling** after 57, thus indicating its special character by separating it from the next large group on "seeing". And indeed, the meaning of *kīma* in 57, "that", must be different from the *kīma*, "(something) like", in the next section.

In theory, "Provider-of-Evil" could take up line 40 but we believe that this is far-

<sup>112</sup> Köcher's "dazu kann man nichts sagen (?)", obviously NU *i-qē-bu*, is wrong; *Fs. Goerke* 28. Labat: *i-qī-pu* "on ne peut se fier", is very wrong. But we admit that the phrase "he will not succeed" is most unusual in medical omens.



etched. — The “front foot” of an ox (*šēpu mahṛītu*) is attested in a few more omen texts.<sup>113</sup>

A large new section starts now, dealing with what the patient, after having been ill for a long time, believes he “sees”. Prescriptions are no longer given and the lines are no longer separated by rulings. Instead we find here the usual prognostications of the handbook: will the patient die or recover?

58 (TDP p. 196) DIŠ *murša* (GIG) *arka* (GÍD.DA) *maṣma* (GIG-ma) *ki-ma* (C: GIM) *šāsi* (ANŠE.KUR.RA) *immar* (IGILÁ) *maṣu šū* (GIG.BI) *la* (NU) *ke-šir*

“If he suffers from a long illness and sees (something) like a horse: that patient is not well”.

The last word perhaps to be emended <i>-ke-šir</i>, as in the preceding lines: “he will not end well”. If this is accepted, this would be another error shared by two manuscripts A and B; the third, C, just says “new break” here. In the next line, A and B seem to share another error, the extra *ana*.

59 DIŠ KLIMIN *immera* (UDU (!)) *immar* (IGILÁ) <<ana>> *murussu* (GIG.BI) *ittanārsu* (GUR.GUR-šū) // (C omits) *imāt* (GAM; C: BAD)

“If, ditto, he sees a sheep: his illness will return to him / change for him time and again, variant: (variant omits “variant”) he will die”.

Of the alternative translations “return to him” / “change for him”, we prefer “return” in lines 59f.; cf. the expression *tūrti murši irašši* “he has a relapse” (CAD A/2 345a).

60 DIŠ KLIMIN *kalba* (UR.KU) *immar* (IGILÁ) *murussu* (GIG.BI) *ittanārsu* (GUR.GUR-šū) *imāt* (GAM)

“If, ditto, he sees a dog: his illness will return to him / change for him time and again; he will die”.

61 DIŠ KLIMIN *šahā* (ŠAH) *immar* (IGILÁ) *murussu* (GIG.BI) *la* (NU) *innassah* (ZI-aḥ)  
“If, ditto, he sees a pig: his illness will not be eradicated”.

62 DIŠ KLIMIN *nēša* (UR.MAH) *immar* (IGILÁ) *ana DAR ardat lilī* (KLSIKILLİL.LÁ) *itārsu* (GUR-šū)

“If, ditto, he sees a lion: it will change for him into the ... of an *ardat lilī* succubus”.

The meaning of DAR is unknown. An emendation U<sub>5</sub> (*rakābu, rikibtu*), which would refer to sexual intercourse with this female demon, is not supported.

63 DIŠ KLIMIN *barbara* (UR.BAR.RA) *immar* (IGILÁ) *ana DAR ardat lilī* (KLSIKILLİL.LÁ) *itārsu* (GUR-šū)

“If, ditto, he sees a wolf: it will change for him into the ... of an *ardat lilī* succubus”.

64 DIŠ KLIMIN *turāha* (DARA<sub>3</sub>) *immar* (IGILÁ) *maṣu šū* (GIG.BI) *iballuṭ* (AL.TI)

“If, ditto, he sees a deer: that patient will recover”.

65 DIŠ KLIMIN *šabūta* (MAŠ.DÀ) *immar* (IGILÁ) *maṣu šū* (GIG.BI) *iballuṭ* (AL.TI)

“If, ditto, he sees a gazelle: that patient will recover”.

66 DIŠ KLIMIN *alpa* (GUD) *immar* (IGILÁ) *i-la-bir-šum-ma ana na-šar murši* (GIG) *itārsu* (GUR-šū)

“If, ditto, he sees an ox: it will drag on for him and it will change for him into a lessening of the illness”.

67 DIŠ KLIMIN *imera* (ANŠE) *immar* (IGILÁ) *i-la-bir-šum-ma ana na-šar murši* (GIG) *itārsu* (GUR-šū)

<sup>113</sup> S. Moren, *Afo* 27 (1980) 65:104; E. Reiner, *JNES* 19 (1960) 35:138. Cf. CAD M/1 113a.

"If, ditto, he sees a donkey: it will drag on for him and it will change for him into a lessening of the illness".

68 DIŠ KL.MIN *šaḥapa* (ŠAH.GIŠ.GI) *immar* (IG.LÁ) *šipta* (ÉN; in A not clear) *tattanad-dašumma* (ŠUB.ŠUB-šum-ma) *iballuṭ* (AL.TI)

"If, ditto, he sees a marsh boar: you will recite an incantation over him, time and again, and he will recover".

69 DIŠ KL.MIN *ana qāt ili* (ŠU DINGIR.RA) *itâršu* (GUR-šú; B omits GUR) *a-ši-pu-us-su teppušma* (DÛ-uš-ma) *iballuṭ* (AL.TI)

"If, ditto, it changes for him into Hand of the God: you will practise magic and he will recover".

"Ditto" stands for "If he suffers from a long illness and". There is no reference to the patient "seeing" anything, a theme that will be resumed later. This entry, on the Hand of the God, and the next one, on the Hand of the Goddess, prelude to the "seeing of dead persons" that will follow then: the latter is associated with Hand of the Goddess.

70 DIŠ KL.MIN *ana qāt ištari* (ŠU <sup>d</sup>INANNA) *itâršu* (GUR-šú) KL.MIN

"If, ditto, it changes for him into Hand of the Goddess: ditto".

71 DIŠ KL.MIN *mītūti* (LÚ.BAD.MEŠ) *itanammar* (IG.LIGI-mar) KL.MIN

"If, ditto, he sees dead persons time and again: ditto".

Seeing "dead persons" is a sure sign of meeting spirits of the dead. There were rituals for such occasions<sup>114</sup> and one ritual is introduced as follows: "If a man sees dead persons time and again: Hand of the Goddess. In order to stop (*parāsu*) the dead persons (...)"<sup>115</sup> Hand of the Goddess seems to link our entry with the preceding one. "Ditto" at the end means: "You will practise magic and he will recover" — the same recommendation as those for Hand of the God and Hand of the Goddess in the preceding lines. The ritual just mentioned shows which magic is to be performed here.

From this point on the text speaks of "seeing" persons or things "time and again" and it now uses a different Sumerogram for "to see", IGLIGI, no more IG.LÁ.

72 DIŠ KL.MIN *mārassu* (DUMU.SAL-su) *itanammar* (IG.LIGI-mar) *la* (NU) *na-ki-id*

"If, ditto, he sees his daughter time and again: it is not serious".

73 DIŠ KL.MIN *ḥi-pi eš-šú* (B omits -šú) *itanammar* (IG.LIGI-mar) *murussu* (GIG.BI) *irrik* (GÍD.DA) *la* (NU) *na-ki-id*

"If, ditto, he sees — new break — time and again: that illness will last long; is not serious".

"New break" is a scribe's remark, here in both manuscripts, indicating that their original was damaged at this place, so we do not know whom or what the patient saw.

74 DIŠ KL.MIN *nāra* (ID) *itanammar* (IG.LIGI-mar) *ana murši šu'āti* (?) (GIG.BI) *i-tar*

"If, ditto, he sees a river time and again: he will turn to that illness (?)".

75 DIŠ KL.MIN *huršāna* (<HUR>.SAG) *itanammar* (IG.LIGI-mar) *murussu* (GIG.BI; B: GIG GIG-su) *inneṭteršu* (KAR-šú)

"If, ditto, he sees a mountain time and again: that illness will be taken away from him (?) (variant: "the patient: his illness will be taken away from him")".

Both manuscripts share the omission of HUR.

<sup>114</sup> G. Castellino, "Rituals and Prayers against Appearing Ghosts", *Or.* NS 24 (1955) 240–274; cf. J.A. Scurlock, *JAO* 108 (1988) 203 f.

<sup>115</sup> *KAR* 234:27; Castellino, 260.



76 DIŠ KL.MIN *qišta* (GIŠ.TIR) *itanammar* (IGL.IGI-mar) *murussu* (GIG-su) *innassah* (ZI-a[h])

"If, ditto, he sees a forest time and again: his illness will be eradicated".

77 DIŠ KL.MIN *apa* (GIŠ.GI) *itanammar* (IGL.IGI-mar) *murussu* (GIG-su) *innassah* (ZI-a[h])

"If, ditto, he sees reed marshes time and again: his illness will be eradicated".

78 DIŠ KL.MIN *kirâ* (GIŠ.SAR) *itanammar* (IGL.IGI-mar) *murussu* (GIG-su) *ikarru* (LUGUD.D[A])

"If, ditto, he sees a garden time and again: his illness will be short".

79 DIŠ KL.MIN *bûrta* (PÚ) *itanammar* (IGL.IGI-mar) *murussu* (GIG-su) *i-[x x]*

"If, ditto, he sees a well: his illness will [...]".

Here ends Tablet XXVIII. After a **ruling** follows the catch-line with the first line of the next tablet, "If Lord of the Roof is born with him". Manuscript A adds a colophon of five lines naming this the second tablet of the sub-series "If a fall falls upon him" and Tablet XXVI of the handbook.<sup>116</sup>

## TABLET XXIX

According to some catch-lines and the entry in the Nimrud Catalogue, this tablet starts with the words

144 (lines): DIŠ <sup>d</sup>LUGAL-ÛR.RA KL.BI Û.TU

The correctness of the reading KL.BI has been a problem. The editors of the Nimrud Catalogue offered DUL.BI, writing [DUL] with a question mark.<sup>117</sup> The sign is damaged in one catch-line and the other offers a baffling GIM DUL.BI.<sup>118</sup> Unpublished texts discovered by Irving L. Finkel show KL.BI and an ancient commentary on this text interprets "KL.BI Û.TU" as *it-ti-šû a-lid*.<sup>119</sup> We suspect that the incorrect GIM DUL.BI is a scribal error for GIM <sup>d</sup>KÛ.BI, inspired by the first words of the prescription following the prognosis, now known from line 2 of the unpublished manuscript BM 42310+, GIM <sup>d</sup>KÛ.BI *tuš-na-al-šû-ma* "you will bury him as if (he were) a still-born child" (see below).

Irving Finkel has discovered some manuscripts of Tablet XXIX in the British Museum collections. He gave a succinct description in a footnote where he wrote about the contents: "The medical problems are linked in the obverse to the age of the patient (DIŠ *ina* MU *n* .KAM ŠUB-su ...), and in the reverse to the spot where the patient is at the time of attack (for example, DIŠ AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *ina a-lak gir-ri* ŠUB-su ...). Each 'omen' or diagnosis has a magical / medical prescription appended, in some cases even including the incipits of the incantations to be used".<sup>120</sup>

Dr Finkel has kindly shown me his preliminary transcriptions of the manuscripts.

<sup>116</sup> H. Hunger, *BAK* no. 454.

<sup>117</sup> I.L. Finkel, *Studies Abraham Sachs* 147 A 35; cf. the copy by Kinnier Wilson in *Iraq* 18 (1956), after p. 146, ND 4358:18.

<sup>118</sup> *TDP* Plates LI:26, and XLIX:80, respectively (*TDP* 196:80).

<sup>119</sup> See the discussion by Finkel in his note 29. The commentary BM 38375 now makes him read KL.BI everywhere.

<sup>120</sup> *Studies Sachs* 147 note 29.

The text of Tablet XXIX still is too fragmentary and too hard to understand to make an edition feasible. We restrict ourselves to the first entry:

(1) DIŠ Bēl-ūri (<sup>d</sup>LUGAL-ŪR.RA) ittišu (KI.BI) alid (Ū.TU) ina šēpišu (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) bīt abišu (É AD-šú) issappaḥ (BIR-aḥ) ana la (NU) sapāḥ (BIR-aḥ) bīt abišu (É AD-šú) (2) kima (GIM) kūbi (<sup>d</sup>KU.BI) tuš-na-al-šu-ma lemna (HUL) it-tab-bal ittašu (IGI.DUB.BI) kima (GIM) ... ([LÍL-ti]?) (3) i-bak-ki i-za-ár ù im-ta-nam-ga-ag

"If Lord of the Roof is born 'with' him: by his feet the house of his father will be disrupted. In order that the house of his father not be disrupted, you will bury him as if (he were) a still-born child and the evil will be carried off. Its sign is: like a ... he cries, is twisting, and becomes permanently stiff".<sup>121</sup>

The meaning of "by his feet" is obscure. It is hardly a coincidence that we find it again in the chapter on babies in the diagnostic handbook, exactly in the lines on "fall" (*miqtu*): "by his feet, either his father or his mother will die" – "by his feet, the house of his father will be disrupted".<sup>122</sup>

The text continues with "it" (presumably the Lord of the Roof) falling upon the patient when he is a certain number of years old (up to 30, or more, years). The case that "Šulpaea is born with him" opens a new section, similar in contents: the child, alive, is to be thrown into the river and thus the evil will be carried off. Then, the text follows the patient affected by Šulpaea over the years.

It is very possible that a much earlier fragmentary text from Emar is the predecessor to our Tablet XXIX: the age of the patient plays a rôle, something is to be thrown into the river, and "Spawn of Šulpaea" is mentioned.<sup>123</sup>

There is another related passage: the catch-line at the end of a text with prescriptions for ailments of babies giving the first line of the following text, runs as follows:<sup>124</sup>

[šī]-bit be-en-nim šā ina MU.7.KAM aldu (Ū.TU) innammaru (IGI) ia-az-za [libbašu (ŠÀ-šú)] i-ta-na-šā-áš ina maqātišu (ŠUB-šú) qatātišu (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) ana arkišu (EGIR-šú) talammi / ilammi (NIGIN-mi)

"The seizure of *bennum* which becomes visible in the seventh year since he was born (?): he makes unnatural sounds, his belly keeps hurting (?): when it falls upon him, you / he ... his hands behind him".

This passage about a seven-year old child clearly belongs to the category discussed by Tablet XXIX. The problems of interpretation that these few lines present are typical of the whole category.

## TABLET XXX

Only the first line is known to us thanks to its entry in the Nimrud Catalogue:

84 (lines): DIŠ GIG-ma KA-šú BAD.BAD-te

That this Tablet follows XXIX is confirmed by the appearance of this incipit as catch-

<sup>121</sup> Cf. TDP 228:107, "If the baby cries and becomes permanently stiff: the Daughter of Anum [= Lamaštu] has seized him".

<sup>122</sup> TDP 230:110–111.

<sup>123</sup> D. Arnaud, *Emar* VI.4 (1987) 317 no. 695.

<sup>124</sup> K. 3628+, as copied by C. Bezold, *Catalogue* II (1891) 550. I.L. Finkel gave a full edition in his thesis (1976) 266–275.



line at the end of a manuscript of Tablet XXIX (BM. 42310+; courtesy I.L. Finkel). A medical text giving symptoms followed by therapeutic prescriptions seems to have the full line:

DIŠ *maṣṣa* (GIG-*ma*) *pišu* (KA-šú) *iptenette* (BAD.BAD-*te*) *qatātušu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *šēpāšu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *i-par-ru-ra qāt* (ŠU) <sup>d</sup>*Mu-u[n-ni]-ši šēdi* (<sup>d</sup>ALÀD) *šá-né-e* <sup>d</sup>*A-nim ana ina qāt* (ŠU) <sup>d</sup>*Mu-un-ni-ši eṭērišu* (KAR-[šú]) (etc.),

"If he is ill and opens his mouth time and again, his hands and his feet are nerveless: Hand of the Weakener, the demon, deputy of Anum. In order to rescue him from the hand of the Weakener, (you shall ...)",<sup>125</sup>

These symptoms seem only remotely related to epilepsy. Even so, Tablet XXX is the last one of the group according to the Nimrud Catalogue "If *miqtu* falls upon him and — Symptoms (of ?) a n. t. a. š. u. b. a".

We do not exclude the possibility that in Tablet XXX therapeutic prescriptions systematically followed the symptoms (as was the case in much of XXVIII and in XXIX).

<sup>125</sup> Kinnier Wilson, *Iraq* 19 (1957) 41 ND 4368 col. VI 1-4.

## V A SECOND DIAGNOSTIC TEXT

There were two diagnostic handbooks. So far, we have considered only the canonical version edited by Esagil-kīn-apli. The other handbook was named, after its incipit, "If you approach a sick man". It seems to be an older version and is known from only two fragments, the one from Middle Babylonian Nippur, the other from Neo-Assyrian Sultantepe. The latter text, published by O.R. Gurney as *STT* 1 89, has a large section on epilepsy. I am of the opinion that "the Gurney text with its diverse, if not 'wild' contents, was an older version and the editor of the classic Diagnostic Handbook composed his book in reaction to it".<sup>1</sup>

The first half of the text, badly damaged, discusses bodily ailments caused by various acts of sorcery: Hand of Cutting-off-Life (*qāt zikurrudē*) and "machinations" (*ipšū epšūšu*); followed by "hatred" (*zīru*) and "seizure of the mouth" (*kadibbidū*).<sup>2</sup> Rituals are often performed before stars.<sup>3</sup> After the passage on seizure of the mouth, there follows one line with a rubric referring to that preceding section (102): "23(+)th tablet (of the series) 'If you approach a sick man'". Of the "3" in the number only the three heads are visible; so the number could equally be 24, 25, or 26 (the heads look too large to be part of "29").

The second half of the text, lines 103 to the end, gives the symptoms of epileptoid attacks and often adds therapeutic prescriptions. The tablet number in the rubric of this section unfortunately is broken off. It is impossible to identify 103 ff. with one particular tablet or "chapter" of the classic handbook *TDP*. Even the first line is not found in the Nimrud Catalogue. The text looks like a collection of diagnoses taken from other texts.<sup>4</sup>

The text begins with symptoms ascribed to the god "Lugal-girra". As was previously suggested, when discussing "Lord of the Roof", Lugal-gir.ra in this text must be an unusual way of writing Lugal-ūr.ra, "Lord of the Roof", the demon that causes epilepsy. Another ideosyncrasy of this text is the use of the Sumerogram UD.DU for *h(i)ātu* "overwhelm", normally LÁ.

103-108 DIŠ enūma (UD) ihītaššu (UD.[D]U-šú) inšū (IGI-šú) šá imitti (XV) kīma (GIM) pilaqqi (GIŠ.BAL) i-lam-[mi] (104) inšū (IGI-šú) šá šumēli (CL) dama (ÚŠ) malāt (DIRIG-at) pašu (KA-šú) iptenette (BAD.BAD-te) lišānšu (EME-šú) (105) ú-na-šak LUGAL-GIR.RA išbassu (DIB-su) šumma (BE-ma) enūma (UD) ihītaššu (UD.[D]U-šú) (106) ma-za-za šá mēšu (A.MEŠ-šú) izziz (GUB-iz) ana mūši (GE<sub>6</sub>) ušterdema (?) (UŠ-ma) [...] (107) šumma (BE-ma) ma-za-za šá (A.MEŠ-šú) la (NU) izziz (GUB-iz) [...] (108) murussu (GIG-su) irrikma (GÍD-ma) amēlu (NA) (or: ina ūmi (UD)) ina lipti (?) (TA[G]) [...]

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his right eye circles like a spindle, his left eye

<sup>1</sup> M. Stol, "Diagnosis and therapy in Babylonian medicine", *JEOL* 32 (1991-92).

<sup>2</sup> Gurney, *STT* 1 p. 8. The "Hand" in 27, 37, 47, 56; the "machinations" in 26, 42, 46, 51, 55; "hatred" in 78, 89, 93.

<sup>3</sup> Lines 17, 25, 31, 36 (?), 50, 55, 60.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. I. Tzvi Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature. Case Studies* (1987) 63, note, commenting on the first half: "(STT 1 89 is) a collection of diagnoses. These diagnoses are, at least in part, extracted from texts which contain the full diagnosis and ritual".



is full of blood, he opens his mouth time and again, he bites his tongue: Lord of the Roof has seized him. If, at the time [it overwhelms him], the (urinary) flow of his water comes to a standstill: he shall discharge (?) before the night and [...]. If the (urinary) flow of his water does not come to a standstill: ...[...]: his illness will last long and the man (or: during the day), when being touched (?), [...].

"To circle", said of the eye, is attested only here. Another text, commenting on a section "eyes" in a diagnostic text, "explains" *i-la-wi* as *i-lam-mu*.<sup>5</sup> Biting the tongue as a symptom of epilepsy is found only here. Did the editor of the canonical diagnostic handbook not accept it as a genuine symptom and omit it in his work for that reason? *Manzazu* (here *ma-za-za*) refers to excrement, be it fluid or solid.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere we read "he is blocked (*issekker*) and his excrement does not come out (*ašû*): Hand of the spirit of a murderer".<sup>7</sup> The by-form *manzaltu* gave some scholars the idea that the Babylonians related this word to the verb *nazālu* "to drip" rather than to *izuzzu* "to stand".<sup>8</sup> It is true that in our passage a translation "flow of excrement" for *manzazu* / *manzaltu* is far to be preferred to just "excrement"; it also would fit the use of *redû* Št. Can we take *ma-za-za* as an infinitive, "to flow"?

This entry first gives the diagnosis "seizure by Lord of the Roof". This is in line with the style of the diagnostic handbook. It continues, however, by adding two alternatives with subsidiary symptoms, followed by an advice (?) and a prognosis. This replaces the usual short remarks like "he will live / die" (and more). The alternatives are introduced by *šumma* "If", written *BE-ma*, as is usual in omina when *šumma* is not written at the beginning of the line.

109–112 *Diš enūma* (UD-*ma*) *iḫitaššu* (UD.DU-*šû*) *inšu* (IGI-*šû*) *šá šumēli* (CL) *kīma* (GIM) *pilaqqi* (GIŠ.BA[L]) [*i-lam-mi*] (110) *inšu* (IGI-*šû*) *šá imitti* (ZAG) *dama* (UŠ) *malât* (DIRIG-at) *pašu* (KA-*šû*) [*iptenette lišānšu*] (111) *ú-na-šak* <sup>d</sup>LUGAL-GĪR.RA *išbassu* (D[IB-su]) [...] (112) *irtenedde* (UŠ.UŠ) [...]

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his left eye circles like a spindle, his right eye is full of blood, he [opens] his mouth [time and again], he bites [his tongue]: Lord of the Roof has seized him. [...] will chase him all he time [...]."

113–119 *Diš enūma* (UD) [...] (114) *pašu* (KA-*šû*) (?) [...] (115) *i-nu-ma šá i la d[u]* [...] (116) <sup>d</sup>LUGAL-GĪR.RA *išbassu* (DIB-su) [...] (117) *šumma* (BE-*ma*) *hīla* (?) (A.KAL) *ir-šu-ú* [...] (118) *na-kud šumma* (BE-*ma*) DA [...] (119) *mūtu* (NAM.BAD) *imqussu* (ŠUB-su-m[a] (?)) [...]

"If, at the time [...] his mouth [...], when ...[...]: Lord of the Roof has seized him [...]. If he acquires 'strong water' [...], it is critical. If ...[...]; Death has fallen upon him and [...]."

"Strong water" must be a bodily excretion. The Sumerogram A.KAL stands for Akkadian *mīlu* "high water, flood" (here not relevant), *hīlu* "exudation, resin of plants", *nīlu* "semen". In the Old Babylonian List of Diseases [A.K]AL.a.ra.ab = *hi-i-[lu]* follows *zu'tu* "sweat".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *SpbTU* I 31:10.

<sup>6</sup> Solid: the faeces comes to a standstill in the anus; *SpbTU* I 36:13 (comm.).

<sup>7</sup> *TDP* 106 III 35; 236:46 (correct Labat's *ilabbir*).

<sup>8</sup> *CAD* A/2 219–220; H. Hunger, *SpbTU* I p. 45a. The two manuscripts for *TDP* 236:46 offer the masculine, resp. feminine, forms: KI.GUB-su and KI.GUB-šu.

<sup>9</sup> *MSL* 9 (1967) 79:117b. — Note that *CAD* A/1 101a reads *a-dan* in this passage, "the natural course of disease". This writing would be most unusual.

**120–123** DIŠ lēssu (TE-su) šá imitti (XV) arqat (SIG<sub>7</sub>-at) šá šumēli (CL) sāmāt (S[A<sub>5</sub>-at]) [...] (121) i-šag-gar-šú tēmšu (UMUŠ(!)-šú) la (NU) šabit (DIB) mihiš (SIG-iš) x[...] (122) ina mūši (GE<sub>6</sub>) lapit (TAG-it) amēlu šú (NA.BI) epērū (SAHAR) kabtūšu (DUG[UD]-šú) (123) a-na UD.50.KAM [...]

"If his right cheek is yellow-green, that of the left is red, [...] pricks (??) him, his mind is not seized: a hit by [...]; he has been 'touched' during the night. The 'dust' will be heavy for that man [...]; within fifty days he will [...]."

The verb *šagāru* (121, 125) is lacking in both dictionaries. What the "heavy dust" means is not clear. "Dust" can refer to a skin disease. A child can suffer from "being reached by dust" (*kišid epērī*).

Note that the two passages on the cheek (120–123, 124–127) look like intrusions within the section where every entry starts with DIŠ enūma (103–140). They are probably secondary symptoms elaborating on what precedes, 113–119. They replace the expected pair BE-ma ... BE-ma in the form of new, seemingly independent, entries.

**124–127** DIŠ lēssu (TE-su) šá šumēli (CL) arqat (SIG<sub>7</sub>-at) šá imitti (XV) sāmāt (SA<sub>5</sub>-a[ti]) [...] (125) i-šag-gar-šú tēmšu (UMUŠ(!)-šú) la (NU) šabit ([DIB]) u zu'ta (IR) x[...] (126) LUGAL-GIR.RA iṣbassu (DIB-s[u]) ana 50 [...] (127) āšipūssu (MAŠ.MAŠ-su) teppušma (DÜ-uš-ma) [...]

"If his left cheek is yellow-green, that of the right is red, [...] pricks (??) him, his mind is not seized and sweat [...]: Lord of the Roof has seized him; within fifty [days] ...]. You will perform magic on him and [he will ...]."

**128–132** DIŠ enūma (UD-ma) iḥiṭaššu (UD.DU-šú) qāssu (ŠU-su) šá imitti (XV) inšū (IGI-šú) šá [...] (129) qerbūšu (ŠA.MEŠ-šú) šum-mu-ru ru'ta (Ú[H]) [...] (130) šaptāšu (NUNDUN.MEŠ-šú) i-ḥi-da mihiš (SIG-iš) [...] (131) amēlu šú (LÚ.BI) iṣ-tu ilputušu (TAG-šu) šumēli (C[L]) (?) [...] (132) teppušma (DÜ-uš-ma) ú-za-bal-ma [x] [...]

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his right hand, his [...] eye [are ...], his intestines are bloated, saliva [...], his lips prattle (?): a hit by [...]. That man, after it has touched him, [his] left side (?) [...]. You will perform [magic] on him and it will linger on and [he will ...]."

The clearly written form *i-ḥi-da* could be derived from *hiādu* "to make an enigmatic utterance".<sup>10</sup>

**133–140** DIŠ enūma (UD-ma) iḥiṭaššu (UD.DU-šú) qāssu (ŠU-su) šá šumēli (CL) inšū (IGI-šú) šá [...] (134) kīma (GIM) kalbi (UR.KU) i-šag-gūm šinnāšu (ZÚ.MEŠ-šú) [...] (135) ināšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) gal(!)-ta LUGAL-GIR.RA iṣbassu (DIB-su) (136) ana bulluṭišu (TI.LA-šú) qí-ba la (NU) tašakkan (GAR-an) šumma (BE-ma) enūma (UD-ma) iḥiṭaššu (UD.DU-šú) (137) ināšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) tar-ka i-ḥar-ru-ur ru'tu (ÚH) ina pišu (KA-šú) illak (GIN) (138) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA iṣbassu (DIB-su) šumma (BE-ma) enūma (UD-ma) iṣbatušu (DIB-šú) (139) dimtu (IR) ina inišu (IGI-šú) illak (GIN-ak) TUG DUGUD (?) par-ši i-ša-bat (140) a-aḥ-ka la ta-nam-di

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, his left hand, his [...] eye [are ...], he growls like a dog, his teeth [...], his eyes are fearful: Lord of the Roof has seized him. In order to heal him, you shall not make a prognostication."

If, at the time it overwhelms him, his eyes are dark, he makes ... noises, saliva flows in/from his mouth: an.ta.šub.ba has seized him. If, at the time it has seized him, tears

<sup>10</sup> M. Held in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (1985) 94.



flow from his eye: he shall seize the 'heavy cloth' of the ritual; you shall not be negligent".

We owe the reading *ināšu gal-ta* in 135 to von Soden's dictionary.<sup>11</sup> The verb *ḥarāru* (137) refers to sounds made by the throat (*pace CAD arāru C*).<sup>12</sup> The negative advice "You shall not make a prognostication" is attested a few times in the diagnostic handbook.<sup>13</sup> Here it is followed by two alternatives giving subsidiary symptoms which make a prognostication possible. A similar procedure is found in a therapeutic text on 'wounds' (*šimmu*): apparently, one waits to see how the 'wound' develops.<sup>14</sup> The prescription at the end is not attested elsewhere. "He shall seize the 'heavy cloth' of the ritual": an alternative interpretation would be "he will seize the garment of an important person" (TUG DUGUD = *šubat kabtim*), leaving an unexplained *par-ši*.

**141–147** DIŠ *ināšu* (IGI-šú) *i-ša-par* (!) *šaptašu* (NUNDUN-šú) *paṭrat* (DU<sub>8</sub>-ā[r]) *ru'tu* ([ÚH]) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *illak* (GIN-ak) (142) *qātātēšu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *šēpēšu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) *t[a]-lam-ma-šú kīma* (GIM) *imмери* (UDU.NITA) *ta-ab-[hi]* (143) *[i (!)]-nap-pa-aš* AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *išbassu* (DIB-su) *šumma* (BE-[ma]) (144) *kīma* (ANŠE) *i-nam-gu-ug* (!) *ina šuprišu* (UMBIN-š[u]) x[...] (145) *qaqqara* (?) (KI) *i-ba-āš ū mītūti* (BAD.MEŠ) *kīma* (GIM) *ru-u-...* (146) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *mursišu* (?) ([G]IG-šú) *me il li[k. ...]* (147) *ul uš-[te-zeb]*

"If his eye squints, his lip is 'loose', saliva flows in/from his mouth, his hands, his feet, his torso (?) he kicks like a slaughtered ram: an.ta.šub.ba has seized him.

X If he brays like a donkey, ...s the ground with his [...] nail, and [...] dead persons as if ...[...]: an.ta.šub.ba ... his disease ...; he will not be saved".

This entry is rather similar to rev. 1–2 of Tablet XXVII: "If, at the time it has seized him, as he is sitting, his eye squints, his lip is 'loose', his saliva flows in/from his mouth, his hand, his foot, his torso (?) of the left side kick like a slaughtered ram: an.ta.šub.ba. If, at the time it has seized him, his heart is awake: it will be eradicated. If, at the time it has seized him, his heart is not awake: it will not be eradicated".

In 141, we emended what looks like *i-DAG* into *i-ša-par* (!). It is striking that the same emendation is again required in other instances where *ināšu išappar* is meant: STT 1 105:16 (cf. 18), BAM 1 3 I 2, dupl. BAM 5 480 I 1 (older copy in CT 23 23). The sign DAG can be read as *bār*, a Sumerian verb well attested in the combination *s a b ā r* "to spread out a net". A commentary has this information: IGI-šú *i-ša-par* : BAR: *ša-pa-ru* BAR: *za-a-ru*.<sup>15</sup> Without going into the discussion on *sa.bar* (etc.) by P. Steinkeller,<sup>16</sup> we suggest the value *šappar* for DAG (BĀR) in our verbal form, thus reading *i-šappar*. This must have been a deliberately learned way of writing *išappar*.

We perhaps need an emendation for *i ba āš* in line 145. One could think of *qaqqara i-<ka>-ba-ās* "he steps on the ground".

**148–151** DIŠ *miqtu* (ŠUB-tu) *imaqqussu* (ŠUB-su-ma) *kīma* (GIM) *alpi* (GUD) [...] (149) *i-ra-mu-um šaptašu* (NUNDUN.MEŠ-šú) [...] (150) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA *išbassu* (DIB-su) *šumma* (BE-m[a]) [...] (151) *bakā* (IR) *ār-ḥi-š ipaṭṭar* (DU<sub>8</sub>) *šumma* (BE-ma) x[...]

<sup>11</sup> Also in KUB 34 6 rev. 3, TDP 80:11, BAM 2 131:9. Cf. *digilšu ga-li-it* in TLB 2 21:14; *nīš inīšu pa-rid*, SpbTU 1 31:9.

<sup>12</sup> M. Stol, BiOr 43 (1986) 173–4, commenting on *ḥrr* in the Ugaritic hippiatric texts.

<sup>13</sup> AMT 51,2:6 (diagnostic !), and in TDP. Cf. E. Ritter, *Studies Benno Landsberger* (1965) 303 note 14.

<sup>14</sup> BAM 6 580 III 1–7. See the discussion by M. Stol in JEOL 32 (1991–92).

<sup>15</sup> SpbTU 1 47:8–9.

<sup>16</sup> ZA 75 (1985) 39–46.

"If a fall falls upon him and [...] like an ox, he roars, his lips [...]: an.ta.šub.ba has seized him. If [...]: he will quickly stop crying.<sup>17</sup> If [...]"

The first three words are identical with those of Tablet XXVII:1 ff., edited above.

**152–158** DIŠ enūma (UD-ma) iḫṭaššu (UD.DU-šú) kīma (GIM) summati (TU.K[UR<sub>4</sub>.MUŠEN]) [i-da-am-mu-um] (153) ināšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) it-ta-na-aš-d[a]-da (?) [...] (154) ina tur-ri pišu (KA-šú) illakma (?) (GI[N]-[m]a) (?) libbašu (ŠA-šú) [...] (155) [UD].A nadi (?) (SUB) enūma (UD-ma) iḫṭaššu (UD.DU-šú) šer'an nakkaptišu ([S]A SAG.K[IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú]) [...] (156) na-šu-u ina KIN.TUR UD.[K]A.BAR tamahḫašma (SĠG-ma) [šumma ina pān mahāšika] (157) ár-ḫiṣ igallut (LUH-ut) murussu (GIG-su) ipaṭṭar (DU<sub>8</sub>) [...] šumma] (158) ina pān (IGI) mahāšika (SĠG-ka) la (NU) igallut (LUH-ut) murussu (GIG-[su]) [...]

"If, at the time it overwhelms him, he moans like a dove, his eyes are constantly 'drawn', [...] flows in the 'thread'<sup>18</sup> of his mouth [or: nose?], his belly [...], is covered with ... spots (?): (if) at the time it overwhelms him, the vein of [his right / left] temple is raised, you shall 'hit' (it) with a bronze lancet and [if] he quickly quivers [when facing your 'hitting'], his disease will stop [...]; [if] he does not quiver when facing your 'hitting', his disease will [...]"

The patient's reactions to scarification of his temple are indicative for the future course of his disease. Such scarification has long been known in the Near East; see M. Stol in *Mélanges André Finet* (1989) 164a.

**159–166** DIŠ šibtu (DIB-tu) ina tūbi (DUG.GA) ikkal (KÚ) išatti (NAG) u ḫa-di-[i] [išabbassuma (?)] (160) ki-ma e-ri-šu ma la iš ma išatti (NAG) [...] (161) enūma (UD) šibissu (DIB-su) um-taš-še-ru-šú kīma (GIM) šá x[...] (162) ramānšu (NÍ-šú) la (NU) idē (ZU) AN.TA.ŠUB.BA [...] (163) UD.6.KAM ina pān (IGI) Sīn (dXXX) BAD KU (or: ina KI) il ke š [u ...] (164) UD x[...] x NAM KU le e [ku] [šú] x[...] (165) inēšu (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) tapaššaš ([Š]ĒŠ) [ina pān] ([IGI]) Sīn (dXXX) taballal (HĪ.HĪ) [...] (166) ina ūmi šemī (UD.ŠE.GA) teppu[ma] (DÜ-u[š-ma]) [...]

"If a seizure [seizes him (?)] (while) he is eating and drinking in a good mood and is enjoying himself, ...<sup>19</sup> as he wishes and drinks (it), after his seizure has released him, he, like one [...], does not know himself: an.ta.šub.ba [...] six days before Sīn ..., when, ..., you anoint his eyes, you mix before Sīn ... on a propitious day you shall perform [and he will ...]"

"Six days" (163): three short horizontals on top of each other, seemingly "3", stand for "9"; proven by *BAM* 2 164:16, cf. 161 V 1. Here, we see two horizontals.

**167–173** [DIŠ šibtu] išabbassuma ([DIB-su-ma] širūšu (UZU.MEŠ-šú) [ú-za-qat] (?) ri-mu-tú irašši ([TUKU]-[š]i) (168) [x x x] x ni ina dabābišu (KA.KA-šú) UR [(x) x] šaknu (GAR-nu) ū ir-te-[h]a (169) [(o) ri-h]u-ut dŠUL.PA.Ē.A išbassu (DIB-su) šumma (BE-ma) enūma (UD-ma) išbatušu ([DIB-šú]) (170) [x] imittišu (ZAG-šú) ēm (NE) [UR].MEŠ <ina> murussu (GIG-su) ipaṭṭar (DU<sub>8</sub>) šumma (BE-ma) enūma (UD-ma) išbatušu (DIB-šú) (171) [x] šumēlišu (GÜB-šú) ēm (NE) [UR].MEŠ ina murūšu (GIG-šú) irrikma (GĪD.DA-ma) kutpā (NA<sub>4</sub>.AN.ZĀH GE<sub>6</sub>) (172) ni-kip-tú zikaru (NITA) u sinništū (SAL) itti (KI) šaman (Ī.GIS) ja-a-[š]i (173) taptanaššassuma (ŠĒŠ.MEŠ-su-ma) iballu[ti] (TI-[u])

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Šitassām mimma la paṭer*, *TLB* 2 21:19.

<sup>18</sup> I.e., the middle ? Cf. *DUR* = *MURUB<sub>4</sub>-ú* (*qablā*), E. Leichty, *Afo* 24 (1973) 79:1. Hardly *dūr appi*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *CAD* L la'āšu, disc. ("obscure").



"[If a seizure] seizes him and his flesh gives him a stinging pain (?),<sup>20</sup> he acquires paresis, ... when he is talking, moreover, it has poured down upon him (?): Spawn of Šulpaea has seized him. If, at the time it has seized him, he is hot on his right side, ... his illness (?) will stop. If, at the time it has seized him, he is hot on his left side, ... his illness (?) will last long and you shall anoint him repeatedly with black frit, the *nikiptu* plant, male and female, together with the oil of a weasel,<sup>21</sup> and he will recover".

174-179 DIŠ *ina alāk* (GIN) *ger-ri šibtu* (DIB-tu) *išabbassuma* (DIB-su-ma) *enūma* (UD-ma) *išabbatušu* (DIB-šú) *qātātēšu* (ŠU<sup>II</sup>-šú) *šēpēšu* (GIR<sup>II</sup>-šú) (175) *itti* (K1) *qaq-qa-[r]i i-šap-piṣ ināšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *[tar]-ka* (176) *naḥirāšu* (KIR<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ-šú) *ga-an-ša šubassu* (TUG-su) *i-kal riḥūt* (A.R1A) (177) <sup>d</sup>ŠUL.PA.Ē.A *ana ittišu* (GIZKIM-šú) *ḥalāq* (HA.A) *būt abišu* (É AD-šú) (178) *abušu* (AD-šú) *ummašu* (AMA-šú) *še-re-es-su inaššú* (IL-ú) (179) *ana la* (NU) *kašādi* (D1.D1) *bal-ṭu-su ina erṣeti* (K1-ti) *te-qeb-b[e]r-[m]a lumunšu* (HUL-šú) *ippaṭtar* (DU<sub>8</sub>)

"If a seizure seizes him while going in the street and, at the time it seizes him, he ... his hands (and) his feet with the ground, his eyes are dark, his nostrils are contracted (?), he 'eats' his garment: Spawn of Šulpaea; in due time the ruin of his family; his father and mother will bear his punishment. In order that (this) will not reach (them), you bury him alive in the earth, and its evil (portent) will be undone".

This passage has previously been translated by Erica Reiner in *Le monde du sorcier* (1966) 92; it together with the next entry was examined above, in the discussion of "Spawn of Šulpaea", pointing out that killing a patient is most unusual (p. 14f.). Landsberger misread the end of line 177 as *ḥa-a-at-ta-šú* (*WdO* 3 49f., note 16) but a collation by Gurney confirmed the copy (Landsberger, 59).

180-186 D[IS] *kīma* ([G]IM) *šimētān* (AN.ÚSAN) *šibtu* (DIB-tu) *išabbassuma* (DIB-su-ma) *enūma* (UD-ma) *išabbatušu* (DIB-šú) *ik-kil-lu* (181) *ištanassišuma* (GÜ.DÉ-šú-ma) *u šu-ú e-t[a]-nap-pal* (182) *abī* (!) ([A]D-ja) *ummī* (!) (AMA-lu) *aḥḥūja* (ŠEŠ.MEŠ-ja) *aḥātūja* (NIN.MEŠ-ja) *imūtū* (BAD.MEŠ) (183) [(ina)] *la* ([N]U) *idē* (ZU (!)-e) *ma-am-ma ištanassi* (GÜ.GÜ-si) *ik-ta-na-la* (184) *ḥi-pī arki* (EGIR) *ibkū* (IR-ú) *[i-ša]-lal-ma la* (NU) *itebbe* (ZI-bé) (185) *enūma* (UD) *šibissu* (DIB-su) *um-taš-š[e-r]u-šu kīma* (GIM) *ibkū* (IR) *la* (NU) *idē* (ZU) (186) *riḥūt* (A.R1A) <sup>d</sup>ŠUL.PA.Ē.A *la* (NU) *itebbe* (ZI) *ina muršišu* (GIG-šú) *ina išati* (IZI) *taqallušu* (GÍBIL-šú)

"If a seizure seizes him at sunset and, at the time it seizes him, a wailing voice cries out at him and he responds (to it) every time, (if) he time and again shouts 'My father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters have died', without recognizing (?) anybody, (and) he stops (doing this) time and again, — 'break' — after he has cried he falls asleep and does not rise; after his seizure has released him he does not know that he has cried: Spawn of Šulpaea; it will not go away; you shall burn him with fire in his illness".

For the "wailing voice" to which the patient responds, see the notes on Tablet XXVI rev. 27-28 (Chapter IV). "Break" is a remark by the ancient scribe that in his original this passage is broken. The following words suggest to us that a short passage like "and he cried" had broken away. "It will not go away": or: "he will not stand up (= recover)"? See the note on Tablet XXVI rev. 23-24 (Chapter IV).

187-191 [DIŠ] *qaqqassu* ([S]AG.DU-su) *pagaršu* (LÚ.BAD-šú) *i-na-aš kišassu* (GÜ-su)

<sup>20</sup> Reading uncertain. Cf. UZU-šú *ú-zaq-qat-uš*, *AMT* 54,3 rev. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Following *CAD* A/1 231a.

*ana imitti* (XV) *u šumēli* (CL) *ittanaddi* (ŠUB.ŠUB-ú (!)) (188) *lišānšu* (EME-šú) *it-te-né-biṭ* *lišānšu* (EME-šú) *it-ta-nak-šar* (!) (189) *pišu* (KA-šú) [x x] *ta it* X.MEŠ-šú *tab-ka ina alākišu* (GIN-šu) (190) [ú] *-sa-kar riḫūt* (A.RI.A) <sup>d</sup>ŠUL.PA.È.A *ana muškēni* (MAŠ.EN.KAK) *šibit* (DIB) *lumni* (HUL) (191) *kabtu* ([DUG]UD) *uš-ta-mar* (!)(text RAD)-*ra-aš-ma ina la-a ūmīšu* (UD.MEŠ-šú)

"If his head (and) his body shake, he (!) throws his neck to the right and the left time and again, his tongue is swollen, his tongue is 'knotted', his mouth ..., his ... are let down, he ... when walking: Spawn of Šulpaea; for a poor man: seizure of Evil; an important man will have a hard time and before his time <he will die>".

**192–195** *Dīš irātūšu* (GABA.MEŠ-šú) *ikkalāšu* (KÚ.MEŠ-šú) *ma-gal ikkalma* ([KÚ]-ma) *ma-gal išatti* (NAG-ti) (193) *ik-ta-na-la ma-gal it* (!)(text IK)-*ta-na-al ig-ta-na-lut* (194) *ū ip-ta-na-[ru]-ud amēlu šū* (LÚ.BI) *be-en-nu iṣbassu* (DIB-su) (195) *amēlu šū* (LÚ.BI) *lu ina bābi* (KÁ) *lu-u ina tarbaši* (TÜR) *lu ina nāri* (ID) *iṣbassu* (DIB-su)

"If his breast(s) hurt him, he eats a lot and he drinks a lot, (and) he stops (doing this) time and again, he lies down (?) a lot, is always quivering and upset: *bennu* has seized that man; it has seized that man either in the door-opening, or in the (cattle) compound, or in the river".

These lines were translated by F. Köcher in *Festschrift für Heinz Goerke* (1978) 35 note 57. Following CAD K 102b he corrects *ik-ta-na-al* into *it* (!)-*ta-na-al* "(und sofort) in tiefen Schlaf fällt". Note the repetitive sequence *iktanal(l)a - iktanal - igtanallut*; is line 193 partially corrupt?

**196–204 (196)** *Dīš ina ḫur-ba-ši murussu* (GIG-su) *ú-šar-ri-ma ba-lu pa-tan* (197) *la-am akala* (NINDA) *ikkalu* (KÚ) *mē* (A) *išattū* (NAG) *zu'tu* (IR) *ina zumrišu* (SU-šú) *it-tab-ši* (198) *ta-aš-rit šalāmi* (SILIM-me) *maršu šū* (GIG.B[1]) *iballuṭ* ([DIN]-uṭ)

(199) *Dīš ina murūšu* (GIG.BI) *ittenebbe* (ZL.ZI-bé) *murūš* (GIG) *mi-na-a-[ti] maruš* ([GI]G) (200) *enūma* (UD-ma) *ḫa-a-at-ti-šū i-bak-ki iš* [x] *ut* [x] [ma] (201) *ru'tu* (UH) *ina pišu* (KA-šú) *illak* (GIN-ak) *maruštu* (NĪG.GIG) *la šu iṣbassu* (DIB-su)

(202) *Dīš i-pe-ši u i-ša-lim šal šu iṣbassu* (DIB-su) [x] *ma* [ti] [x] *lu*

(203) *Dīš ina šū* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *nu-up-pu-ḫa ma-mit iṣbassu* (DIB-su) *ipaššarma* (BÚR-ma) *iballuṭ* (T[1]-uṭ) (204) // *ana zikari* (NITA) *u sinništi* (SAL) *ištēnma* (1-[ma])

"If his illness had begun in shivering and on an empty stomach, before he has eaten bread (or) drunk water, sweat appears on his body: the beginning of health; that patient will recover.

If he gets up all the time in his illness: he suffers from an illness of the limbs<sup>22</sup>. (If) he cries at the time of his fit, ..., saliva flows in/from his mouth: ... trouble has seized him.

If he becomes white and he becomes black: ... has seized him; ...

If his eyes are swollen: an Oath has seized him; it will be released and [he will] recover. Variant: for a man and a woman it is the same".

For line 202 (to become white and black) CAD S 70b gives the freer translation "If he becomes alternately pale and flushed". It is unfortunate that we do not understand the cause of the seizures in lines 201–2 (cf. O.R. Gurney, *STT* 1 p. 8: *ikkib ilišu* and *SAL šu*). An *ikkibu* never "seizes" a person; a *maruštu* does. — That a prognosis equally applies to a man and a woman is a more common remark in the medical texts.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. TDP 158:15 f.



205–214 At the end of this text there now follows a selection of omnia diagnosed as “Hand of Sin”. Does this mean that the Hand of the Moon-god is associated with the preceding epileptoid diseases? No therapies are given.

(205) [DİŠ] *maṣṣu* ([G]IG) *zumuršu* (SU-ŠU) [*i*]-*mím ikašši* (ŠED<sub>7</sub>) *šibissu* (DIB-su) *in-akkir* (KÚR.KÚR) *qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX)

“If the body of a sick man becomes warm (and) becomes cold (and) his seizure changes: Hand of Sin”.

This is the first line of Tablet XVIII; see TDP 168:106 (catch-line) and 168:1.

(206) [DİŠ] *ināšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *ma-aḥ-ḥa qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX)

“If his eyes are suffused: Hand of Sin”.

Cf. KAR 211:22, [...] *maḥiṣ u ināšu maḥḥa* (DIRIG) *qāt Sîn*

(207) [DİŠ] *ināšu* (IGI<sup>II</sup>-šú) *it-te-neq-lip-pa-a qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX)

“If his eyes...<sup>23</sup> Hand of Sin”.

(208) [DİŠ] *inšu* (IGI-šú) *šá šumēli* (GÜB) *ka[p]-ša-at u i-sa-šú nu-uš qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX)

“If his left eye is bulging (?) and his cheek is shaken: Hand of Sin”.

Cf. TDP 48 E 5–6 (= Labat, vol. II, Planche IX K. 10570), ([i-s]u-šú *nuššā*: Hand of Sin; [in]šu *kaṣṣat* BU *us su*).

(209) [DİŠ] *pussu* (SAG.KI-su) *šá šumēli* (GÜB) *ikkalšuma* (KÚ-šú-ma) *u it-te-niq-lep-pu qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX)

“If his left forehead hurts him and ...: Hand of Sin”.

Taken from TDP 34:24. Note that TDP 48 E 6 continues with BU *us su* at the end of the line. The lexical texts closely associate the obscure verb *neqelpû* (line 209) and *dalāhu* (line 210). On the other hand, *neqelpû* and *maḥāhu* (206) both have DIRIG as Sumerogram.

(210) [DİŠ] *iga* [llut] ([LU]H-[ut] *ittanadlaḥ* (LÜ.LÜ) *qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (<sup>d</sup>XXX)

“[If he is quive]ring and he is ‘troubled’ all the time: Hand of Sin”.

Symptoms of a baby: *šumma šerru igdanallut u LÜ.LÜ* (var. LÜ.LÜ-*aḥ*) *qāt Sîn iballut* (TDP 220:35; cf. 224:55).

(211) [DİŠ ... š] *e-e-ti ana zikari* (NITA) *u sinniṣti* (SAL) *ištēnma* (1-ma)

“[If ... caused by] sun-heat: for a man and a women it is the same”.

(212) [DİŠ ...] *zu'ta* ([I]R) *la* (NU) *irašši* ([TUKU]) *qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (XXX) *iballut* (AL.TI) *šá-niš ana rabi* (GAL) *u šeḥri* (TUR) *qātma* (ŠU-ma)

“[If ...], he has no sweat: Hand of Sin; he will recover. Otherwise: for an old and a young person it is the same”.

“The same for old and young”: also in TDP 112:29.

(213–214) [DİŠ ...] *x bi i ru da u x ka* (214) [...] *x su qāt* (ŠU) *Sîn* (XXX) *u Šamaš* (<sup>d</sup>UTU)

“[If ...] ... [ ... ] ...: Hand of Sin and Šamaš”.

A ruling follows; in line 215 the last words of the title of the series are preserved: “[Tablet x of:] When you approach [a sick man]” (restored with help of line 102).

<sup>23</sup> See the remark on line 209.

## VI PROTECTION AND THERAPEUTICS

The diagnostic handbook occasionally gives remedies against epilepsy; but such passages are highly exceptional. We will now turn to the texts that presuppose the diagnosis "epilepsy" (according to modern terminology) and present their users with the appropriate treatment. Magic pervades all prescriptions and some are merely magical in as much as they are rituals with prayers. We will first study those.

### Magical rites

The first text tells what to do, "If a n.t a.š u b. b a, Provider-of-Evil, Hand of a Spirit [or Hand] of the Goddess continually are upon a man".<sup>1</sup> "In order to marry off all those diseases", the text continues, one has to make "a puppet of the disease(s) made of clay", to dress it in specific garments and to pour oil on its head; "(then) you shall select for him for marriage (*hiāru*) a piglet as a wife (*kīma aššati*)". Presents and offerings are to be brought to the Sun-god Šamaš — later to be invoked in a prayer —, an offering table is to be erected and set on fire and then the decisive ritual act follows: "You (= the conjurer) make the sick man speak as if marrying (was involved) (*kīma ša hārim*), you sever his (garment's) hem (by cutting it) from the puppet of the disease(s), three times". What the sick man has to "speak" is the now following prayer to the god Šamaš; the important phrases there are "Any Evil to which I have been married in your presence: investigate my case and his case and [remove it] from my body. O Šamaš, in your presence I made him take in marriage (*aḥāzu*) a piglet..." Unfortunately, the text breaks off here.

The interpretation of this ritual is not always clear. Firstly, some difficult lines at the beginning of the text are not translated here but they do not seem to affect its central meaning. Then the reader will be surprised that diseases can be represented by "puppets". We know from other texts that a disease can be symbolised in such a way. An interesting and unusual example is this passage taken from a text on the effects of sorcery:<sup>2</sup>

- If a man is dizzy (lit. "his face turns around"), his ears buzz, his flesh contracts lameness, his heart is troubled all the time, but you do not know the nature of his disease (*šikin murši*): that man is bewitched; puppets of him have been made and been entrusted to Ereškigal [goddess of the Netherworld] in barren places. In order to undo the witchcraft, four puppets will be made and entrusted to Ereškigal in barren places.

We assume that the conjurer, not being able to recognise in the four symptoms one specific disease, symbolises each symptom by a separate puppet. In our text, on the contrary, symptoms have already been identified with four diseases which are represented by only one puppet. The fact that these four are so much akin could explain the

<sup>1</sup> KAR 66, see E. Ebeling, *MVAG* 23/1 (1918) 45 ff.

<sup>2</sup> BAM 3 214 11–14.



single puppet. The incantation presupposes a marriage to "Any Evil"; this also could be visualised in a puppet.<sup>3</sup>

As to the marrying ceremony, there has been some discussion about the question as to who is the male and who the female. A recent study made clear that the "puppet" of diseases is the male partner and the piglet is the "wife" — as the text itself says.<sup>4</sup> The prayer shows that the words spoken by the sick man unite his diseases and the piglet in wedlock and the Sun-god seems to be the "best man".<sup>5</sup>

The cutting of the hem is a real problem; the interpretation of *itti* in line 19 is a smaller problem: "You sever his (garment's) hem (by cutting it) from (?) (*itti*) the puppet of the disease(s), three times" ([TÚG].SÍG-šú KINU *mur-ši 3-šú ta-bat-taq*). Cutting the hem reminds Assyriologists of a divorce procedure, but the question is, whose hem is meant. Is it that of the patient, the piglet, or the puppet? If it is the patient's hem, its cutting symbolizes his separation from the "Any Evil to which I have been married": the evil is now happily married to the piglet and gone. This means that the patient originally was tied to the "puppet" of his own diseases by a hem. Then the act of divorce ends this baleful "marriage". This interpretation seems to be the best for this context, but we should not fail to mention that in another magical ritual cutting the hem of a puppet representing a disease (caused by a spirit) is no more than a symbol of irreversible separation, not of divorce.<sup>6</sup>

The two marriages deserve some special attention.

As to the first marriage, between the patient and a demonic disease, it is known from the general expression "I am married to Any Evil".<sup>7</sup> More specific is being married to a dead person (*mītu*), i.e., a spirit;<sup>8</sup> sorcerers could arrange a marriage like this with black magic — using puppets, one may presume.<sup>9</sup> One ritual prescribes in this case the manufacture of a "puppet of Any Evil" which suggests to us that there is a close relation between being married to a spirit and Any Evil;<sup>10</sup> the reader will remember that Hand of a Spirit was one of the afflictions mentioned in the first line of our text. The first act in white magic is now to undo this marriage by "cutting the hem" in order to bring about the patient's improvement.<sup>11</sup> This enactment of a divorce lived on in the much later Aramaic incantation bowls where the female demon Lilith is being divorced

<sup>3</sup> BAM 3 212:41.

<sup>4</sup> M. Malul, *Studies in Mesopotamian Legal Symbolism* (1988) 170–173; contra K. R. Veenhof.

<sup>5</sup> Thus W.G. Kunstmann, *LSS NF 2* (1932) 106 sub 9.

<sup>6</sup> Separation of two puppets, female and male, by cutting "their hem", in KAR 374 rev. 12. For KAR 22, see below, note 11.

<sup>7</sup> KAR 66:24 (our text), 297:12, now W.R. Mayer, *Or. NS* 59 (1990) 471, (11) "Dem (Dämon) 'Jegliches Böse' bin ich angetraut, so dass schlimme Krankheit [...] (...) (21) Reiss (den Dämon) 'Jegliches Böse', der in meinem Leibe ist, heraus". Cf. LKA 90 rev. 15, now A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege* ... (1985) 191 B 15, "Ich NN (...), den 'Jegliches Böse' erwählt (*hi-ra-an-ni*)".

<sup>8</sup> BBR 52:1 with A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege* ... (1985) 167; W.G. Lambert, *Afo* 18 (1957–58) 298 Bu. 91–5–9, 143+176:33.

<sup>9</sup> Maqlu I 107, IV 17, 28; TDP 218:15, on a newborn baby, followed by the diagnosis "sorceries" in lines 16–19; note that a commentary identifies the sorceress with the demon Lamaštu, *SpTU* I 41:6 — see the next note.

<sup>10</sup> BBR 52:3; puppets of a sorcerer and sorceress follow. — A special case is a newborn baby being married by the Daughter of Anum, i.e., the demon Lamaštu, TDP 218:24 f.

<sup>11</sup> This seems to be the correct interpretation of the ritual in KAR 22 (E. Ebeling, *TuL* 76 ff.): the puppet of the sick man, seized by a spirit, is made (4) and his hem is cut (18).

from the patient by giving her the divorce document (*gittā*).<sup>12</sup>

The second act is to unite the evil with something else in a new marriage; here the texts use the causative form of the verb *aḥāzu*, "to take (in marriage)". We see this in our text and also in the ritual against the demon Lamaštu who is married off to a black dog.<sup>13</sup> The exorcist stages a wedding ceremony between two puppets named "husband" and "wife",<sup>14</sup> possibly connecting them with a hem.<sup>15</sup> They are richly provided with food and sent away, in Babylonian magic a favourite method to get rid of demons.

Returning now to the ritual that we are studying, one aspect still needs comment: the fact that it is a piglet (*kurkizannu*) that takes over the burden. This is an example of magical "substitution" and, indeed, pigs or goats can serve for that purpose.<sup>16</sup> The pig seems to have been an unclean animal in Babylonia<sup>17</sup> but the closest parallel for our passage can be found in the New Testament: demons ask Jesus to send them into a herd of swine.<sup>18</sup> The commentaries on this Gospel story just say that the pig was an unclean animal in Israel. In Babylonia another despised animal with an uncanny colour, the black dog, was the substitute in the Lamaštu ritual. Similarly, pigs and dogs — young or grown — in Hittite magic were considered to "absorb" impurities.<sup>19</sup>

The second ritual is not directed against a whole range of epilepsy-related afflictions but specifically against a n.t a.š u b. b a.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, it is badly broken. We see that a white sow plays a role and garments are tore off; the pig is released. According to W. Farber this is a substitution ritual: the garments are those of the patient and whoever will "take" the pig or the garments, will suffer from a n.t a.š u b. b a.<sup>21</sup> They are "contaminating", so it seems. — The other prescriptions in this text are merely pharmaceutical, to be applied "If Lugal-amašpae seizes a man", and "If a n.t a.š u b. b a falls upon a man".

Another ritual, against "[... o]r bennu", is very fragmentary. Three puppets of clay are to be made, dressed up, the roof is to be swept clean and a ritual is to be performed before a star, during the night.<sup>22</sup> Do the puppets represent the diseases?

A special ritual for children with epilepsy will be studied later (Chapter X). Earlier, in the discussion of the demon Evil Alû, we gave a translation of a letter describing

<sup>12</sup> M. Malul, 127 f., writing on what is now Ch. D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (1975), Texts 12 and 13; also J.A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913) (= PBS 3) 209–211 no. 26, with K.A.D. Smelik in K.R. Veenhof, *Schrijvend Verleden* (1983) 313 f.; J. Naveh, Sh. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (1985) 158, Bowl 5:5, 7; J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia V* (1970) 228 f., note 6; 235 ff.; 349 f. See also our discussion of incubus and succubus.

<sup>13</sup> F.A.M. Wiggermann in M. Stol, *Zwangerschap en geboorte bij de Babyloniërs en in de Bijbel* (1983) 107, Lamaštu III Vs. 67, Rs. 22 (F. Köcher). — Cf. in BBR 52:5 f. [...] [tu]-šā-ḥaz, almost certainly referring to a marriage between a sorcerer and sorceress.

<sup>14</sup> BBR 49; BAM 3 234:27–30, see *Anat. Studies* 30 (1980) 25 ff.; KUB 14 53 II.

<sup>15</sup> BBR 49:10, ta-ka-[sar], see also CAD S 322a.

<sup>16</sup> H.M. Kümmel, *Ersatzrituale für den hethitischen König* (1967) 5; A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege ...* (1985) 125–139, 241 f.; J. Prosecky, *Festschrift Lubor Matouš II* (1978) 245–256; T. Nash in W.W. Hallo a.o., *Scripture in Context* vol. III (1990) 71.

<sup>17</sup> K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (1985) 34 f.

<sup>18</sup> In the country of the Gadarenes; see Matthew 8:28–34, Mark 5:1–20, Luke 8:26–39.

<sup>19</sup> James C. Moyer in W.W. Hallo a.o., *Scripture in Context* vol. II (1983) 29–33. Cf. W.G. Lambert, *AFO* 18 (1957–58) 292:25, with comm.

<sup>20</sup> SpbTU II 192 no. 48.

<sup>21</sup> W. Farber, *WdO* 18 (1987) 41.

<sup>22</sup> KBo 9 50:18–33.



the ritual for "eradicating" this demon and a n.t a.š u b.b a which is relevant here (*ABL* 24). We refer the reader to that section. No attention will be paid to the rituals against a broad spectrum of diseases among which the epilepsies, often ascribed to divine "wrath".<sup>23</sup> Presumably they are not specifically used against epilepsy.

### *Materia medica et magica*

#### 1 Leather bags

Pharmaceutical material of botanical, mineral, animal and human origin used against epilepsy was applied in several ways; it is described not only as "medica" but also as "magica" because often its use can only have been motivated by magic — examples are hairs, blood or semen. It was administered in various ways: rarely by eating and drinking,<sup>24</sup> more often in a salve,<sup>25</sup> but most frequently "in leather". This was for the Babylonian scribe a succinct way of saying "you wrap (it) in a leather (bag)"<sup>26</sup> and such a bag had the name *mēlu* in Akkadian, often translated as "phylactery" or "poultice" in Assyriology.<sup>27</sup> We will use the translation "(leather) bag". The composition of their contents was a great secret; one pharmaceutical text claims that the five "bags" against a n.t a.š u b.b a described in Sumerian were "the secret of Lu-Nanna, the Sage of Ur".<sup>28</sup> Indeed, "the twenty-one bags" were supposed to have their origin in the realm of Ea, god of magic and master of the sages.<sup>29</sup> Most recipes, however, give the compositions of the various "bags" without this veil of mystery; some are just long lists. These bags were hung around the neck and were used against a great variety of diseases of which those related to epilepsy concern us here.

The first question is whether the bags are meant to protect the patient (as precaution), or to heal him when he is already sick. The most elaborate ritual for making a magical leather bag seems to give an answer: being seized by the Hand of a Spirit, epilepsy, Provider-of-Evil, etc., are just the symptoms of the real disease, that is to say, the wrath of the gods, and the purpose of the leather bag is "to undo (their wrath), so that fears will not get hold of him and to eradicate these ailments from his body".<sup>30</sup> Maybe this interpretation still leaves room for discussion as to the meaning(s) of "disease" in this text; our specific case of leather bags used against epilepsy is easier: epilepsy is a recurrent disease and wearing a leather bag is clearly apotropaic, i.e., meant to ward off the next attack. The same can be said of the salves and the amulet stones that we will

<sup>23</sup> Like W. Farber, *BID* 55–73 (*KAR* 42, *AMT* 96,3, etc.); *KAR* 26; *BAM* 4 323:39–44.

<sup>24</sup> *BAM* 2 159 III 25–27, seven herbs against a n.t a.š u b.b a (heart-break follows); 5 478 rev. 7; *STT* 2 286 Fragment C:5 with ND 5488/1:11–12. We have already seen at the end of the discussion of a n.t a.š u b.b a that eating the flesh of an owl (?) helped for "eradicating" both of a n.t a.š u b.b a and Hand of a Spirit (p. 9).

<sup>25</sup> *BAM* 2 184 I 1–14, eleven herbs, "salve of a n.t a.š u b.b a"; nine herbs: R. Labat, *RA* 54 (1960) 173 f.; with blood: *STT* 2 286 II 4–8; plants: *STT* 1 93:16, 41. Cf. *STT* 1 89:165, 173.

<sup>26</sup> Studied by W. Farber, *ZA* 63 (1973) 59–68. Cf. A. Cavigneaux, *RA* 77 (1983) 90 f.

<sup>27</sup> The correct reading of the word was discovered by Erica Reiner. Recent lit.: W.G. Lambert, "The twenty-one Poultices", *Anat. Stud.* 30 (1980) 77–83; S. Parpola, *LAS* Part II, Commentary (1983) 226 ("phylactery" — note the determinative "leather" in this letter).

<sup>28</sup> *BAM* 5 476 rev. 11.

<sup>29</sup> See Lambert's article for the myth and note that 14 bags are named "secret of the scholars" in *BAM* 3 315 III 17.

<sup>30</sup> *BID* 64:13, following W. Farber's interpretation, p. 41 f.

study later. Confirmation for this theory comes from the only passage in the diagnostic handbook where prescriptions are given: they all concern the event that one form of epilepsy "turns into" another (Tablet XXVIII). A leather bag is to be made and hung around the patient's neck "in order to save him", and "he will live".<sup>31</sup> The perspective can be broadened a little when we look at a man who is seized by the Hand of a Spirit: if the exorcist cannot "eradicate" the spirit, a leather bag is to be hung around the man's neck.<sup>32</sup> The evil is always there (*lazāzu*) and the bag is protecting the man against it.

Leather bags were often used in magico-medical practice. Some texts where the compositions of these bags are given are primarily concerned with epilepsies and related afflictions.<sup>33</sup> In a Neo-Assyrian letter the writer informs the king how he treated a baby suffering from a n.t.a.š u b.b a affecting the child all (?) day: he manufactured amulet stones (and) a leather bag against this disease, put this on the child and, indeed, the a n.t.a.š u b.b a left the baby (*rummā*) and he calmed down.<sup>34</sup>

What are the contents of the leather bag against epilepsy? The *materia medica et magica* is too varied to see a pattern. When we take a look at the Babylonian Pharmacopoeia, we learn something more. This handbook, named "Vademecum" by the Assyriologist R.C. Thompson, is divided into three columns: name of a plant — the disease it is effective against — the application. A copy from Nineveh gives the plants against epilepsy after the section on snake bites and scorpion stings. We read:<sup>35</sup>

- the herb "[šakirū] Šamaš"<sup>36</sup> — herb against *bennu* — you anoint (him) repeatedly with oil.
- the herb "root of *urānu*" — herb against *bennu* — you wrap (it) in a tuft of wool (and) put (it) around his neck.

A plant against incubus follows. Another copy of a Vademecum, from Assur and organised differently, discussing the various uses of the plant *urānu*, gives this entry:<sup>37</sup>

- the herb "root of *urānu*" — herb against *bennu* — you wrap (it) in ... wool (and) put (it) around his neck.

So according to the pharmacopoeia two plants are effective against the epilepsy called *bennu*. The first plant probably had the simple name "plant of Šamaš" (the Sun-god), a plant that in botanical lore was identified with *šakirū*.<sup>38</sup> And indeed, the Babylonian botanical handbook with descriptions of plants (Uru-anna) gives a description of *šakirū*, a plant appraised as "good against *bennu*, the demon, deputy of Sin", when applied as a salve.<sup>39</sup> The second plant is *urānu*. It is wrapped in a tuft of wool (*itqu*) and hung around the neck. Was the leather bag used only for a plurality of plants and

<sup>31</sup> TDP 192–94:37–55. — "He will live" at the end of a prescription of the leather bag is also attested in BAM 5 476 rev. 6, STT 1 57:16, 53; 2 286 I 12; cf. "in order to live" in BAM 3 202:7 and dupl. 311:53; STT 1 57:28.

<sup>32</sup> W. Farber, *BiOr* 39 (1982) 599, with dupls.

<sup>33</sup> STT 1 57; BAM 3 311.

<sup>34</sup> ABL 1289 = LAS 239.

<sup>35</sup> CT 14 23 K. 9283:17 f., dupl. STT 1 92 I 17 f.

<sup>36</sup> Broken at the beginning; restored with the duplicate from Sultantepe, STT 1 92 I 17, Ú [ŠAKIR]<sup>d</sup>Šá-maš.

<sup>37</sup> KADP 1 V 41.

<sup>38</sup> F. Köcher, BAM 3 (1964) p. XVI, on no. 225; cf. KADP 1 I 6, [šam]-mi<sup>d</sup>Šá-maš = ša-ki-ru-ú. Confirmed by W. Farber, *Schlaf* ..., 69, ad 235. A Sumerian ideogram is Ú KI<sup>d</sup>UTU = šakir<sub>4</sub>, see M. Civil in *Studies Erica Reiner* (1987) 42, with a discussion on the plant (not: henbane).

<sup>39</sup> STT 1 93:41.



other material? We actually find this plant as one ingredient in several leather bags against epilepsy.<sup>40</sup>

Other passages in the botanical handbook recommend "sea-weed" (*imbu tāmtim*) against *bennu*: anoint the patient with it and hang it around his neck;<sup>41</sup> or hang green tamarisk around his neck.<sup>42</sup>

A copy of this handbook from Sultantepe tells us that the plant *ankinutu* was to be used for "eradicating" a n.t.a.š u.b.b a. When it is used as a salve the patient "will live".<sup>43</sup> This plant is also attested as an ingredient in compositions against epilepsy, sometimes together with *urānu*.<sup>44</sup> In one handbook it precedes that plant and *ankinutu* seems to be characterised there as "the herb for the going away of the falling sickness (*miqtu*)", but this interpretation is not certain.<sup>45</sup>

In a later chapter we will see that in Classical Antiquity they packed the root of the peony in leather and hung this around the patient's neck (Chapter IX, under "Plants and stones").

## 2 Stag's horn

A special word must be said on stag's horn as a remedy "for eradicating a n.t.a.š u.b.b a". One special recipe (broken at the end) says that horns of a number of stags were to be charred (*kabābu*) in a fire and the resulting product was apparently to be put around the neck.<sup>46</sup> Stag's horn (*qaran ajali*) was also a powerful agent in magic among the Greeks and Romans.<sup>47</sup> In the Classical world (and later) it had a special use in discovering epilepsy: by burning bitumen, jet or stag's and goat's horn, and by eating the liver of a he-goat, one could detect this disease.<sup>48</sup> More will be said about this in a later chapter, on epilepsy and slaves but here it is noteworthy that the very first line of the Babylonian commentary on the ritual of fumigation against epilepsy (to be studied presently) explains the Sumerograms for "stag's horn" although it does not occur in the commented text.<sup>49</sup> It is still not clear why the commentator deemed this opening line in his explanatory text necessary but we now see some connection between fumigation and the use of this horn in the epilepsy test. As to the recipe we started with, its "char-ring" also implies a kind of fumigation. Stag's horn can be an ingredient in a leather bag and is attested among fourteen herbs used in fumigation against a n.t.a.š u.b.b a.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>40</sup> TDP 194:51, 54; BAM 3 311:68, 73, 76, 82; STT 1 57:17, 48 51.

<sup>41</sup> BAM 4 379 III 44; 5 423 I 22.

<sup>42</sup> BAM 4 379 III 46.

<sup>43</sup> STT 1 92:16 f.; the plant name was restored with help of the preceding entries, 9-14.

<sup>44</sup> BAM 3 311:82, cf. 476 rev. 20; STT 1 57:17 (!), 49.

<sup>45</sup> KADP 1 V 34, Ú Š[U]B (?) *te-bi*.

<sup>46</sup> BAM 2 166:11 ff., dupl. STT 2 286 II 2 f.

<sup>47</sup> Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie* VIII, art. "Hirsch", col. 1943.

<sup>48</sup> "Oribasius", CMG VI 2, 2 (1933) 186, below. Cf. also Caelius Aurelianus, *On Chronic Diseases* I 4 § 67.

<sup>49</sup> BRM 4 32:1, commenting on TCL 6 34.

<sup>50</sup> BAM 5 476 rev. 5 (leather bag; after the plant *šakirā*); TCL 6 34 II 2 (fumigation; before sea-weed).

### 3 Blood

Equally interesting is the role played by blood in the following recipe.<sup>51</sup> The patient is anointed with the blood of a dog, a lion, a wolf, a wildcat, a turtle, etc. Again, the end is lost but this salve seems to be effective against a n.t.a.š u b.b a, ..., Lugal-urra, Hand of a God, ..., a persistent (*lazzu*) Hand of a Spirit. The last expression suggests the apotropaic character of this treatment: the Hand is always there but should not strike again. Blood always has been a potent remedy against epilepsy; especially human blood. We read this in texts from ancient Egypt<sup>52</sup> and everywhere in the Greek and Roman ancient sources.<sup>53</sup> Special value was ascribed to the fresh, flowing blood of gladiators or criminals just killed; this belief persisted into the nineteenth century: Hans Christian Andersen tells us that after a decapitation an epileptic boy was made to drink a cup filled with the blood of the executed.<sup>54</sup> The Babylonian recipes for potions and salves against epilepsy occasionally give as one of their ingredients "blood of a prisoner (*kamû*)";<sup>55</sup> a commentary explains this away by: "prisoner: a leper"; a late variant in the same context replaces it by "blood of an owl".<sup>56</sup> Where these feasible alternatives when the blood of an executed prisoner was not available?

Salving with blood gave the Babylonian epileptic his personal protection. Blood could also protect his house:

- In order that *bennu*, a n.t.a.š u b.b a, Lugal-urra, ... do not near his house, he shall mix together in first class oil the blood of the goose, blood of the dove, blood of a fox, ... blood of ..., ..., bitumen, gypsum, and he shall smear (*lapātu*) ... the doors, corners, sills, as many as there are, and he will be all-right.<sup>57</sup>

This is reminiscent of the well known apotropaic ritual performed by the Israelites on the night that the "Destroyer" killed every first-born in the land of Egypt: they took some of the blood of the Passover lamb and put it on the two door-posts and the lintel of their houses. As a result, the angel of death "passed over" (Exodus 12:7, 13, 23). The parallel is very good indeed but we do not have to look for it outside Babylonia because this rite was often used by the Babylonians on other occasions.<sup>58</sup> It was intended to ward off all kinds of evil, especially the consequences of bad portents. Blood of a she-goat<sup>59</sup> or a he-goat<sup>60</sup> could be smeared on the door-posts, sills and the lintel.

<sup>51</sup> STT 2 286 II 4–8, cf. ND 5488/2:6–10.

<sup>52</sup> B. Ebbell, *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 62 (1927) 15 f.

<sup>53</sup> Ebbell; O. Temkin, 12 f., 23; Otto Böcher, *Dämonenfurcht und Dämonenabwehr* (1970) 209 note 278.

<sup>54</sup> Leo Kanner, in "The folklore and cultural history of epilepsy", *Medical Life* 37 (1930) 167–214, the pages 198–200; A. Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die Antike Zauberei* (1908) 273 notes 9, 10.

<sup>55</sup> R. Labat, *RA* 54 (1960) 173 f., AO 17613 rev. 2, with discussion in *RA* 55 (1961) 95 note 3; *BAM* 2 178:5 with dupl. *AMT* 35,3:5; *SpbTU* 1 50:19. The epilepsy is a n.t.a.š u b.b a.

<sup>56</sup> See *CAD* K 128a lex. section, and *UŠ qa-di-i* in *TCL* 6 34 I 6: its commentary, *BRM* 4 32:7 f., gives both possibilities as alternative explanations. — Does the identification of the prisoner with a leper (*garbānu*) play with a meaning "outside(r)" of *kamû*?

<sup>57</sup> Combining the badly preserved duplicating passages *STT* 1 57:11–13 and 2 286 II 9–13; cf. ND 5488/2 rev. 1–6 (courtesy J.A. Black).

<sup>58</sup> See the little known but excellent article by R. Gelio, "Il rito del sangue e l'identificazione del *negeph lemašit*", in F. Vattioni, *Sangue e antropologia biblica* II (1981) 467–476. Cf. Gelio in another article, p. 440 f.

<sup>59</sup> *LKA* 117 rev. 1, with E. Ebeling, *RA* 50 (1956) 26–29.

<sup>60</sup> In the royal ritual *Bit rimki*, *BBR* 26 III 20–21; see W. Farber, *TUAT* II/2 (1987) 248. Read (with Zimmern, note) at the end of line 20: I[DIB].



The famous English excavator Henry A. Layard discovered "on all the slabs forming entrances in the oldest palace of Nimroud (...) marks of black fluid, resembling blood, which appeared to have been daubed on the stone". He added "I have not been able to ascertain the nature of this fluid, but its appearance cannot fail to call to mind the Jewish ceremonies, of placing the blood of the sacrifice on the lintel of the doorway".<sup>61</sup> Layard knew at that time nothing of the Babylonian rituals, of course.

After the various kinds of blood our protective ritual mentions the minerals bitumen and gypsum, yielding the colours red, black, and white. Other texts show that bitumen and gypsum were often used together in similar rites.<sup>62</sup> An "esoteric" commentary identified the bitumen (black !) and gypsum (white !) on the door of a sick man's house as follows: bitumen is the demon Asakku and gypsum is the god Ninurta; Ninurta chases this demon.<sup>63</sup> Bitumen and gypsum were used to draw two fighting figures, another ritual says<sup>64</sup> — they may represent Asakku and Ninurta and the fight could symbolize the battle of good and evil in the sick man. In our ritual the man is not "sick" and here the bitumen and gypsum are merely apotropaic.

#### 4 Fumigation

Fumigation (Babylonian *qutāru*) is another method to "eradicate" a n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a, Lugal-urra, Hand of a God, Hand of a Goddess that are "upon a man". We have an elaborate ritual prescription dating to the Seleucid period; much earlier fragmentary duplicates from Assur and Nineveh are also known.<sup>65</sup> The Seleucid text — damaged at the bottom — continues in its second column with "fourteen herbs, fumigation for a n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a"; on its reverse are fumigations and salves against "heart-break" and a salve against "fever". The colophon informs us that this tablet covers "Tablet One of 'Fumigation'". Later Babylonian scholars composed a running commentary on selected words in this text.<sup>66</sup> As we often see in such learned annotations, their explanations frequently are not to the point and the commentary, though instructive and interesting in itself, is not illuminating the text. When discussing the various forms of epilepsy, we already had the occasion to see how these scholars "defined" them here.

In the British Museum there are four baked clay vessels, bought as a group, bearing the following inscriptions: "Fumigation of the he-goat", "Fumigation of a n.t.a.š.u.b.b.a", "Fumigation of heart-break", "Fumigation of fever" — exactly fitting our text.<sup>67</sup> So

<sup>61</sup> H.A. Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains* II (1850) 256, as cited by S. Parpola in *LAS* Part II (1983) 280, in a context of pouring blood on foundation bricks/stones.

<sup>62</sup> *LKA* 111 rev. 10, with Ebeling, 30 f., the portent of a wildcat in the house. The same ritual, now against black magic, in R. Caplice, *Or. NS* 39 (1970) 135 Text 40:26–29 (read in line 29 [K]Ā.MEŠ, with the photo). Bitumen, gypsum and cedar oil in *4 R* 2 59 no. 1 rev. 6 f. Still more in F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits* 16, lines 246–257.

<sup>63</sup> A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (1986) 172:1 (= *ZA* 6 242:15).

<sup>64</sup> G. Meier, *AJO* 14 (1941–44) 150 f., lines 215–220.

<sup>65</sup> *TCL* 6 34 col. I, with the shorter and somewhat deviating duplicates *BAM* 2 178 and *AMT* 35,3 (adding to the symptoms the Hand of a Spirit and the "persistent" (*lazzu*) Hand of a Goddess). Rev. II, detailing a salve against fever, is duplicated by *BAM* 2 179 and R. Labat, *RA* 54 (1960) 174 f. Related is the unpublished fragment K. 6320.

<sup>66</sup> *BRM* 4 32; see R.C. Thompson, *JRAS* 1924 452 ff.

<sup>67</sup> C.B.F. Walker, *Iraq* 42 (1980) 84–86.

these vessels were used in the daily practice of the Babylonian conjurer performing the rituals prescribed by our tablet. This is a most unusual coincidence!

What remains of column I covers “Fumigation of the he-goat (MÁŠ.ZU)”. We offer a translation of the prescription, full of unusual words — not very well explained in the commentary text:

- If a n.t a.š u b. b a, Lugal-urra, Hand of the God, Hand of the Goddess is upon a man: for “eradicating” (it) (this is) its procedure. You take a he-goat, you recite into its right and left ear the incantation “Evil <Utukku-ghost>”, two times, (and) you slaughter (it). You take (its) [...], the pupil of the eye, the ...<sup>68</sup> head and neck, the water of the black of its eye.<sup>69</sup> Naphtha, fish oil, cedar “blood”, soap plant, seeds of the soap plant, blood of an owl,<sup>70</sup> hide of the god Kuši, vine of the god Kuši,<sup>71</sup> — pure incense — lupine, (the plants) thousand-worth, twenty-worth<sup>72</sup> [...] you make him eat, drink, you anoint him with, and you fumigate him by charcoal,<sup>73</sup> and he will “live”. — Subscript: Fumigation of the he-goat.

Reciting an incantation into the ear of an animal before it is killed is a well known procedure in Babylonian rituals. The first line of it, quoted here, looks like that of a lengthy bilingual incantation, of no interest to us.<sup>74</sup> Much of the *materia magica* summed up in this text is quite unusual; the “hide” and “vine” of a god Kuši are unique. We will eventually demonstrate that there was a special relationship between epilepsy and the goat (Chapter XI).

Fumigation was a magical technique that we cannot study here; we are not able to say what the remark “pure incense” (KÙ.GI UD.UD.MEŠ) in the middle of the prescription means and how exactly the *materia magica* was administered. Suffice it to say that fumigation was used against a variety of afflictions among which being seized by a spirit of the dead figures prominently.<sup>75</sup>

Fumigation was also used in the treatment of epilepsy in children, as will be shown later (Chapter X).

## 5 Amulets

Precious stones were used as amulets, strung on a thread and hung around the neck; we possess a great number of prescriptions and inventories of such “strings” (*turnu*,

<sup>68</sup> *i ta' šá hu-pat*, line 4; var. *át ta' šá h[u-]*, BAM 2 178:2. Note *ta'-a-šá* UDU.NITA, BAM 5 494 IV 4.

<sup>69</sup> The Babylonians were of the opinion that tears flow from the iris, *burmu* (cf. B. Groneberg in CRR 32 (1986) 101, line 18), or *šulum iní* (R. Borger, AfO 18 315 f.).

<sup>70</sup> Var.: blood of a prisoner, BAM 2 178:5; cf. AMT 35,3:5. See above, in the section on blood in rituals.

<sup>71</sup> KUŠ AN.KU.ŠI (7) *til-lat* AN.KU.ŠI. Cf. commentary BRM 4 32:8 f. with E. Ebeling, ArOr 17/1 (1949) 173, and M. Civil, JNES 33 (1974) 337, KU ŠI MÁŠ = *tu-li-mu* “spleen”. Unexplained are *ina* UGU KU ŠI, BAM 3 237 I 26, cf. 27; AN KU ŠI, BAM 5 478 rev. 8–9.

<sup>72</sup> Three well known purifiers in magic.

<sup>73</sup> IZI = *pēmtu*, as often in fumigation; here the plant used is not indicated.

<sup>74</sup> BAM 3 215:35 with F. Köcher, AfO 21 (1966) 17:35, used in fumigation (ms. B).

<sup>75</sup> Not much has been written on fumigation since Erica Reiner discovered its Sumerograms, over thirty years ago. See R. Labat, RA 55 (1961) 152 f.; D. Goltz, Studien zur altorientalischen und griechischen Heilkunde ... (1974) 83–86; P. Herréro, Thérapeutique 109 f.



*takširu, kušaru, šerpu*).<sup>76</sup> They were used for a variety of purposes; this quotation in an inscription of Sennacherib on the gem *pindū* will serve as an example:<sup>77</sup>

- *pindū*, whose beautiful structure has the appearance of cucumber seeds, amounting to a valuable neck(stone): a stone of speaking (by a human being) and (then) being heard (by the god), of making pass (without harming) a heavy flooding, of a disease not approaching man.

This stone is supposed to have three qualities. The first is to achieve a positive result: to ensure that a prayer is answered by the god.<sup>78</sup> Other amulets have similar aims: being reconciled with a god,<sup>79</sup> having a good reputation with man,<sup>80</sup> success in social and economic terms,<sup>81</sup> happiness and harmony.<sup>82</sup> The second quality is negative, to ward off flooding.<sup>83</sup> One might call this a "public" disaster, affecting everybody. The third use is directed at "private" misery: so that a (or: any) disease should not approach a man.

The second and third qualities of amulet stones interest us here. They are prophylactic, i.e., the amulets were used to prevent unhappy events from actually taking place. The amulet lists among the medical texts tell us which stones protected against which events. Some were used in a very general way against "any evil, of the countryside and the town".<sup>84</sup> Others intended to preclude the dire consequences of bad portents<sup>85</sup> like seeing "strange" birds,<sup>86</sup> having bad dreams,<sup>87</sup> unlucky days, months or years,<sup>88</sup> malformed births.<sup>89</sup> The reason for such portents was divine anger (*kimiltu*) and some stones were worn to undo ("loosen") it or to "reconcile" the god.<sup>90</sup> Amulets were also used against demons; the best example are the strings of stones hung around the body of a pregnant woman exposed to the demon Lamaštu.<sup>91</sup> They could "loosen" sorcery caused by black magic.<sup>92</sup> Thanks to stones one could recover from the consequences of an "Oath".<sup>93</sup>

Not every precious stone or gem could be used as a magical amulet; lists of those amulets can be found in the medical corpus. To take one unexpected example, the

<sup>76</sup> F. Köcher, *Afo* 20 (1963) 156–8, on *BAM* 4 400. For *takširu*, see F.R. Kraus, *RA* 64 (1970) 59–61. The last two words, rare, are attested in *BAM* 4 363 rev. 13 and 356 IV 15. See also H. Limet, "Amulettes babyloniennes et lapidaires zoroastriens", in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin emerito oblata* (1984) 327–339.

<sup>77</sup> Taken from *OIP* 2 (1924) 132:72 f.; cf. B. Engel, *Darstellungen von Dämonen und Tieren in assyrischen Palästen und Tempeln nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (1987) 9 f., 170 f.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. most recently W.G. Lambert, *Anat. Stud.* 30 (1980) 82. In a magical context: *BAM* 4 367:14.

<sup>79</sup> *BAM* 4 368 I 15, II 8, 13.

<sup>80</sup> *STT* 2 271 IV 4.

<sup>81</sup> *BAM* 4 367:1–12, 368 I 22, 372 II 7–14, 375 I 33.

<sup>82</sup> *BAM* 4 357:8–15, 375 II 45.

<sup>83</sup> Also in the fragmentary *BAM* 4 343:2.

<sup>84</sup> *BAM* 4 367:42, 400 IV 6. — For *BAM* 4 400, see Köcher in *Afo* 20 (1963) 156 f. (Si 81).

<sup>85</sup> IGLDUB HUL-tim (*iti lemuttim*), as in J.-M. Durand, *TBER* (1981) 45 AO 17619 rev. 11.

<sup>86</sup> *BAM* 4 400 II 7 f.

<sup>87</sup> *BAM* 4 376 I 30.

<sup>88</sup> Durand, *TBER* 45 AO 17619 rev. 7; *BAM* 4 368 II 16, 372 III 7, 375 II 5, 400 III 3; *LKA* 130:4.

<sup>89</sup> *BAM* 4 361:21; K. 2409 II 7–10, cited *Or. NS* 34 130.

<sup>90</sup> Köcher, *Afo* 20 156 f., cf. *BAM* 4 400 III 8–12. Also *AMT* 7,1 II 5; *BAM* 4 364 II, 368 I 18, 370 Ia, 372 I, 373 (reconciliation), 376 I; *STT* 2 271.

<sup>91</sup> F. Thureau-Dangin *RA* 18 (1921) 161–171; *BAM* 4 346, 363; *STT* 2 241. Against bleeding: *BAM* 3 237.

<sup>92</sup> *BAM* 4 373 III 14; *STT* 2 275 I 16, 20.

<sup>93</sup> *BAM* 4 342:5–9 (AL.TI "he will live"), with *STT* 2 275 I 16, 20, 31 (together with "sorcery").

stones that Sennacherib's horses were standing upon are of a special kind supposed to avert evils. They are amulet stones.<sup>94</sup>

Disease could be explained as an important symptom of an imminent or actual supernatural event. When amulet stones are used against diseases, we cannot draw a clear line between prophylaxis and therapy. When considering the "leather bags", we were confronted with the same problem and there we suggested the bags were used against recurrent diseases of which epilepsy was a good example: the leather bag prevented the next attack from coming. Amulets were used against epilepsy, as we will see below, and also against muscular diseases,<sup>95</sup> forms of fever,<sup>96</sup> aphasia and stroke,<sup>97</sup> "heart-break" and mania,<sup>98</sup> bad eye-sight.<sup>99</sup> These are chronic ailments with ups and downs, so it seems. The amulets protected the patient against the next wave.

Some specific stones were used against two forms of epilepsy, *bennu* and a n.t a.š u b. b. a. There are passages which explicitly indicate that they were used "in order that *bennu* / a n.t a.š u b. b. a should not approach (*teḥū*)" a man<sup>100</sup> or his house.<sup>101</sup> A few texts are more specific in prescribing that the amulets against a n.t a.š u b. b. a are to be put on the right hand or the left foot.<sup>102</sup> Elsewhere we see that amulets against *bennu* and feverish shivering, its prelude, are hung around the neck.<sup>103</sup> But the passages are too few to conclude that a n.t a.š u b. b. a must be the form of epilepsy starting in the extremities. In any case, those amulets around hands or feet have nothing to do with the finger-rings used in the Classical world or the "cramp-rings" of the Middle Ages.<sup>104</sup>

The lists of amulet stones are very consistent in their enumerations of specific amulet stones. Fourteen are used against a n.t a.š u b. b. a:<sup>105</sup>

- *ašpū* - *aban lamassi* - *saḥḥū* - green *šubū* - *gišnugallu* - *turminabandū* - *anzahḥu*, white and black - *šadānu šābitu* - *ajjartu* - *janibu* - *sīlu* (?) - *bišsur atāni*.

Another list with eleven stones also starts with *ašpū*.<sup>106</sup> Elsewhere, the fourteen stones serve against a n.t a.š u b. b. a, Lugal-urra, and at least three "Hands".<sup>107</sup>

Four stones are used against *bennu*:<sup>108</sup>

- *ašpū* - *zalāqu* - *ḥilibū* - *engisū*. Elsewhere we only find *zalāqu* and *ašpū* - *zalāqu*.<sup>109</sup>

When we read in a very succinct catalogue of amulet stones: "14 a n.t a.š u b. b. a, 4 *bennu*

<sup>94</sup> J. MacGinnis, *Iraq* 51 (1989) 189, with 191. Compare the apotropaic powers of many of the same stones as described in *BAM* 4 344.

<sup>95</sup> *šimmatu*, GÜ.GIG.GA (*BE* 31 60 with BM. 41281 IV, unpubl.; *BAM* 3 215:18-27 with F. Köcher, *Afo* 21 17; *BAM* 4 349, 354 IV), SA.GAL, *maškadu*, etc. (*BAM* 4 350, 354 III, 390; *STT* 2 273 I 19-22), pain in the shoulders (*BAM* 4 372 III 14).

<sup>96</sup> *išatu kasistu* (*BAM* 4 350:8-12; *STT* 2 273 I 25-29), *di'u* (*BAM* 4 376 III 21, 23).

<sup>97</sup> KA.DIB.BI.DA (*BAM* 4 370 IIb 5), *mišittu* (*BAM* 4 372 III 12, 376 III 7).

<sup>98</sup> *BAM* 4 375 I 11 and 376 III 3.

<sup>99</sup> *birratu* (*BAM* 4 352:13-14; *SpTU* II 124 no. 85).

<sup>100</sup> *BAM* 4 344:1, 14, 377 IV 14; *STT* 2 273 III 7 (*bennu* and *šuruppū*); *CT* 51 89 I 5; III 13 (*bennu* and *šuruppū*).

<sup>101</sup> *STT* 2 286 II 10.

<sup>102</sup> *BAM* 4 377 IV 4, 8, 12; *STT* 2 273 III 4.

<sup>103</sup> *STT* 2 273 III 7.

<sup>104</sup> See R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros* (1931) 109-111, and O. Temkin, 114, respectively.

<sup>105</sup> *BAM* 4 356 I 1-7 and dupls., see H. Limet, *Orientalia Duchesne-Guillemin oblata* (1984) 329 f.; S. Parpola, *LAS* Part II (1983) 226.

<sup>106</sup> *BAM* 4 376 II 10 f., 377 II 5-8.

<sup>107</sup> *BAM* 4 372 III 16-19.

<sup>108</sup> *BAM* 4 356 II 11 f. and dupls., see Köcher, p. XVI.

<sup>109</sup> *BAM* 4 344:1, 14; cf. *tāk-k[ās]* against *bennu* - *rābišu*, line 10.



*šurpû*”, we can be sure that our standard lists are meant.<sup>110</sup> Only one text with stones against a.n.t.a.š u b. a, “Daughter of Anum” (= Lamaštu), Lugal-urra, etc., seriously deviates in not having any of these stones.<sup>111</sup> Were they meant for new-born children?

## 6 Jasper and the Moonstone

It is especially interesting that the standard lists all give *ašpû* as the first stone and, indeed, the lexical tradition equates Sumerian NA<sub>4</sub>.AMAŠ.PA.È with both *aš-pu-û* and *aban benni* “stone of *bennu*”.<sup>112</sup> There, a direct link between this stone and *bennu* is made. This is worth investigating, especially because one of the demons of epilepsy is called “Lord of AMAŠ.PA.È”.

What stone can this be? The Sumerian and Babylonian words sound so similar that they might go back to a common *Kulturwort* that also may be discovered in Greek *jaspis* “jasper”.<sup>113</sup> Modern jasper is “opaque chalcedony commonly dark red, red-brown, or yellowish-brown; pigmented by finely divided hematite or goetite particles”.<sup>114</sup> Babylonian “jasper” (*ašpû*) looks different. An inscribed chalcedony bead dedicated by an Elamite king of the 12th century has been found; its colour is pale-blue and the inscription says that it is made of “jasper of Puralsiš”.<sup>115</sup> The Babylonian handbook with descriptions of stones compares *ašpû* with “a clear sky” and, in the next line, with “a cloud of flooding”.<sup>116</sup> Two shades of blue seem to be appropriate. The lowest of the three “heavens” is made of this stone.<sup>117</sup>

The lexical tradition knows of various kinds of this “jasper”; we already saw how Babylonian stone-lore discerns two shades of blue. A Neo-Babylonian list distinguishes four:

*ašpû* — *ašpû* “which shows the crescent of the moon” — *ašpû* “which shows . . .” — *ašpû* “which shows . . .” — NA<sub>4</sub>.AMAŠ.PA.È.<sup>118</sup>

The first and the last entry stand for one and the same stone; *ašpû* and NA<sub>4</sub>.AMAŠ.PA.È are simply the Babylonian and Sumerian words for this “jasper”, respectively, as duplicating texts show.<sup>119</sup> A similar sounding stone, NA<sub>4</sub>.AMAŠ.MÚ.A (= *amašmû*) ought to

<sup>110</sup> BAM 2 183:27, 32. *Šurpû* = *šuruppû* = “feverish shivering” (p. 38).

<sup>111</sup> CT 14 16 BM. 93084.

<sup>112</sup> MSL 10 (1970) 9 Hh XVI 177 f., restored with the help of earlier parallel texts, p. 21 f. and 66.

<sup>113</sup> Rejected by B. Landsberger; see D.O. Edzard, art. “Jaspis” in *RLA* V / 3–4 (1977) 269 f.

<sup>114</sup> I. Vandier, P.F. Kerr, *Mineral recognition* (1967) 260b. See also Martha Haussperger, *Die Einführungsszene* (München-Wien 1991) 276 f.

<sup>115</sup> E. Sollberger, *JCS* 19 (1965) 31 f. — Was this bead an amulet against epilepsy given by the king to his daughter?

<sup>116</sup> BAM 4 378 IV 19–22, dupl. STT 1 108:76 f. B. Landsberger, *JCS* 21 (1967) 154: “wie der wolkenlose Himmel – wie eine schwere Gewitterwolke”. Cf. GIM IM.DIRIG . . ., W. 23279 III 11, 20 (in *SpbTU* IV).

<sup>117</sup> Landsberger, 154 f.; A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works . . .* (1986) 82:33, with p. 86; W. Horowitz, *Or.* NS 59 (1990) 516 f. — Note that the sun is situated in the “lapis lazuli sky”; B. Alster and U. Jeyes, *ASJ* 12 (1990) 8:4, Sumerian an za.gin.na, Akkadian *ša-mu-û el-lu-tum*.

<sup>118</sup> MSL 10 (1970) 66 BM. 38385 III 9–13.

<sup>119</sup> BAM 3 316 II 2 = 4 376 I 31, see MSL 10 21 f. and Köcher, BAM 4 p. XIX note 64. — Note the writings AMAŠ.PA.A and A.MAŠ.PA.A in BAM 4 372 III 6 = 368 II 14 = 375 II 3 = Durand, *TBER* 45 AO 17619 rev. 2 (all against unlucky days, etc.).

be distinguished from it, as both stones are named in sequence in a number of texts,<sup>120</sup> and this stone has the descriptions "like sunrise", "like sunset".<sup>121</sup>

Three entries speak of the *ašpû* that "shows" something, an expression that is used for some other stones<sup>122</sup> described as showing something of a red colour.<sup>123</sup> Collation has shown that we cannot read this red colour in the damaged signs of the second and third entries and we unfortunately have to retain the dots.<sup>124</sup> These two variants of the stone may be very rare because in the texts we never find any kind of *ašpû* showing something except the *ašpû* named here as the first variety: that "showing the crescent of the moon".<sup>125</sup> Maybe the two extra stones showed some rare colour.

What could "jasper, showing the crescent of the moon (*uskaru*)" be? A Babylonian commentary on an astrological text does not help much; the broken passage runs "its check is the water-clock (*mašqû*) — ditto: jasper of the crescent which (is) in (*šā*) the moon; god Nabû which is situated in the sun".<sup>126</sup> We know from other texts that theological speculation saw the god Nabû in the moon and Marduk in the sun,<sup>127</sup> or the sea-monster Tiamat in the moon.<sup>128</sup> It is too early to work this out. Another possible connection between jasper and the moon could be the fact that king Assurbanipal had made a costly seal of jasper, to be hung on the neck of the statue of the moon-god Sin.<sup>129</sup>

More light comes from Classical sources. The Greek and Roman handbooks on the virtues of stones list jasper (*iaspis*) and the "moonstone" (*selēnītēs*) together. Dioscorides does this in his encyclopaedia of pharmacology, adding that the moonstone comes from "Arabia".<sup>130</sup> St. Augustine knew that the moonstone comes from "Persia".<sup>131</sup> All authors agree that jasper and moonstone are very similar.<sup>132</sup> Of these two gem stones, varieties of jasper are efficient against epilepsy (and mania), a tradition that has its origins in Babylonia and Persia, according to Max Wellmann.<sup>133</sup> The Babylonian Zacharias or Zalachthes dedicated a book on gems to king Mithridates; he and

<sup>120</sup> As in BAM 4 366 III 15 f., 367:11, 13. Cf. MSL 10 21 on 175 (by-form *abašmû*).

<sup>121</sup> STT 1 108:74 f. with BAM 4 378 IV 17 f. (only "like sunset"). — Note the unusual writing *amaš* (KWU 543).me.è in TCL 5 6044 rev. I 23, etc., if G. Pettinato, *Or. Ant.* 21 (1982) 64 n. 52, is correct.

<sup>122</sup> UET VII 121 II 9, III 7, dupl. LKA 9 I 19. "To show" is Sum. PĀD, Akkadian *kullumu*.

<sup>123</sup> ZU.GAN, explained by a commentary as *sa-a-m[u]*, E.F. Weidner, *Babyloniaca* 6 (1912) 98 Sm. 2074:4.

<sup>124</sup> Mr C.B.F. Walker who kindly collated the passage BM. 38385 III 11–12 (MSL 10 66) for me, saw underground traces like UD x and UD BI, respectively; not ZU.GAN.

<sup>125</sup> References in E. Reiner, *JNES* 26 (1967) 196 note 21; MSL 10 (1970) 22. Add now STT 2 271 II 10 with dupl. BAM 4 370 Ia:32; 372 II 18 (no PĀD); *SpTU* II 112 no. 22 III 32 (read NA<sub>4</sub> *aš-pû-u šā UD.SAR PĀD-û*); unpubl. K. 3304 II 6 (NA<sub>4</sub> *aš-pû-u šā UD.SAR PĀD*). In BAM 4 475 II 38, dupl. 376 I 12: 4 *ašpû ištēn ina libbišu šikin* (GAR) *uskari* (UD.SAR).

<sup>126</sup> ACh Suppl. 2, 19:8.

<sup>127</sup> A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works* ... (1986) 82 VAT 8917 rev. 5 with p. 90 f.

<sup>128</sup> STC II plate LXVII:11, with Livingstone, 90.

<sup>129</sup> Nabonidus, inscr. no. 8 X 32–42 (= Nabonid Stelenfragment XI); see VAB 4 (1912) 286.

<sup>130</sup> V 141–2. Serpentine (*ophitēs*) is the third and last (amulet) stone in his handbook; see J.M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (1985) 159.

<sup>131</sup> *De Civitate Dei* 21, 5, 1.

<sup>132</sup> Damigeron-Euax §36, see R. Halleux, J. Schamp, *Les lapidaires grecs* (1985) 277; J.M. Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes' (1035–1123) De Lapidibus* (1977) 65 § XXVI:384. — Xenocrates on jasper: M. Ullmann, *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 8 (1973) 70.

<sup>133</sup> Max Wellmann, *Die Stein- und Gemmenbücher der Antike. Die Stein- und Gemmenliteratur des Altertums* (1935) (= *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin* Band 4, [426]–[489] = Viertes Heft, 86–149) p. 122 f. (= [462 f.]). Some of his references are *Orphei Lithica Kerugmata* § 6, also in R. Halleux, etc., *Les lapidaires grecs* 150; Alexander of Tralles I 567; see Wellmann 123 note 1.



the Assyrian magus Tarmoendas, quoted by Xenocrates and Pliny, may have played an intermediating rôle in the chain of tradition.

The moonstone has other virtues, as fantastic as the stone itself. We have already seen that the gem was supposed to be found in remote lands like Arabia and Persia. Pliny the Elder writes: "The *selenitis*, a transparent, colourless stone with a honey-coloured sheen, contains a likeness of the moon, and reproduces, if the report is true, the very shape of the moon as it waxes or wanes from day to day. It is thought to occur in Arabia".<sup>134</sup> To put it in the words of Wilkie Collins, as phrased in the prologue of his detective novel *The Moonstone* (1868): "A semi-transparent stone of the inferior order of gems, supposed to be affected by the lunar influences — the moon giving the name by which the stone is still known to collectors in our own time"; "partly from its peculiar colour, partly from a superstition which represented it as partaking of the nature of the deity (...) and growing and lessening in lustre with the waxing and waning of the moon".<sup>135</sup> Clearly, neither Pliny nor Collins ever saw such a gem. The moonstone as it is known to experts in gemmology has a blue glow and has some specific chemical characteristics.<sup>136</sup> In folklore, however, a moonstone reflecting the lunar phases was accepted as real and considered to have extraordinary powers.<sup>137</sup> It was a means to win love and scrapings of it, collected at the waxing moon, were effective against epilepsy (Dioscurides). The stone promotes fertility of trees<sup>138</sup> and the Byzantine handbook of magical stones even claims that the moonstone fills the bearer with divine power (*éntheos*).<sup>139</sup>

We now know that the mysterious moonstone was originally a variety of jasper, "showing the crescent of the moon". Such was the definition of the Babylonians themselves. This stone existed and was used, as their medical and magical texts show. It ought to be distinguished from jasper proper, the stone effective against epilepsy when used as an amulet — a distinction also made in the Classical world.

At the end of this discussion of amulet stones and jasper a warning should be given: the modern classification for gems follows principles completely different from those of the Ancients. Even if an age-old word — like "jasper" — is used one cannot be sure that over the centuries always the same stone was meant by it. In fact, the blue glow of the moonstone of today reminds us more of Babylonian *āspû* "jasper" than modern jasper itself; we have seen that "blue" was its characteristic colour. We will give here the description of the moonstone as given by modern handbooks:

<sup>134</sup> *Nat. Hist.* 37 181, as translated by D.E. Eichholz (1962). — Assyriologists should note that in the same chapter Pliny writes: "*Sagda* is the name given by the Chaldaeans to a leek-green stone which they find, so to say, attached to ships' hulls".

<sup>135</sup> The moonstone in Collin's book is another gem, coming from a sanctuary in India. Its description and origin as described in the Prologue may have been inspired by what Lucian tells us in his book *De Syria Dea*, cap. 32, about the "stone" on the head of the goddess in Hierapolis, named *luchnis* and shining during the night; see also M. Hörig, *Dea Syria* (1979) 245. In the nineteenth century, Lucian was read in schools and young Wilkie hated "the grand old fortifying classical curriculum" that he was blessed with; Jean Ruer, *Wilkie Collins* I (1990) 49.

<sup>136</sup> See the end of this section.

<sup>137</sup> W.H. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (1890) 84 with notes 332 f.; R. Halleux, J. Schamp, *Les lapidaires grecs* (1985) 277 note 1; H. Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* VI (1935; reprinted in 1987) 543 f. (by Olbrich).

<sup>138</sup> M. Ullmann, *Der Islam* 54 (1977) 54, with more from Greek and Arabic traditions.

<sup>139</sup> Dimitris Kaimakis, *Die Kyraniden* (1976) 66 f., Book I, 10. — On the moonstone also Photius, *Bibliotheca*, ed. R. Henry (1971) vol. VI p. 9 and 47 (Budé edition).

### Jasper and the Moonstone

- Varieties of orthoclase, adularia, sanidine, or albite with a bluish opalescent play of colors are called *Moonstone*. Microscopic to submicroscopic intergrowth of sodium-rich feldspar in a potassium-rich feldspar host (micro- or crypto-perthites) are believed to be responsible for the opalescence of some moonstone.<sup>140</sup>
- The blue glow of moonstone is produced by the interference of light from the thin feldspar plates.<sup>141</sup>
- Even though this gem is not fully transparent, it is highly translucent. Generally, it is colourless but displays a blue glow when polished cabochon (and it always is), a glow moving over the stone on being turned around.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> I. Vanders, P.F. Kerr, *Mineral recognition* (1967) 262b.

<sup>141</sup> Vanders, 79a.

<sup>142</sup> J. Hammes, *Edelstenen* (1965) 104.





## VII TIMING

The Babylonian experts in magic paid much attention to lucky and unlucky days. We have a few texts that indicate for every month all the year round which days are propitious for curing what specific disease by magic. The oldest text dates to the end of the Assyrian empire<sup>1</sup> and at its beginning, in the section on the first month of the year, there is a line that interests us: if one intends to "eradicate" incubus and a n.t a.š u b.b a, the days ... up to 30 of month I (Nisan) are propitious. "If you do (magic) (then), you will be successful", as the formula runs. Such a propitious moment is called "the (right) time" in Akkadian (*adannu*).<sup>2</sup> But the fifth month, named Abu, was more important for curing epilepsy and related diseases:

- In month Abu, day 10 is the right moment for (curing) Cutting-off-Life (*zikurrudû*); day ... is the right moment for (curing) dizziness (*šidānu*); day 28 (is) for "eradicating" a n.t a.š u b.b a, *bennu*, Lugal-girra, Hand of the God, Hand of a Spirit: if you do (it) (on these days), you will be successful.

Lugal-girra is identical with Lugal-urra, "Lord of the Roof", as we have seen when studying this demon of epilepsy. Day 28 of the fifth month is of great interest: this is the first of the two or three moonless nights at the end of the month — already known as the time for ghosts to appear, but at the end of this particular month, the fifth, it also is the moment for the annual "All Souls" celebration of the Babylonians.<sup>3</sup> Just as at the end of the fourth month (Tammuz) the lover of the goddess Ištar, Tammuz, appearing from the Netherworld, was supposed to take down with him human disease ritually presented to him,<sup>4</sup> just so the end of the next month, Abum, was the appropriate moment to send down spirits. The purpose of the rituals was to cure diseases caused by ghosts and spirits of the dead, which in most cases had been activated by evil sorcery.<sup>5</sup> We know that this was done "when the spirit of his father or his mother seized a man".<sup>6</sup> The spirits of one's own family were of a great help during those three days, while the sun-god Šamaš and the judge of the Netherworld, Gilgameš, were supervising.<sup>7</sup> The end of the month Abu was also the right moment to counter evil sorcery (black magic); the witches were sent down to the Netherworld as spirits, taking with them "Any Evil".<sup>8</sup> Our text views 28.V as the good moment for "eradicating" Hand of a Spirit and epilepsy-related afflictions. There is no evidence that epilepsy could be caused by black magic, so we can just say that epilepsy is associated with the spirits of the dead here. Again, it must be emphasised that a correct appreciation of the implica-

<sup>1</sup> STT 2 300.

<sup>2</sup> J. Bottéro, *Mythes et rites de Babylone* (1985) 100.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kispum) im alten Mesopotamien* (1985) 48 ff.

<sup>4</sup> W. Farber, *BID* (1977) 101 ff., Tafel II, with J. Bottéro, *ZA* 73 (1983) 193–6.

<sup>5</sup> Thus S. Parpola, *LAS* Part II (1983) 204, comm. on no. 208.

<sup>6</sup> Farber, Tafel III.

<sup>7</sup> Tsukimoto, 161–167.

<sup>8</sup> T. Abusch, *JNES* 33 (1974) 252 below, 259–261; see Abusch in *History of Religions* 26 (1986) 151 for the interpretation of the rituals *KAR* 227, etc. He situates the performance of the anti-witchcraft ritual *Maqlû* in this month. — Note the ritual against sorcery to be performed on days 7, 14, 21, [28] of month V; *SpbTU* II 96 no. 19 rev. 32.



tions can only be undertaken in a separate study on spirits of the dead in Mesopotamia — a book still to be written.

The contents of the Assyrian text reappear in a new garb in two texts of the early Seleucid period.<sup>9</sup> What is new is the link with the Zodiac that is established here: since ca. 400 B.C. the Zodiac with its twelve signs for the twelve months was accepted in Babylonian astronomy. These two younger texts relate the days of the months to the 30 degrees of each sign. Every sign or month is divided into 12 sections, again having the names of the Zodiacal signs; this is the micro-zodiac. The twelve equal parts in this subdivision are called "dodekatemoria" in Greek astronomy, a subdivision going back to the Babylonians. By this system it is possible to compute, starting from a given longitude, another astrologically valid different longitude, named "aspect".<sup>10</sup> Obviously one had not only to consider the influence of the first position but also the significance of its aspect. The horoscopes also used this system.

The first of our Seleucid texts has the following simple entry for the epilepsies; that on incubus and succubus precedes:<sup>11</sup>

— a n.t a.š u b. b a, Lugal-urra, Hand of the God, Hand of a Spirit: area of [Leo]. Leo is the zodiacal sign for the fifth month;<sup>12</sup> Virgo follows. The second text, closely related to the first, is more sophisticated in giving both longitudes:<sup>13</sup>

— (Month) V! (day) 29: a n.t a.š u b. b a, *bennu*, Lugal-urra, Hand of the God, [Hand of a Spirit: for] eradicating: you do (this), you will be successfull. V 29 [=degree 29 in the fifth Zodiacal sign] V 17 [second longitude or aspect]; Virgo of (*šá*) Leo (is) the distance travelled (*zi*).

Using the formula for computing the second longitude one arrives at 377 days or degrees after V 29 which is 16 VI, in the sign Virgo. Our scribe, already sloppy at the beginning in not writing a clear V, made one or two more minor errors in noting down 17 V instead of 16 VI. Why he should have given the "aspect" of the right time for curing epilepsy is not clear.

In any case we are witnessing the birth of "iatromathematics" in this development from the simple Assyrian almanack of the exorcist to the sophisticated Seleucid texts, orientated to the Zodiac. Iatromathematics, a word composed of *iatros* "physician" and *mathematica*, with the special meaning "astrology", was to play a great role in ancient, medieval and Renaissance medicine.<sup>14</sup>

Another cuneiform text of Seleucid times also assigns diseases to the "area" of zodiacal signs; the epilepsies are included but not assigned to Leo or Virgo; this text may have had a purpose other than indicating the correct time for curing a disease.<sup>15</sup> The text says that to the area of Perseus belong *bennu*, malaria, *rapadu*, and head-ache; and adds: "The star of Marduk for *bennu*; Spawn of Šulpae (is) *bennu*". This "star", also named Šulpaea, is the planet Jupiter and "Spawn of Šulpaea" is a severe form of

<sup>9</sup> BRM 4 19 and 20, studied by A. Ungnad, *Afo* 14 (1941-44) 255-284; cf. J. Bottéro, *Mythes et rites* ... 100-112 (who is not aware of the micro-zodiac).

<sup>10</sup> Discovered by O. Neugebauer and A. Sachs, *Afo* 16 (1952-53) 65 f.; cf. A. Sachs, *JCS* 6 (1952) 72 f.; F. Rochberg-Halton, *JAO* 108 (1988) 57-60.

<sup>11</sup> BRM 4 20:32, with *Afo* 14 259.

<sup>12</sup> E.F. Weidner, *Handbuch der babylonischen Astronomie* (1915) 121-3.

<sup>13</sup> BRM 4 19:24 f., with *Afo* 14 274 f., cf. 280.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Emilie Boer in *Der Kleine Pauly* 2 (1967) 1326 f.; F. Klein-Franke, *Iatromathematik im Islam* (1984).

<sup>15</sup> The text is *LBAT* 1597 and has been studied by M. Leibovici, *Journal asiatique* 244 (1956) 275-280.

epilepsy. We see the connections but view the remark as a not very useful "explanatory" addition by the scribe. Two entries onwards, a n.t a.š u b.b a and "Daughter of Anum" (the demon Lamaštu) are assigned to the area of Taurus and Orion. The first entry on the reverse, now following, is: "Area of Gemini: a n.t a.š u b.b a and Lugal-urra". As an explanation follows: "Gemini: Lugal-urra and Meslamtaea". Gemini literally means "twins" in Latin and the Sumerogram used in the Babylonian astronomical texts has about the same meaning, "great twins". Lugal-girra and Meslamtaea are those twins in the Babylonian pantheon; their "Hand" was feared.<sup>16</sup> Again we note that Lugal-urra, "Lord of the Roof", demon of epilepsy, is identical with Lugal-girra. "Hand of a Spirit" is located in the area of Leo (month V), as we had expected.

An astrological text of the same period, of varied contents, on its reverse gives information about what will happen to a person who is born in the "area" of a specific zodiacal sign. The text follows the order of the signs and has this to say about the tenth sign, Capricornus: "Is he born in the area of Capricornus: *bennu*, incubus, migraine will seize him".<sup>17</sup> Incubus threatens women and new-born babies, as we have seen elsewhere (p. 48).

Neither of these two fragmentary texts gives information on the positions of the moon or the planets, which is essential for seeing a pattern or drawing conclusions.<sup>18</sup> At any rate, the planet Jupiter (Marduk; Šulpaea) has to do with epilepsy, as we have seen. This was an old belief detectable in the expression "Spawn of Šulpaea" for epilepsy. The chapter on astrology in the early Assyrian handbook of astronomy *Mul-apin*, when discussing the ominous position of Jupiter, gives this omen: "If Marduk (= the planet Jupiter) is seeing the body (*pagru*) of a man, *bennu* will seize him".<sup>19</sup>

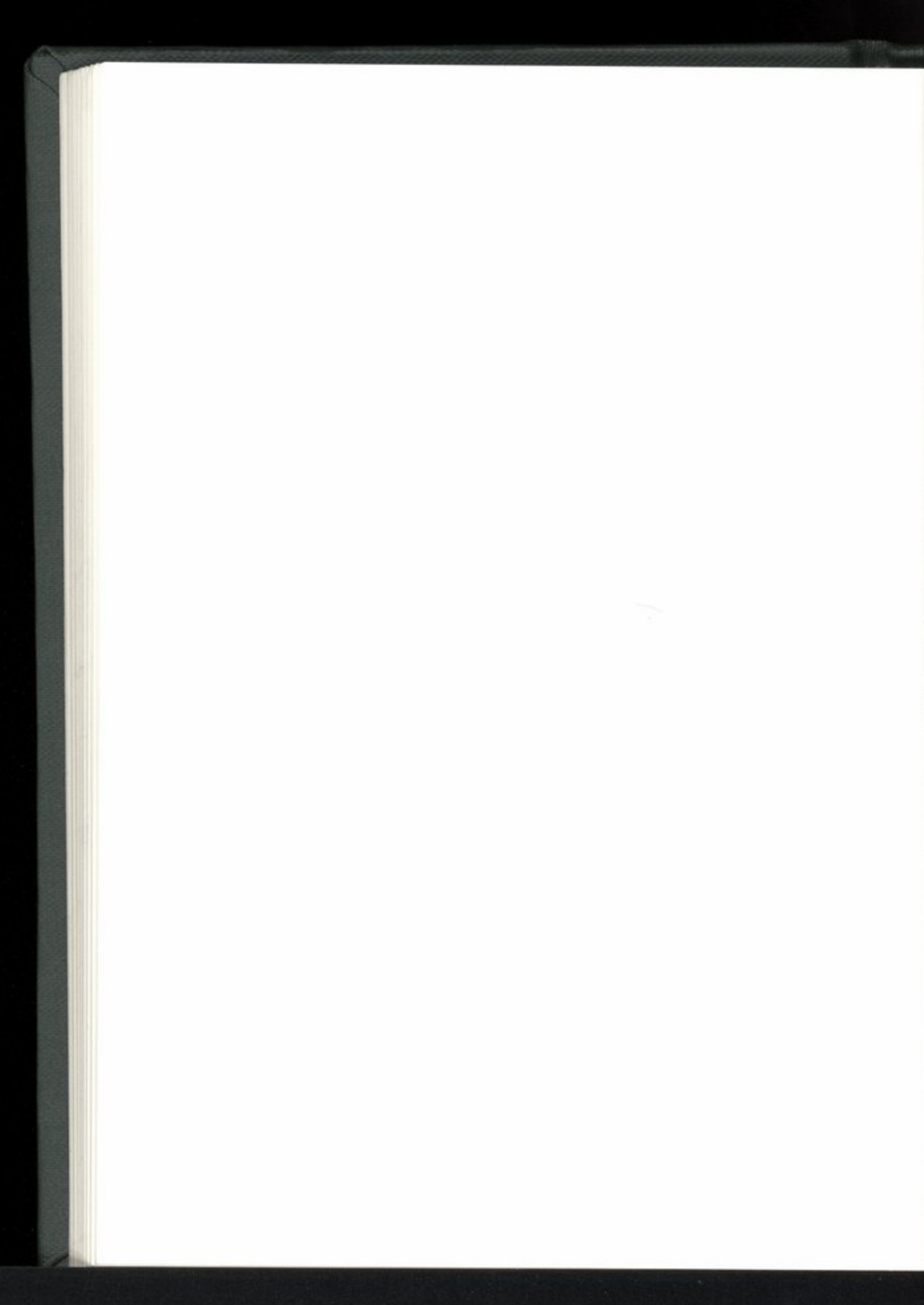
<sup>16</sup> TDP 76:58, 65; SpbTU I 34:23 (*qāt L. u M.*).

<sup>17</sup> LBAT 1593 rev. 9 f.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the complete horoscope predictions in E.F. Weidner, *Gestirndarstellungen...* (1967) 14.

<sup>19</sup> STT 2 331 rev. 19 and dupl.; see H. Hunger, D. Pingree, *MUL.APIN. An Astronomical Compendium in Cuneiform* (1989) 117, Gap B 4 (and Plate X, U:4).





## VIII EPILEPSY IN PREDICTIONS

With "If the planet Jupiter is seeing the body of a man, *bennu* will seize him", an astrological omen, we have already slipped into the vast field of the Babylonian omen literature. All sorts of phenomena in nature — notably the unusual — had a bearing on the future of the individual and the community. They are named *omina* (singular: *omen*) in Latin, "portents". Astrology played an increasingly important rôle in this science of divination; another important branch was the study of the liver of sheep. We will first look for the forecast "epilepsy" in astrological literature.

Astrology is primarily interested in what will befall the community: the land or its representative, the king. "Epilepsy will be in the country" — always named *bennu* — is a common prediction. This is at first sight surprising because epilepsy is not commonly known as an epidemic disease, but by the ancients it was considered to be contagious.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in one region of Liberia nearly 5 % of the population suffers from this disease.<sup>2</sup> So it is actually possible to consider it as an epidemic. Furthermore, epilepsy can be a symptom of epidemic diseases ("secondary epilepsy").

The chapter on the planet Venus in the classic Babylonian handbook for astrology discusses the rising of this planet in the months of the year:

- If Venus in month VII is surrounded by two or three halo's [...] (the) disease hysteria (?) (*GIG šihitu*) and *bennu* will be in the country.<sup>3</sup>

The same handbook, writing on the Great Twins (= Gemini), does not forget who those twins are: the gods Lugal-girra and Meslamtaea, personifications of Nergal, god of the Netherworld; when they are involved, "the god Enlil will 'throw' leprosy (*epqu*) and *bennu* in Akkad, and Nergal will [devour] the cattle".<sup>4</sup> In the chapter on lunacy, we will see that leprosy and epilepsy can be the outer and inner manifestations of the same disease.

Omina of the moon in the handbook see in a corona around the moon "slaughtering/murder"; one possibility is that "*bennu* will be in the land; Lugal-girra will devour".<sup>5</sup> Lugal-girra can stand for Nergal, also god of the plague. An astronomical diary of 324–323 B.C. says in a broken line that *bennu* "devours".<sup>6</sup>

Somewhat unusual is the place of epilepsy in a forecast cited in a report by a scribe to the Assyrian court. A shooting star with a tail like that of a scorpion is a good omen: "this does not concern the owner of a house, but the entire country: if *bennu* is in the entire country, bad people will disappear; there will be justice; the poor will be rich and the rich will be poor (...)"<sup>7</sup> This complicated prediction could have been

<sup>1</sup> Samuel S. Kottke, *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and related sciences* 25 (1988), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Corry Gerrits, "Conceptions and explanations of *sii*, Epilepsy. A medical-anthropological study among the Bassa and Kpelle in Liberia", *Curare. Zeitschrift für Ethnomedizin und transkulturelle Psychiatrie* 6 (1983) 33–40.

<sup>3</sup> V. Scheil, *RA* 14 (1917) 144:3 f. — Differently *ACH* Second Suppl. Istar 49:95–7 (rev. 8–10). — We discussed this "hysteria" (?) above, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> E. Reiner, *BPO* 2 (1981) 44 Text IV 2a; cf. 48 Text VI 1a.

<sup>5</sup> *ACH* Suppl. 1:32; dupl. Second Suppl. 17: 24; Weidner, *BA* VIII/4 (1911) 34:32.

<sup>6</sup> *LBAT* 203:11, [...] x *be-en-ne* KÜ.

<sup>7</sup> *RMA* 200:1–6; now edited by H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings* (1992) 93 no. 185.



based on a historic conjunction of circumstances during the reign of the renowned king Nebuchadnezzar I (1124–1103 B.C.) in view of the fact that his reign is mentioned in this same report.<sup>8</sup> Or is a “prophecy” based on heavenly phenomena quoted here?<sup>9</sup> The recent edition of this report by H. Hunger makes our problem disappear because he considers “If a shooting star ...” and “If there is *bennu*-disease ...” as independent omens quoted in this text.

We now turn to extispicy.<sup>10</sup> Forecasts based on features of a sheep’s spleen predict that “*bennu* will fall upon the son of the man”; the duplicating text speaks of a *bennu* “not going away”.<sup>11</sup> The following entry gives for an opposite situation the prediction “the *bennu* that fell will go away”; duplicate: “a *bennu* that goes away will fall upon the man”. A model of a sheep’s liver found in the capital of the Hittite empire is inscribed with this text:<sup>12</sup>

- If the gall-bladder is full of pustules: thirst will seize my troops — or: *bennu* will seize the man.

The two predictions are given as alternatives, one of a “public”, the other of a “private” nature. We rarely see a connection between what is said in the “If ...” sentence and the following forecast of omen texts; here, however, we may see a common element: the “pustules” on the gall-bladder may already foreshadow “thirst” and “epilepsy”. Why the latter is related to pustules, will be seen at the end of Chapter IX (p. 129).

The future of individuals can be foreseen by studying their physiognomy. The third chapter of the Babylonian handbook for this branch of omen science investigates the forehead. They recognized in the folds patterns like cuneiform signs.<sup>13</sup> The future of a man and his family was “written” in these folds. We quote the line that interests us:<sup>14</sup>

- If the sign EN, or RI, or HU (are there), *bennu* will s[eize] that man.

The same forecast applies when the signs UR or IB are visible. According to the following entry “that man will see (?) that of (the moon-god) Sin [...]”. Is the demon *Bennu*, “deputy” (*šanū*) of Sin?

The handbook on human behaviour was already quoted in our discussion of Lugal-urra, “Lord of the Roof”. It is also part of the omen literature. “If a man approaches (a woman) on the roof, Lugal-urra will seize him” — “If he approaches a woman on the roof, the Lurker will strike him with a stroke (*mašādu*)”.<sup>15</sup> In both cases the demon of epilepsy is meant. In the discussion of human behaviour in divorce, we find:<sup>16</sup>

- If a man leaves his first wife (*hīrtu*) and makes (her) starve, he will get the falling (*miqitti*) of *bennu*.

The wording is unusual and perhaps faulty. It is possible that the sound of the verbal form “makes starve”, *uberre*, suggested *bennu* to the writer.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. E.F. Weidner, *MAOG* 4 (1928–29) 238 f.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. R.D. Biggs, *Iraq* 29 (1967) 117 ff.

<sup>10</sup> U. Jeynes, *Old Babylonian Extispicy* (1989) 107 f.

<sup>11</sup> YOS 10 41:52, dupl. RA 67 (1973) 44:67 f., [l]a te-bu-um (Old Bab.); also in the later text KAR 152; see RA 67 49 f.

<sup>12</sup> KUB 37 218; cf. J.-W. Meyer, *Untersuchungen zu den Tonlebermodellen aus dem Alten Orient* (1987) 148.

<sup>13</sup> TBP no. 6 with F.R. Kraus, *MVAeG* 40/2 (1935) 22. Cf. S. Lieberman in *Studies J.J. Finkelstein* (1977) 147 ff.

<sup>14</sup> TBP 6 rev. 21.

<sup>15</sup> CT 39 44:6; S. Moren, *JCS* 29 (1977) 66:2.

<sup>16</sup> CT 39 46:54.

## IX STRUCK BY THE MOON

### Lunaticus

In a previous chapter we have seen that epilepsy can border on madness. This is also reflected in the semantic development of the word "lunacy", a form of madness, but going back to a Greek word denoting an epileptic. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the following definition for lunacy:

- The condition of being lunatic; intermittent insanity such as was formerly supposed to be brought about by the changes of the moon; now applied generally to any form of insanity (idiocy usually excepted).

The word goes back to Latin *lunaticus* which in the Roman world had the same meaning as "lunatic" in English. The word itself is late in Latin; we find it in the Digests where a slave is described as *furiosus vel lunaticus*<sup>1</sup> which means that he "is mad or has periods of unreason", following a modern translation. However, we already learn from Cicero that *furiosus* is the appropriate term for temporary madness, according to him (and tradition) caused by melancholy.<sup>2</sup> This madness can be a sign of divine wrath.<sup>3</sup> The Digests found it useful to differentiate between *lunaticus* and *furiosus*. Unrelenting madness or idiocy is *insania* in Latin. Although the word "lunacy" is not mentioned, the Roman poet Horace refers to it in his *Ars poetica* in his list of diseases: mange, scab (*mala scabies*), jaundice (*morbus regius*), religious mania (*fanaticus error*), "the irate Diana" (*iracunda Diana*). Diana is a name for the moon-goddess; lunacy is meant by "the irate Diana".<sup>4</sup>

### The story in the Gospel

The Greek equivalent to "lunacy" is *selēniasmós* in which we recognize the Greek word for the moon, *selēnē*. Its meaning in context is "epilepsy", as is evident from the New Testament where we find the oldest references. Let us start our discussion of the relation between epilepsy and the phases of the moon with this story from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 17:14-18:<sup>5</sup>

- And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic (*selēniázetai*) and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him". And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me". And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly.

<sup>1</sup> Dig. 21, 1, 43 § 6.

<sup>2</sup> Tusc. Disp. III 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione* I 31, 66; II 48, 100; *De harusp. resp.* 18, 39, cited by P. Bonfanti, *Corso di Diritto Romano* I (1925) 475. See Jackie Pigeaud, *La maladie de l'âme* (1981) 253-264.

<sup>4</sup> *Ars poetica* 454, with the scholiast. C.O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry* (1971) 422 f., did not see this point.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Rudolf and Martin Hengel, "Die Heilungen Jesu und medizinisches Denken", in *Medicus Viator* (= *Studies Richard Siebeck*) (1959) 332-361, esp. 350 f.



Matthew's story is an abbreviation of the original account given by Mark where the boy is described as "having a dumb (*álalos*) spirit" (9:17); the symptoms are clearly those of an epileptic attack: "wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid" (...) "it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth". Another version is found in the Gospel of Luke according to which "a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him till he foams, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him" (9:39). Matthew is the only source to use the word "to be diseased by the moon" for "being an epileptic", here and elsewhere: "they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, those diseased by the moon (*selēniazoménoi*) and paralytics, and he healed them" (4:24). "Diseased by the moon", a somewhat free rendering of the Greek word, stands for epilepsy in this context.<sup>6</sup>

Falling into fire and water can happen in this condition, as Classical medical experts report.<sup>7</sup> As to the "dumb" spirit, there is a theory that "deaf" and "dumb" spirits cause deafness and loss of speech.<sup>8</sup> Others have contended that the spirit's dumbness in our passage means that he is particularly intractable to the exorcist by not making himself known.<sup>9</sup> The Greek magical papyri often sum up the group of "blind, deaf and dumb" spirits and it is hard to see how "blind" fits in with the second theory. However this may be, it is good to point out that one of those papyri gives this trio in a context of epilepsy (*epilēmpsia*) and lunacy (*selēniasmós*).<sup>10</sup>

The story in the Gospels made a great impression upon the Christians.<sup>11</sup> It started with Origen's commentary on Matthew (third century A.D.) who rejected the "physiological talk" of doctors who say that epilepsy has its origin in the brains and follows the moon by "sympathy". "We, that believe in the Gospel, are of the opinion that this disease is worked by an unclean spirit, dumb and deaf, in those suffering from it".<sup>12</sup> This view on the cause of epilepsy had a great impact for many centuries to come and shows how important the spiritual factor can be in the development of scientific thinking.<sup>13</sup> It is another matter how we appreciate this development. The Christians wanted to say that the moon is not divine nor the cause of disease and they warned that Satan's demons suggest this by following the lunar phases in their attacks.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See the full discussion by H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* (1965) 371-414, "The Healing of the Possessed", esp. 397-405, "The 'lunatic' boy".

<sup>7</sup> Caelius Aurelianus (Soranus) and Aretaeus; see G.B. Winer, *Biblisches Realwörterbuch* second impr., I (1833) 191 f., in art. "Besessene". Also "cited in Responsa Maharam (R. Meir of Rothenburg, 1215-1293), § 160"; see Kottek, *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and related sciences* 25 (1988) 3, 10 (note 8).

<sup>8</sup> Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (1978) 126.

<sup>9</sup> C. Bonner in his article "The technique of exorcism", *Harvard Theological Review* 36 (1943) 39-49, esp. 43 f., following M. J. Lagrange.

<sup>10</sup> *Pap. Mag. Graecae* CXIV.1-14, with H.D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (1985) 313. Cf. R.W. Daniel, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 25 (1977) 148, and F. Maltomini in *Papyrologica Florentina* VII (1980) 174.

<sup>11</sup> F.J. Dölger, "Der Einfluss des Origenes auf die Beurteilung der Epilepsie und Mondsucht im christlichen Altertum", *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934) 95-109. Cf. J.H. Waszink, art. "Epilepsie", and C.D.G. Müller, art. "Geister" (col. 780 f.) in *RAC*.

<sup>12</sup> Origenes, commentary on Matthew 17:14 (Tom. XIII, 6; ed. Klostermann [1935] X 193), translated by Dölger, 96 f.

<sup>13</sup> Pointed out by W. den Boer in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 87 (1974) 233 f., against G.E.R. Lloyd. For an evaluation of Origen's thinking on these matters, see R.M. Grant, *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (1952) 204 ff.

<sup>14</sup> O. Temkin, 96 and above p. 12.

## Evidence from the Classical world

Returning now to the pagan Greeks and Romans of the first centuries of our era, we can present the following material on the relationship between epilepsy and the moon. A preliminary observation is that the moon has an influence on the processes in the human body; this is what Origen called "sympathy". At full moon there is a plethora of blood and in later times blood-letting was preferably done when the moon was waning.<sup>15</sup> The moon has an impact on pregnancy; at full moon most children are born.<sup>16</sup> Galen wrote in his influential book *On the Decisive Days* on the moon, receiving its light from the sun: "the moon makes fruits swell and living beings fat, guards (*diaphulattō*) the monthly periods of women, watches (*tērēō*) the periods of the epileptics (...)"<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the moon also regulates the recurrent fits of madness and epilepsy; both were associated.<sup>18</sup> Astrological literature has other and more precise distinctions: *epileptic* is a man seized and possessed by a demon; he is mentally deranged by this; *falling* (*ptōmatikos* in Greek; Latin *caducus*) refers to those suffering from epilepsy; *diseased of the moon* are those who have fits of madness in accordance with the lunar phases.<sup>19</sup> The word "falling" used here for an epileptic person is late<sup>20</sup> and we will concentrate now on "diseased of the moon" as an expression for "epileptic".

The Hellenized Syrian Lucian names epileptics as "those falling down at (*pros*) the moon"; they were healed by a "Syrian from Palestine" — scholars do not see in this story of the second century A.D. a reminiscence of the accounts in the Gospel.<sup>21</sup> Aretaeus of Cappadocia, living in Rome in the first century, when writing on epilepsy, feels that he has to explain the popular name "sacred disease" and ascribes this to the belief that "sinners against the moon" suffer from it.<sup>22</sup> This excellently fits the "irate Diana" seen by Horace as instigating madness and a late scholiast on Galen reports that the common man views epilepsy as a result of divine wrath.<sup>23</sup>

When we now ask at what moment exactly during the monthly course of the moon one is in danger of getting an epileptic attack, we have to say that most texts are vague about this. The scholiast just mentioned says "at full moon"; Lucian and Pliny "when the moon is waxing".<sup>24</sup> Most writers just say that the disease follows the course of the moon.<sup>25</sup> Christian writers are more precise in naming the New Moon or the moonless

<sup>15</sup> Sophie Lunais, *Recherches sur la Lune*. I. *Les auteurs latins* (1979) 74 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Lunais, 76.

<sup>17</sup> Galen, IX 903. Cf. O. Temkin, 26, and Claire Préaux, *La lune dans la pensée grecque* (1973) 91 f.

<sup>18</sup> W.H. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (1890) 68–70; *Nachträge* 27–29; *Ausführliches Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie* II/2 (1894–97) 3155 f., in art. "Mondgöttin"; O. Temkin, 16; Cl. Préaux 91 f. (she sees in this Hellenistic belief the hand of growing astrology).

<sup>19</sup> F. Cumont, *L'Egypte des astrologues* (1937) 169 note 2, with references.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Temkin, 94 and above, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> *Philopseudes* cap. 16; see Temkin, 90.

<sup>22</sup> *CMG* II (1923) 38, III 4, 2. Cf. Temkin, 7, and E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951) 83 note 11.

<sup>23</sup> *CMG* V 9, 2 (1915) 206 ad 11. — Note that according to the Qur'ān users are "stricken" (*khabaṭa*) by Satan, by touching them (*mina l-massi*), 2 276 [275].

<sup>24</sup> Lucian, *Toxaris* cap. 24; Pliny, *NH* XI 149. — This applies also to other diseases, especially of the eyes; see W.H. Roscher, *Über Selene* ... 72 note 276.

<sup>25</sup> Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* II 12 (F.J. Dölger, 95 note 1); Isidorus, *Origines* IV 7, 6; Quintus Serenus (Samonicus), cited by E.D. Baumann, 285 f. and Temkin, 8: *dubiae per tempora lunae*, *CML* II 3 (1916) 48, line 1010.



period (*leipsis selēnēs*) and the fifth day of the month as the moments observed by the demon.<sup>26</sup> The fifth day of the month as an unlucky day is part of Roman mythology: this was the birthday of the frightening goddesses of revenge, the Eumenids. A little understood line in Virgil's *Georgics* refers to it (I 276 ff.).<sup>27</sup> It will be no surprise that the Christian authors of the East, writing in Syriac, do not refer to the fifth day; they tell us that the demon of epilepsy is active "when the moon is born" — "at the end of the month" — "at the beginning and the end of the month".<sup>28</sup> This is Greek tradition. So we are left with the period of the change of the lunar months as the point in time most appropriate for epilepsy to attack. This seems to be confirmed by the scanty evidence that we can gather from the Greek magical papyri: fragmentary lines in one papyrus offer "sacred rag[e]" — "New Moon" — "those diseased of the moon".<sup>29</sup> We can use this insight in the next chapter, where it will be suggested that slave markets in ancient Greece were held on the first day of the new month with the purpose of detecting epilepsy in the slave that one is buying: this is the time the disease makes itself manifest.

Arab sources speak of the New Moon and the Full Moon, according to information given by Dr G.J. van Gelder (Groningen). He kindly provided me with translations of some relevant passages. A poet wrote the line "How could Ka'b ibn Nāṣib ever come to his senses, while his demon (*ṣayṭān*) is struck (by an epileptic fit, *yūṣra'u*) at the new moons?"<sup>30</sup> A scholar wrote "When madmen (*mamrūrīn*, lit. "people affected by *mirra*, bile) that suffer from fits (*yūṣra'ūn*) eat mutton, their condition becomes worse, so that they are struck even outside their (usual) time. The times for fits are New Moon and the middle of the month. In these two periods the sea rises and the water increases. The waxing of the moon, until it becomes full, has a clear effect on the increase of blood and brains and all other humidities".<sup>31</sup> This passage was rewritten as follows: "Mutton is very harmful to those that suffer from fits on account of bile, to the extent that it may cause a fit outside the (usual) time for a fit. The times for fits are the New Moon and the middle of the month. These two periods are the times that the sea rises and water and blood increase. The waxing of the moon, until it becomes full, has its effect on the increase of blood and brain and all (other) humidities".<sup>32</sup>

The idea that people suffering from epilepsy and lunacy are liable to have an attack at New Moon (and Full Moon) was to have a long history in Europe. Isaac Newton's discovery of the gravitation laws gave this belief a new impulse. The principle of planetary attraction seemed to account for lunar influences and it was Richard Mead who worked this out in his dissertation *De imperio solis ac lunae* of 1704, revised edition 1746, plagiarised by the well known Mesmer in 1766.<sup>33</sup> Mead's examples for seizures

<sup>26</sup> Athanasius, *Fragmentum in Matthaeum*; in *Patrologia Graeca* 27 (1857) 1389, B; see Dölger, 101 f. (New Moon and fifth day); a Byzantine ritual for pronouncing a charm: the moonless period, the fifth day, the "Sabbath"; see F.J. Dölger, *Theologische Revue* 19 (1920) 178.

<sup>27</sup> *Ipsa dies alios alio dedit ordine Luna / Felices operum; quintam fuge: pallidus Orcus / Eumenidesque satae*, as explained by F. Cumont, *L'Antiquité classique* 2 (1933) 259–270.

<sup>28</sup> G.J. Reinink, *Studia Patristica* XVI (1985) 107 note 7; 108 note 15; "full moon" in note 7, end.

<sup>29</sup> PGM XVC:10, 11, 16.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Al-Gāhiz, *Al-Hayawān*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, second edition (Cairo 1965–69), vol. VI, 243; and by Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Ši'r wa-l-šū'arā*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Šākīr, second edition (Cairo 1967) 696. The poet is Da'lag ibn al-Hakam, of the time of the Prophet.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Gāhiz, vol. V, 479.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akbār* (Cairo 1925–30) vol. II, 74.

<sup>33</sup> Frank A. Pattie in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 11 (1956) 275 ff. Cf. Schneble, 41.

at new and full moons had all been copied from books and were not based on autopsy.<sup>34</sup> Still, the theory of lunar influences persisted until it was given its death blow near the middle of the nineteenth century — by statistics.

#### Plants and stones

At this juncture a section on plant-lore ought to be inserted. Greek and Roman books on magical plants sometimes indicate when they are to be plucked, and here again the phases of the moon can be given as the appropriate moments.<sup>35</sup> Epileptics are recommended to take as medicine a plant plucked during the night when the moon is waning.<sup>36</sup> Only the mistletoe is to be plucked at New Moon.<sup>37</sup> One plant, the *peony*, known as "the moon-plant" (*selēnion*), was used against diseases caused by the moon, like faltering menstruation.<sup>38</sup> The peony was a miraculous plant, shining in the dark like a star and was named *aglaóphantōn* or *astērion* for that reason. A growing magical lore gave this plant more and more qualities; in Byzantine times it was supposed to be effective against almost anything — provided it had been sown, grown and plucked according to the magical rules, including prayers to God.<sup>39</sup> In those later texts epilepsy is only one of the numerous ailments it can heal. This herb and the asphodel were associated with the planet Jupiter, "Kronos". Earlier sources already have fantastic stories about this plant: is so dangerous that a dog has to pull it up and will die at sunrise.<sup>40</sup> Some of those stories may overlap with those on the root of the mandrake.<sup>41</sup> The magical belief governing all these stories may be the idea that a root only retains its power when remaining in darkness: growing in the earth and plucked at night. Babylonian prescriptions also speak of roots "that do not see the sun when you tear them out".<sup>42</sup> The sober botanist Theophrastus had rejected these tales — they apparently were already told at his time, in the third century B.C.<sup>43</sup> What interests us is the peony's use against epilepsy. Authoritative was the experience that Galen had with an epileptic

<sup>34</sup> Pattie, 282. — See also G. Wilhelm, *ZA* 77 (1987) 134 f.

<sup>35</sup> A. Delatte, *Herbarius* (1961) 42–50, is confusing and relatively useless to us in not telling the reader which plant is used against which disease. The plucking was always done just before sunrise, p. 50–54.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander Trallianus, ed. Th. Puschmann I 570, 572; Apuleius, *Herbarium*, in *CML* 4 (1927) 114 s.v. *asterion* (see below, on peony); cf. Cl. Préaux 119.

<sup>37</sup> Pliny, *HN* 24 12.

<sup>38</sup> Cl. Préaux, 89 (*emmenagogue*); A.J. Festugière (see below), 189 f., note 52; Diosc. III 140 (also against nightmares; cf. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon* ... s.v. *Incubus*).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. F. Pfister, art. "Pflanzenaberglauben", in *RE* XIX (1938) 1452 sub "Selene"; H. Gossen, art. "Paionia", 3, in *RE* XVIII<sup>2</sup> (1942) 2409 f. Later sources: A.J. Festugière, "Un opuscule hermétique sur la pivoine", in *Hermétisme et mystique païenne* (1967) 181–201; A. Olivieri, "La peonia nell' astrologia greca", *Rivista Indo-Greco-Italica di filologia – lingua – antichità* XXI (1937) 139–156. Cf. *Catalogus Codic. Astrologorum Graecorum* VIII/4 (1921) 260 and W. and H. Gundel, *Astrologumena* (1966) 21 note 25.

<sup>40</sup> Aelian, *Hist. Animalium* XIV 27. — It has gone unnoticed that we have about the same story in the "Syriac Book of Medicines", ed. E.A. Wallis Budge (1913) II 708–710 (= Syriac text, 594–7), the section on the *kahhīnā* root.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Fl. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* VII, cap. 6 § 180–5, with comm. by O. Michel and O. Bauernfeind (1969) 255 f., Anm. 98. Cf. A. Olivieri, 36; A.T. Starck, *Der Alraun. Ein Beitrag zur Pflanzensagenkunde* (1917; reprint 1987) 18 ff., esp. note 31; 28, 32. We did not consult the more recent book by C.J.S. Thompson, *The Mystic Mandrake* (1934; reprint 1968).

<sup>42</sup> *CT* 14 23 K. 259:6 f., 10; *BAM* I 1 7, 10, etc.; P. Herréro, *Thérapeutique* 82 note 37.

<sup>43</sup> *Hist. Plant.* IX 8, 6. For Theophrastus' attitude in such matters, see G.E.R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology. Studies in the Life Sciences in Ancient Greece* (1983) 121–135.



child: when the root of peony was taken from its neck, the child got an epileptic fit.<sup>44</sup> This confirmed its apotropaic use; the root was kept in a leather bag. We find this everywhere in later literature and Galen often is quoted as an authority.<sup>45</sup>

The peony remained an important herb against epilepsy. In traditional Italian folk medicine it is still used.<sup>46</sup> — In Iraq, the plant is rarely seen in the mountains.<sup>47</sup> We have seen already that the Babylonians recommended the herbs *šakirû*, *urānu* and *ankinutu* against *bennu* and a n.t a.š u b. a.

Not only plants but also minerals had to be collected at the right time in order to be effective against epilepsy. Dioscurides informs the readers of his handbook on pharmacology that it is best to collect them at the waxing moon: the stones found in the stomach of swallows and scrapings of the moonstone (*selēnitēs*).<sup>48</sup> One had to bind those swallow stones in leather and hang the bag around the neck or the arm. These stones were famous for warding off epilepsy.<sup>49</sup>

Small models of the moon crescent were worn as amulets against epilepsy in Antiquity and they still are in Italy.<sup>50</sup>

#### The rays of the Moon

One has to keep the fits that are due to the periodicity of the moon apart from the diseases caused by being "exposed" to the rays of the moon, so it seems. Plutarch, in a broad discussion on the influences of the moon, ascribes spoilage of meat to the stream of heat which emanates from it. Those streams loosen and set in motion the moisture in the bodies. "The nurses are exceedingly careful to avoid exposing young children to the moon, for, being full of moisture like green wood, they are thrown into spasms and convulsions. And we see that those who have gone to sleep in the light of the moon are hardly able to rise again, like men with senses stunned or doped, for the moisture poured through them by the moon makes their bodies heavy".<sup>51</sup> The moon was considered very "cold and moist"; dew descended from it. In contrast, the sun was "hot and dry" — all this is Greek natural philosophy.<sup>52</sup> Galen has very similar things to say on the influence of the full moon.<sup>53</sup> Aristotle claims that particularly during the first seven days of their lives babies are liable to contract spasms or die — the reason to give them their name only after having survived this week — and remarks "They suffer more when the moon is full".<sup>54</sup> Greek magical papyri phrase these beliefs in mythical

<sup>44</sup> Galenus XI 859 f.; cf. Temkin 25.

<sup>45</sup> A.J. Festugière, 192; A. Olivieri, 37; Aetius Amidenus VI 17, end (Galen); 21, end (Posidonius); Pseudo-Theodorus (Priscianus), *De simplici medicina* s.v. Glycysside, in ed. V. Rose (1894) 411.

<sup>46</sup> G. Lützenkirchen, *La medicina nei secoli* 14 (1977) 329.

<sup>47</sup> *Flora of Iraq* IV/2 (1980) 667–9.

<sup>48</sup> Diosc. II 56 and V 141, see Baumann 196 and Temkin 79 f.

<sup>49</sup> R. Halleux, J. Schamp, *Les lapidaires grecs* (1985) 175 and 332 f.

<sup>50</sup> W.H. Roscher, *Selene und Verwandtes* (1890) 72 f.; *Nachträge* ... (1895) 29; *Ausführliches Lexikon* ... II/2 (1894–7) 3156; *Medicina nei secoli* 14 (1977) 325–333.

<sup>51</sup> Plutarchus, *Quaest. Conviv.* III 10, 3 658 C–F, as translated by P.A. Clement and H.B. Hoffleit in *Plutarch's Moralia* VIII (1969) 275 ff.

<sup>52</sup> W.H. Roscher, *Über Selene* ... 49–54; H. Rahner, *Symbole der Kirche* (1964) 142–9.

<sup>53</sup> Galenus, IX 903. See also Macrobius, *Saturnalia* VII 16, 25–27, and E.D. Baumann, 214 note 1; Roscher, 72.

<sup>54</sup> *Hist. Anim.* VII 12 588 A 10.

imaginery: the goddess of the Netherworld, also known as the Moon, strikes man with her light (*phōtoplēks*).<sup>55</sup> Her rays are "arrows".<sup>56</sup> Being blinded seems to be the most probable ailment resulting from this exposure.<sup>57</sup> Epilepsy also is a possibility.<sup>58</sup>

As to Jewish superstition, we simply quote Samuel Kottke: "Regarding the etiology of the disease [epilepsy], as documented in the Talmud and Midrash, it is stated: 'If one stands nude to the light of a candle, he will be *nikhpe* [epileptic]' (Babylonian Talmud, tractate Pesahim, fol. 112b). However, we find a parallel statement elsewhere, as follows: 'If one stands nude to the light of a candle or of the moon, he endangers himself seriously (*damō benafšō*)' (Babylonian Talmud, Derekh Erez, 11.).<sup>59</sup>

European travellers in Arab countries have similar reports on popular belief in the Middle East.<sup>60</sup> Most telling, however, is a personal experience of one of those travellers:

- Its glare there is so painful, and communicates feelings so disagreeable, that at night a person may be observed sheltering himself from its rays with the same care as he would in the day from those of the sun. The effect of lunar rays, in producing the speedy decomposition of fish and animal substances has never, as far as I know, been attempted to be explained; the fact, all who have been in the East and West Indies can bear testimony to.<sup>61</sup>

It is here appropriate to quote a verse from one of the best known psalms in the Bible, Psalm 121:6, "The sun shall not smite (*nākā*) you by day, nor the moon by night". We can now understand what the poet was afraid of. The Talmud, commenting on "I walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4), says: "This refers to him who sleeps in the shadow of a single palm tree or in the shadow of the moon".<sup>62</sup>

#### The moon and leprosy

Having surveyed the implications of the New Moon and the Full Moon for human well-being in other Mediterranean cultures, we are ready to study the relationship between the moon and disease in Babylonia. The moon is a god, *Sin*. His name seems to be the first element in the Babylonian word for "night-blindness", *sinlurmā* or, in an older text, *sf-nu-ri*.<sup>63</sup> Are the rays of the moon its cause?

<sup>55</sup> PGM IV 2244. Cf. H. Gundel, *Weltbild und Astrologie in den griechischen Zauberpapyri* (1968) 27 f.: "gemeint ist die besonders schädigende Wirkung der Mondstrahlen auf Epileptikern usw."

<sup>56</sup> Gundel, 32, on *iochéaira*.

<sup>57</sup> Still a matter of discussion in the eighteenth century; see G.B. Winer, *Biblisches Realwörterbuch* ... II (1838) 122 f., note 1, in art. "Mondsucht".

<sup>58</sup> A report from Steiermark in Austria: "Mann soll nie im Bette so liegen, dass der Mond auf das Gesicht scheint, sonst wird man leicht mondsüchtig"; A. Schlossar, *Germania* 36 (= Neue Reihe 24) (1891) 389.

<sup>59</sup> Kottke 1988 (see Bibliography), 3-11 (p. 3-4).

<sup>60</sup> M. Rodinson, in *La lune. Mythes et rites* (= Sources orientales, 5) (1962) 190 f.; John Carne, *Letters from the East* ... I (1826) 88 (bad for the eyes); Ch. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* Vol. I, Chapter XVI (ed. T.E. Lawrence, 1936) 491; S.H. Stephan, in his article "Lunacy in Palestinian folklore", *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 5 (1925) 1-16 (p. 4 note 1: somnambulism). See also the quotations given by M. Stol, *JNES* 45 (1986) 298 note 25.

<sup>61</sup> J.R. Wellstedt, *Travels to the City of the Caliphs* ... I (1840) 96 (ref. Thijs Booij).

<sup>62</sup> *Pes.* 111a; cf. H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* I (1922) 758, ad Matthew 17:15.

<sup>63</sup> M. Stol, "Blindness and Night-Blindness in Akkadian", *JNES* 45 (1986) 296-299; cf. W. von Soden, *U.-F.* 18 (1986) 343 f., and M.J. Geller, *BiOr* 43 (1986) 741-3.



Very clear is the effect of the Moon-god on the skin of human beings. A patient who has red pustules or boils, suffers from the "Hand of Sin", according to a variety of texts.<sup>64</sup> A person suffering from the skin disease *garābu*, associated with "leprosy", has to perform a ritual invoking the name of Sin.<sup>65</sup> Whoever commits perjury against the Moon-god and the Sun-god will be full of "scales" (*epqu*).<sup>66</sup> We read in a commentary that a man who is full of "scales" is bearing the wrath of Sin.<sup>67</sup> Most important to us are the standard curse formulae telling what the Moon-god will do to the sinner: Sin will "clothe" him with the skin disease *saḥaršubbū* "like a garment".<sup>68</sup> This disease is loosely translated "leprosy" in Assyriological literature<sup>69</sup> and it was indeed notorious and feared like leprosy in other societies and times; people having it were shunned.

In Pharaonic Egypt, we come across a very similar belief: certain sores on the skin, discussed in the medical Ebers Papyrus, are named "sores of Chons" — and Chons is the god of the moon.<sup>70</sup> According to the Jews, in children "the light of the sun was believed to produce white eruptions, the moon, scurfiness which finally develops into leprosy, the stars, stammering".<sup>71</sup>

It is surprising to discover that there is a relationship between skin diseases (notably leprosy) and epilepsy. Both were considered as revolting and "sacred", i.e., god-sent punishments, and this may be one reason for associating them. We also have the impression the the Moon instigates both.

The most telling evidence is late in Antiquity: in Byzantine Greek "sacred disease" also stands for leprosy;<sup>72</sup> we find the same identification in Syriac.<sup>73</sup> The Roman author Apuleius earlier viewed the cutaneous eruption *vittiligo* on the chest as an innocent variant of epilepsy. Whoever has suffered from this, will never contract epilepsy. His explanation is scientific: the bad humour (*tabes*) should rather emerge from the chest than reach the brain.<sup>74</sup> That bad humour actually is liquefied flesh, joining with black bile in a more advanced stage. Black bile in Greek thinking is not only the cause of melancholy, epilepsy, madness but also of sores. An excellent example is Heracles, suffering from a "sacred" disease: he was raging with madness and covered with sores.<sup>75</sup> The

<sup>64</sup> BAM 6 584 II 25 f.; TDP 28:91 f., 74:47, cf. 170:22. The commentary *SpbTU* I 47 no. 38 is fragmentary.

<sup>65</sup> BAM 6 580 V 20.

<sup>66</sup> UET 6/2 402:36 f., with D. Charpin, *Le clergé d'Ur* (1986) 327.

<sup>67</sup> *SpbTU* II 164 no. 38:22. An astrological omen gives the forecast "The king will be full of pustules (*bubu'ū*) because of his sin (*šēru*) and will die", *ACh* Suppl. 2 63 I 24 and dupl. K. 2349:24; also *BPO* 2 Text XVIII 10, cf. *LBAT* 1499:15. — Note that the Persians explained a similar disease as a punishment by the Sun; Herodotus I 138.

<sup>68</sup> K. Watanabe, "Die literarische Überlieferung eines babylonisch-assyrischen Fluchthemas mit Anrufung des Mondgottes Sin", *ASJ* 6 (1984) 99–119.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. M. Stol, "Leprosy, new light from Greek and Babylonian sources", *JEOL* 30 (1987–88) 22–31. The Sumerian word *saḥar* "dust" stands for leprosy in Šulgi Hymn E 41; see J. Klein, *Studies in Honor of Ake W. Sjöberg* (1989) 298 note 65 (in a curse of Sin).

<sup>70</sup> Ebers 874, 877; see H. von Deines a.o., *Übersetzung der medizinischen Texte* (1958) 228 f., and H. Brunner, art. "Chons" in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* I (1975) 960–3.

<sup>71</sup> J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (1939) 186 (ref. Gerrit Bos).

<sup>72</sup> A. Philipsborn, *Byzantion* 33 (1963) 226 f.; P.P. Gläser and A. Hohlweg in J.H. Wolf, *Aussatz – Lepra – Hansen-Krankheit. Ein Menschheitsproblem im Wandel* II (1986) 65 f., 69 f.

<sup>73</sup> *Kūrhanā kāhjanā*, as explained in *Patrologia Orientalis* II (1903) 85 ("Vie de Severe").

<sup>74</sup> Apuleius, *Apologia* 50, 2. A. Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei* (1908) 272 f., remains silent on this.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. (Pseudo-) Aristotle, *Problemata physica* XXX,1 (the famous chapter on melancholy), translated in Chapter III; Hippocrates, ed. Littré VIII 32, below. See also Jackie Pigeaud, *La maladie de l'âme. Etude sur*

plant black (!) hellebore was effective against all this.<sup>76</sup> It may be relevant here to recall what Hippocrates had to tell about the two month old baby of Timonax: he suffered from eczema and epilepsy.<sup>77</sup> And if Karl Sudhoff was correct, we find in Greek slave sale contracts from Egypt the "sacred disease" and "leprosy" together in a clausula to be studied in the next chapter of this book.

Our evidence from the Ancient Near East can begin by noting that the Hebrew word for "leprosy", *šāra'at*, seems to be based on the same verbal root as "epilepsy" in Arabic, *šar'un*. Most probably the root means "to throw down", at least in Arabic.<sup>78</sup> We remark that the Akkadian verb *nadû* has two meanings: "to throw down" and "to be covered with". The liver in extispicy and the human skin in medical and related texts are said to be "covered" with spots, etc.

According to the medical and magical texts from ancient Egypt, speaking of the "god above", this god clearly inflicts cutaneous diseases on man; among them are "the disease of Asia / Canaan" and the disease *tmyt*.<sup>79</sup> This god very much looks like the Canaanite moon-god (his wife's name is Ningal) and the disease from that country, being black "like charcoal", could be true leprosy.<sup>80</sup> Now, the texts say that a "seal" is effective against both this disease and epilepsy (*nsyt*). An incantation is directed against the other disease, *tmyt*, and epilepsy, taking both together.<sup>81</sup>

Turning to the Babylonian texts, we observe that epilepsy (*bennu*) and leprosy (*epqu*, "scales") are mentioned in one breath in the astrological omen "(God) Enlil will bring leprosy and epilepsy upon the people".<sup>82</sup> Both diseases can have the qualification "not going away".<sup>83</sup> Liver omens derived from extispicy connect pustules on the sheep's liver with epilepsy: "If the gall-bladder is full of pustules (*bubu'tu*): thirst will seize my troops, or: *bennu* will seize the man".<sup>84</sup> Such pustules are a symptom of Babylonian "leprosy".<sup>85</sup> Another pustule (*saḫḫum*, *siḫḫum*) also predicts the *bennu*-epilepsy.<sup>86</sup> Other evidence comes from a completely different quarter: the botanical handbook of the Babylonians has entries informing us that parts of the plant *urānu* are good both against epilepsy (*bennu*) and eczema (*kuraštu*) and sores (*lamṣatu*).<sup>87</sup> We have already discussed this plant, in the section on leather bags. What we find here is a precious

la relation de l'âme et du corps dans la tradition médico-philosophique antique (1981) 407-428; H. Schneble, 28-32.

<sup>76</sup> Stadler, art. "Helleborus", *RE* VIII (1913) 163-170; A. Dietrich, *Zum Drogenhandel im islamischen Ägypten* (1954) 41-44; J.M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (1985) 111-115.

<sup>77</sup> Hipp., *Epid.* VII 106, ed. Littré V 456.

<sup>78</sup> Etymologies: J.F.A. Sawyer, *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976) 241-5.

<sup>79</sup> Th. Bardin, "Remarques sur les maladies de la peau, la lèpre, et le châtement divin dans l'Égypte ancienne", *Revue d'Égyptologie* 39 (1988) 3-36.

<sup>80</sup> Bardin, 15 f., 17, 18-21.

<sup>81</sup> Bardin, 17 f., cf. 23. Compare the text J.F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian magical texts* (1978) 35 f no. 53. Bardin cannot accept the translation "epilepsy" for Egyptian *nsyt*, because of this context. We will say a few words on it in Chapter X, when studying the "sacred disease" in Egyptian slave sale contracts (p. 139).

<sup>82</sup> *ACH Suppl.* 2 Istar 84:2; now E. Reiner, *BPO* 2 (1981) 48 Text VI (and par.) The verbal form means literally "makes fall upon".

<sup>83</sup> *AHW* 1343b, *tēbū* 8. Also said of the very general *simmu* "wound, disease".

<sup>84</sup> *KUB* 37 218.

<sup>85</sup> *BAM* 1 35 II 7-10; cf. M. Stol, *JEOL* 30 (1987-88) 29, with note 43.

<sup>86</sup> *RA* 67 (1973) 44:67-70.

<sup>87</sup> *KADP* 1 V 35-41; *BAM* 4 379 II 18.



piece of evidence, reminding us of the manifold uses of the black hellebore in Greek plant lore.

What has all this to do with the moon? When we first look at the "Hand of Sin" in the diagnostic handbook we are in for a disappointment, just as we experienced when trying to find the meaning of the "Hand of the God" and the "Hand of the Goddess"; this Hand of the Moon-god is — for us — unpredictable because its symptoms do not display a distinctive pattern.<sup>88</sup> Only the category "red boils" — Hand of Sin, studied above (p. 128), stands out. We may add that trembling (*ra'ābu*) and being shaky (*nāšu*) of parts of the body are other symptoms in a number of cases.<sup>89</sup> Being alternately hot and cold without having fever is one more symptom.<sup>90</sup> The Hand of Sin also affects new-born babies: the baby is extremely restless<sup>91</sup> or trembles. A baby can also suffer from being knocked down (*nikiptu*) or hit (*miḥṣu*) by the Moon-god<sup>92</sup>; the first expression is unique, the second is rarely used for the Moon-god. We have seen that in the European tradition babies are particularly in danger of being struck by the moon.

After this survey of various lunar influences we have to come to a conclusion. What does "struck by the moon" stand for? Epilepsy or leprosy, or what?

The most elegant hypothesis for viewing the various diseases "of the moon" is the following. When the moon is *full*, man is exposed to its rays and, when unprotected, he is in great danger of contracting an abhorrent skin disease like leprosy; blindness is also possible. When the moon is *new*, or rather during the moonless nights at the end of the month, an epileptic fit caused by demonic powers threatens him. Here the connection with the moon is indirect: the moon is not visible and the spirits of the dead are active at this juncture. Superstitions known to Hippocrates and the novelist Xenophon of Ephesus have it that these spirits, or "heroes", inflict epilepsy (p. 51). The Babylonian demon of epilepsy, the deified *Bennu*, is named "deputy of Sin" which seems to illustrate this indirectness: the Moon-god, not being present himself, sends his messenger. At the beginning of this book, discussing *bennu*, it was suggested that this variant of epilepsy is one which recurs at certain intervals because it "falls" on a patient "time and again".

Epilepsy and leprosy have more in common. Both evoke fear from the communities in which they occur, which will be discussed further when we consider social ostracism at the end of Chapter X.

<sup>88</sup> Important passages are *STT* 1 89:205–214 (Chapter V) and *KAR* 211:11–24.

<sup>89</sup> *TDP* 48 E 5 (so !), 60:43 (cf. *KAR* 211:13), 166:90, 94, 230:120–2 (babies).

<sup>90</sup> *TDP* 152:49, 166:90, 93 f., 168:106, 230:120–2 (babies), cf. 246:22. — In Greek medicine, epilepsy and (quartan) fever were considered mutually exclusive; see O. Temkin, 46 f. and R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros* (1931) 146 f. (the story about Teucer).

<sup>91</sup> *TDP* 220:35, 222:47, 224:55.

<sup>92</sup> *TDP* 222:42, 46.

## X EPILEPSY AND PEOPLE

In this chapter we will discuss the ways society coped with epilepsy. First, we will give a short survey of how they handled this disease in children; then, in a more lengthy section, how it affected slave sales; and, finally, some remarks on the feelings it elicited.

### Children

Epilepsy often becomes manifest in an early stage of life. There are numerous stories of "boys" suffering from it; one example is that of the "lunatic" boy in the Gospels. The Spartans washed their newborn in wine in order to see if they were prone to epilepsy (*epilēptikós*) or sickly.<sup>1</sup> In that case, they were to be discarded. Since the disease may cease everything was done to achieve that. For medical writers this was an interesting problem: what changes in human physiology as the child grows older could explain this? Hippocrates had an answer,<sup>2</sup> Aristotle gave a strange one,<sup>3</sup> and Galen wrote a tractate about it, mainly dietary.<sup>4</sup>

In the Babylonian texts there is more than one reference to epileptic children: an Old Babylonian letter speaks of the Hand of the God, resting on a baby (or: a servant?);<sup>5</sup> a Neo-Assyrian letter speaks of a baby affected by a n.t a.š u b. a.<sup>6</sup> Omina of the Seleucid age forecast that a lunar eclipse at the moment of conception means that right after birth the baby will be seized by incubus or Hand of the God.<sup>7</sup> We already have seen that these afflictions are forms of epilepsy or closely related to it. In the chapter on babies in the diagnostic handbook attention is paid to the epilepsies.<sup>8</sup> It is possible that one of the lost chapters in the section "Epilepsies" in the handbook specifically dealt with children (Tablet XXIX).

The therapeutic texts have separate sections on children; one unpublished tablet in the British Museum is solely devoted to them.<sup>9</sup> They are actually magical and apotropaic. The pertinent sections in three of them, from Assyrian Sultantepe and from Seleucid Uruk, duplicate and have recently been presented in transliteration and translation by Walter Farber in his book on various ailments of babies, *Schlaf, Kindchen, schlaf* (1989).<sup>10</sup> We will summarise their contents.

The text opens with a ritual to be performed on a baby that has been seized by a n.t a.š u b. a. The two special plants against epilepsy (*urānu, ankinutu*), the plant *nikiptu*, "male" and "female", and the hair of a virgin goat are to be put in a magical

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 16, 3; cf. E.D. Baumann, 186 f.

<sup>2</sup> Hippocrates: ed. Littré VI 376, Grensemann 74, Jones 162.

<sup>3</sup> A. Debru, "L'épilepsie dans le *De Somno* d'Aristote", in G. Sabbah, *Mémoires III. Médecins et médecine dans l'Antiquité* (1982) 25-41.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by O. Temkin, see the bibliography in his book of 1971.

<sup>5</sup> OBTR 65, a letter. Cf. J.-M. Durand, *AEM* I/1 (1988) 40.

<sup>6</sup> ABL 1289 = LAS 239. The recommended treatment is like that of the texts published by W. Farber, to be summarized presently.

<sup>7</sup> E.F. Weidner, *Gestirndarstellungen* ... 14.

<sup>8</sup> TDP 216-231, Tablet XL.

<sup>9</sup> K. 3628+, to be published by I.L. Finkel (now in his dissertation of 1976).

<sup>10</sup> W. Farber, 116-129. The texts are STT 1 57, 58, LKU 32.



leather bag. A child, "an outsider (*ahû*), whose father or mother are not known", has to scoop water from the river. A prayer to *Sîn* is to be recited three times, before a reed altar while the patient is present. After this, the "outsider" child has to sprinkle the river water over the leather bag. The epithets used in the prayer show that *Sîn* is invoked as the god who rejuvenates mankind (because the moon is reborn every thirty days, so one reads between the lines). This is an appropriate prayer for a newborn baby, and we see no direct connection with any "disease of the moon" here. In this prayer *Sîn* is asked "that the *bennu* which seized him will not approach him". The unexpected appearance of the variety *bennu* is surprising: the baby is suffering from a n.t a.š u b.b a, not *bennu*. This may show a scribe's carelessness or be meaningful: as we surmised in Chapter II, a n.t a.š u b.b a is a sudden attack, capriciously falling from the sky, so to say, and *bennu* is the regularly recurring form of epilepsy. If this difference is valid here, a child that has been struck by an epileptic fit on one previous occasion (a n.t a.š u b.b a), here receives a treatment against its chronic form (*bennu*) that is feared to develop now. Indeed, the last line of the ritual promises that "it" will no more seize the child "as long as he lives", provided the leather bag remains around his neck.<sup>11</sup>

The text continues with shorter, "therapeutic", prescriptions for "the same", involving fumigation and more leather bags. We may add that the unpublished therapeutic tablet prescribes anointing and fumigation as apotropaic means against those other diseases befalling children, Hand of the God, Hand of the Goddess, incubus; a cylinder seal inscribed with an incantation, hung around the neck, serves against Evil *Alû* or Any Evil.<sup>12</sup>

When the child grows older, his illness remains a problem. The unpublished text refers in its catch-line to "seizure of *bennu*" in a seven year old child<sup>13</sup> and one of the texts from Sultantepe seems to continue with prescriptions for a "young man" and "young woman" upon whom *bi-nu-tû* (...). It is unfortunate that the passage is so much broken.<sup>14</sup>

### Slaves

In our modern, so enlightened, age one has to do one's best to realise what risks the purchase of a slave could involve. You pay much money for a valuable "item", acquiring it from an unknown merchant on the market place. The slave bought is unknown to you, full of secrets. Some of them you will never learn, others are not evident at first inspection and will reveal themselves later, and then the opportunity for redress is gone.

Articles of law and special *clausulae* in sale contracts gave provisions for returning the slave when such problems arose. An edict issued some time before 152 B.C. by the inspectors of the Roman market (*aediles curules*) specified in what circumstances a slave could be returned (*redhibitio*, in Greek law *anagōgē*).<sup>15</sup> Three main reasons for returning a slave can be distinguished in Roman law, namely, eviction, latent defects,

<sup>11</sup> Farber, 120 f., line 26 (his translation is not complete).

<sup>12</sup> K. 3628+, with W. Farber, 124-9.

<sup>13</sup> K. 3628+ (I.L. Finkel; also copied by C. Bezold in his *Catalogue*; see above, p. 90).

<sup>14</sup> STT 1 57:54-6, in UGU GURUŠ *bi-nu-tû* in UGU KI.SIKIL...

<sup>15</sup> Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* IV 2.

and a bad record.<sup>16</sup> Eviction means that it has been proved that the seller was not the owner; the real owner claims the slave. Latent defects (German *Sachmängel*) can be physical and mental defects (*morbus*, resp. *vitium*), temporary or permanent. What we loosely named a “bad record” implies that the slave has the tendency to flee (*fugitivus*), that he is a roamer (*erro*), or that he has committed theft (*furtum*) and is not free from noxal liability. The seller of the slave ought to know all this and he is responsible.

The latent defects are interesting since epilepsy is one among them. Articles of Roman law only speak of temporary madness (*furiosus*, in the later Digests distinguished from *lunaticus*),<sup>17</sup> not epilepsy. Later law in the East of the Roman Empire accepts warranty for a slave possessed by a demon (Syriac *šidā*) or devil (*dajwā*) which means madness; one of the articles distinguishes possession by a demon from “latent disease” and in this category epilepsy could fall.<sup>18</sup> The demon and the devil are new here and due to Christian and Oriental beliefs.<sup>19</sup> Returning to earlier Roman and Greek law, we meet with epilepsy only in a clausula of contracts. A slave sale contract written on a triptych found in Transsylvania guarantees that the “boy” (*puer*) is not *caducus*, “falling”, i.e., epileptic.<sup>20</sup> This adjective stands for the *morbus* (“disease”) of the Roman aedilian edict, a word that is lacking in this contract. We will see below that contracts on Greek papyri are equally specific on the diseases in mentioning “the sacred disease”. In a Greek plea by Hyperides, “an epileptic slave” is his example of a disease allowing *anagōgē*.<sup>21</sup>

But before going into this we will start at the beginning of the jurisprudence on latent defects in slaves, namely section 278 of the Old Babylonian Hammurabi “Code” (CH), dating to about 1750 B.C.

# 1 In the Hammurabi Code

§ 278 of CH reads as follows:

- If a man buys a male (or) female slave, and before one month has passed *bennu* falls upon him, he (the buyer) will return (the slave) to his seller, and the buyer will take (back) the silver that he had paid.

The wording of this article is not without a few problems. In the first place, the text literally says “and he does not complete *his* month”. “His” is said of the slave and the possessive pronoun “his”, “her” or “their” after time spans is amply attested in Old Babylonian hiring agreements of one or more persons (but hardly recognised in

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Raymond Monier, *Manuel élémentaire de Droit Romain II* (1936) 186–205, § 120–126. For Greek law, see Fritz Pringsheim, *The Greek Law of Sale* (1950) 429–496, “Warranty against eviction and against secret defects”, and I. Triantaphyllopoulos, “Les vices cachés de la chose vendue d’après les droits grecs à l’exception des papyrus”, in *Studi in onore di Edoardo Volterra V* (1971) 697–719.

<sup>17</sup> *Digesta* XXI 1, 1 (see p. 121). Note that a bought slave in Plautus, *Captivi* 547–557, is suspected of being *rabiosus*. He is spat upon.

<sup>18</sup> K.G. Bruns, E. Sachau, *Ein syrisch-römisches Rechtsbuch aus dem fünften Jahrhundert* (1880) 14 L. § 39, cf. § 113. Cf. Walter Selb, *Zur Bedeutung des syr.-röm. Rechtsbuches* (1964) 177, with note 41 (lit.).

<sup>19</sup> Bruns, Sachau, 206–210, end: “Redhibition, wenn sich ein Teufel im Sklaven findet: dies ist nicht römisch, sondern offenbar orientalisch christlicher Zusatz”. Cf. *anepilēmpton apō daīmonos* in the slave sale contract P. Berol. Inv. 16046 B (Hermopolis, 300 A.D.).

<sup>20</sup> *CIL* III 940; cf. P.F. Girard, *Textes de Droit Romain* (1937) 849. Dated 142 A.D.

<sup>21</sup> Hyperides, *Against Athenogenes* 15.



current literature).<sup>22</sup> Often, the suffix *-šu* is miscopied as *-ma*. Notwithstanding this syntactical peculiarity the best translation is "that very month"; compare this line in an omen text: "If in the street of a city he waits for the sun to rise: he will perish that same night (GE<sub>6</sub>-*šu*)".<sup>23</sup> Let us now proceed to the second problem: the word *bennum* is not written in the nominative, as one would expect, but as *be-en-ni*. The same unusual form *benni* is used in omens of the spleen, in a similar sentence.<sup>24</sup> The grammarian W. von Soden explains this form as the absolute state of the substantive *bennu* and translates "(even only) one epileptic seizure".<sup>25</sup> It is very possible that the equally unusual word *bi-nu-tam*, seemingly a feminine word, attested only twice, has the same individualizing meaning.<sup>26</sup> Finally, it is especially interesting that one month is the term fixed for epilepsy. Does this mean that this disease is liable to "fall" upon man once in a month?

About fifty years after Hammurabi's reign, in Babylonian slave sale contracts a new clausula is adopted; most common is:

- three days: *teb'itum*; one month: *bennum*; he will be responsible (lit. "stand") for claims, according to the regulation of the king.<sup>27</sup>

Studying the elements of this clausula, it is noteworthy that the one month for *bennu* is also standard according to the Hammurabi Code. Next, the warranty for claims (*baqrū*) is reflected by the following section of the Code, § 279: "If a man buys a male (or) female slave and he gets claims, his seller will answer (= satisfy) the claims". This refers to eviction; actually, a legal action on the good title of a bought slave is attested.<sup>28</sup> Not the buyer, but the seller is the defendant.

The third element is that of three days for *teb'itum* (some texts have two days). Because of the proximity to *bennu* many scholars have thought of another hidden disease, like the onset of leprosy. An attempt to etymologize the word connects it with *bu'um* "to search" and leads to the suggestion "Nachforschung". According to this interpretation it is commonly assumed that during these three days one looks into the question whether the slave is a fugitive.<sup>29</sup> However, the eviction clausula already takes care of

<sup>22</sup> See the remarks by A. Goetze, *JCS* 11 (1957) 26, and B. Landsberger, *JNES* 8 (1949) 288, *WdO* 3 (1964) 63, 65.

<sup>23</sup> *CT* 51 147:29, following Erica Reiner in *Zikir šumim. Assyriological Studies Presented to F.R. Kraus* (1982) 287. — A new ref. is: *ištu warahšu umtallū*, *AbB* 13 84:14 (W.H. van Soldt).

<sup>24</sup> *YOS* 10 41:53 f. Also in the contract *CT* 33 41:12.

<sup>25</sup> Hidden in *GAG*, *Ergänzungsheft* § 62e, and *AHW* 1548a, indirectly referring to *YOS* 10 41:53-4. Furthermore, *apud* H. Heintzel, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Epilepsie* (1975) 11 with 135, note 4: "Status absolutus, der für die betonte Einzahl steht". — Note Sumerian *n a m e n n a* of a slave in the letter *AbB* 5 190:6, with note b by F.R. Kraus.

<sup>26</sup> In the Old Bab. *Hana* text *Syria* 5 (1924) 272:15, and in the Standard Bab. ritual *STT* 1 57:54 (note 14).

<sup>27</sup> A survey was given by C. Wilcke, *WdO* 8 (1976) 258-262, 281. Add now *ARN* 122 (two days for *teb'itum*), K. van Lerberghe, *Old Babylonian Legal and Administrative Texts from Philadelphia* (1986) 39:14-19, *IAS* 22 20:2-6, 22:6-8, and *passim*. See also I. Cardellini, *Die biblischen "Sklaven"-Gesetze im Lichte des keilschriftlichen Sklavenrechts* (1981) 97 note 11 (only lit.).

<sup>28</sup> H.M. Kümmel, *AFO* 25 (1974-77) 72-75. For a discussion on the legal meaning, see R. Westbrook and C. Wilcke, *ibidem* 118 (with earlier lit.). In general on eviction in § 279: H.P.H. Petschow, *ZA* 76 (1986) 24-47, 74.

<sup>29</sup> All go back to M. San Nicolò, *Die Schlussklauseln der altbabylonischen Kauf- und Tauschverträge. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Barkaufes* (1922) 211-218. Cf. W. von Soden, *AHW* s.v., "Nachuntersuchung (v Sklaven auf Epilepsie)"; P. Koschaker, *NKRA* (1928) 31 note 3; C. Wilcke, *WdO* 8 259, hesitates. Max Mühl, *Untersuchungen zur altorientalischen und althellenischen Gesetzgebung* (1933) 75, suggested "die Verfolgung bzw. Aufhellung eines kriminellen Falles".

that legal defect. It has been especially interesting to discover that *teb'itum*, as "Nachforschung", is illustrated by the two following sections in the Code, § 280–1. Translating and interpreting them is not easy. They deal with the problems arising around slaves bought abroad, fellow-citizens or not, who are identified by their former master as his property.<sup>30</sup> What is important to us is the process set in motion: an investigation of the identity and status of the slave had to ensue. We believe that *teb'itum* means exactly this: "investigation (of legal status)". Syria and Iraq in the Old Babylonian period were full of warring petty states and it was very possible to stand suddenly face to face with an enslaved countryman, abducted years ago, and now for sale on the local marketplace. In the relatively small communities three days seemed to suffice to establish such facts. So in the Old Babylonian *clausula* we have to do with a rule issued by the king, or State (*šimdat šarrim*), because fellow-citizens — be they free or not — are involved. We add that Neo-Babylonian and Persian slave sales have the warranty that the slave has not the status of a free citizen or is property of the king or some institution.<sup>31</sup> In many respects, *teb'itum* will remind us of *anákrisis* in the Greek papyri, i.e., establishing the origin and parentage of a slave when he is sold in Egypt for the first time; most of them were imported slaves.<sup>32</sup>

The interpretation suggested here brings the entire *clausula* of the contracts neatly in line with § 279–281 of CH and strongly suggests that "the regulation of the king" (*šimdat šarrim*) was a royal decree containing these or similar provisions. Hammurabi does not use the word *teb'itum* and, more important, does not give a time limit of three (or two) days. The decree giving these details must be one issued by a later king, specifying Hammurabi's ruling.<sup>33</sup> The time gap between Hammurabi and the first attestation of the *clausula* is fifty years. H. Klengel has shown that Hammurabi's successor, Samsu-iluna, based his "edict" prohibiting the purchase of citizens of Ida-maraš and Arrapha, now part of his realm, on CH § 280–1.<sup>34</sup>

The *clausula* is not known from earlier (Sumerian) contracts, neither from slave sale contracts from the kingdoms East of the Tigris, nor from those in Mari. In distant Terqa, however, the *clausula* is attested in a somewhat younger text.<sup>35</sup> Later we come across a similar phrase only in the Neo-Assyrian contracts — not counting the unique stipulation on the Hand of the God in a text from Nuzi, referred to earlier in this book.<sup>36</sup>

## 2 In Neo-Assyrian contracts

In the Neo-Assyrian slave sale contracts, roughly one thousand years after Hammurabi, we read: "*šibtu* (and) *bennu*: for 100 days; *sartu*: for all years/days". As in the Old Baby-

<sup>30</sup> Now clarified by D. Charpin, *AfO* 34 (1987) 36 f.

<sup>31</sup> H. Petschow, *Die neubabylonischen Kaufformulare* (1939) 55–7; M.A. Dandamaev, *Slavery in Babylonia* (1984) 182–3.

<sup>32</sup> Seen by H.J. Wolff, "Beaufsichtigung des Sklavenhandels im römischen Ägypten: Die Anakrisis", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 83 (1966) 340–349.

<sup>33</sup> C. Wilcke, *WdO* 8 (1976) 257–8.

<sup>34</sup> H. Klengel, *AOF* 5 (1977) 67, on *AbB* 3 1. F.R. Kraus, *Königliche Verfügungen in altbabylonischer Zeit* (1984) 73, is not convinced.

<sup>35</sup> F. Thureau-Dangin, *Syria* 5 (1924) 272 f.

<sup>36</sup> G. Wilhelm 1987, see the Bibliography.



lonian documents, here again we find a nominal (= verbless) clause. It has been discussed many times.<sup>37</sup> What is meant by *sartu* is not very clear. The root behind this substantive suggests "fraud", "cheating", or even "crime", reminiscent of *furtum* and *noxa* in Roman law on slave sales.<sup>38</sup>

The word *šibtu*, lit. "seizure", is new. Semantically it is identical with Greek *epilēpsis*, a word derived from the verb *epilambánō*. These Greek words imply the suddenness of an attack of fever, spasms, pestilence, etc.<sup>39</sup> What the word *šibtu* means here, is not clear. In any case, a translation "seizure of/by *bennu*" is excluded, because we sometimes find them in reverse order: *bennu, šibtu*,<sup>40</sup> and there is clearly no genitive relation between the words.<sup>41</sup> A lexical text equates the word with "Hand of the God",<sup>42</sup> an affliction related to epilepsy. In medical texts we find the word only twice, together with *bennu*: preceding it, seemingly in a genitive relation, "seizure of/by *bennu*",<sup>43</sup> but also after it, comparable with our clausula.<sup>44</sup> To the Assyrians, its meaning may have been as general as it is to us: any "seizure" of a recurring nature — except *bennu*? One might think of a form of madness, "lunacy". There is no positive evidence for "leprosy" (thus K. Sudhoff).

Two additional remarks should be made. The first is, that in the contracts from Kannu' and in one text from Assur *bennu* is abbreviated to *be*.<sup>45</sup> Secondly, sale contracts from Assur add a warranty against madness (*šēhu*), "within months".<sup>46</sup> We have already seen that this illness is akin to epilepsy.

The contracts set a term of one hundred days for "seizure" and epilepsy. In Old Babylonian time, thirty days stood for epilepsy alone; the document from Nuzi seems to fix the period for Hand of the God as forty-five days. Can we say anything about the figure "one hundred" in the Assyrian texts? Perhaps. At the time of our contracts one hundred days was the duration of the period of danger after an eclipse of the moon, a frequently mentioned phenomenon: a "farmer" had to take the place of the Assyrian

<sup>37</sup> Starting with K. Sudhoff, *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 4 (1911) 360–3; recent lit.: J.N. Postgate, *FNALD* (1976) 26 § 2.3.5; H.P.H. Petschow, *RLA* V/7–8 (1980) 525 f., in article "Kauf"; K. Deller, *Baghd. Mitt.* 16 (1985) 374 f.

<sup>38</sup> See the suggestions by Petschow in *RLA* V 526a, and the lit. collected by Th. Kwasman, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents in the K. Collection of the British Museum* (1988) 18, on no. 13:16; also, M. Stol in *Études Paul Garelli* (1991) 335.

<sup>39</sup> "Les maux les plus fréquemment associés au verbe *epilambánein* sont dans le Corpus Hippocraticum le frisson et la fièvre, souvent liés, les spasmes (...) et la toux. Le sommeil n'apparaît qu'une seule fois comme sujet de ce verbe (...) et dans un contexte tout à fait pathologique (...)". It marks "agressivité" and can be translated "attaque"; thus A. Debru in G. Sabbah, *Mémoires III. Médecins et médecine dans l'Antiquité* (1982) 39 note 34. — For pestilence "seizing" people, see Thucydides II 51, with Sudhoff, *AGM* 4 368. Hippocrates avoids the word *epilēpsis* as a name for the Sacred Disease, maybe because of its magical overtones. It only indicates a fit. See the edition by H. Grensemann (1968) 5 f., and cf. O. Temkin, 21 f.

<sup>40</sup> J.N. Postgate, *GPA* (1973) 40 ad no.11:8.

<sup>41</sup> V. Scheil, *RA* 18 (1921) 32, *šib-tu be-ni ana 100* [...]. And more references.

<sup>42</sup> *AHW* 1259 s.v. *šudingirakku*.

<sup>43</sup> K. 3628+ rev. 18, *[šib]-tu be-en-nu-um*, see p. 90.

<sup>44</sup> *STT* 2 138 rev. 22 with dupl. K. 6335+ rev. (*zib-tu*).

<sup>45</sup> Sudhoff, 362; Deller, *Baghd. Mitt.* 16 375 VAT 8754. Note *be-en* in Th. Kwasman, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents in the K. Collection of the British Museum* (1988) no. 411 rev. 4. And *bi-bi-it* is attested in an unpublished text, ND 2327:23 (see p.5 note 4).

<sup>46</sup> Deller, 373 ff.

ian king as a substitute; after 100 days he has completed his “reign”.<sup>47</sup> This span of 100 days is given in reports by Assyrian astrologers as the “term” (*adannu*) for a lunar eclipse taking place in the first and third night watch.<sup>48</sup>

“One hundred days” is there invariably phrased as “three months (and) ten days”. Note that the Athenians, when about to leave Sicily after their disastrous campaign, had to wait “three times nine days” when suddenly a lunar eclipse took place. Soothsayers had told them to do so, and the oracular diction is recognisable in the solemn wording “three times nine”.<sup>49</sup> Three, thirty and their multiples are the common elements in the material associated with lunar eclipses presented here. In Babylonian theology, 30 is the number of the moon-god Sin. Can we explain the 45 days in the Nuzi contract along similar lines? It is a girl that is sold and 45 is three times fifteen — the number of the goddess Ištar.<sup>50</sup> We admit that the text speaks of “Hand of the God” as her possible disease; not Hand of the Goddess.

In other Assyrian contexts, 100 days occur again. The maximum stipulated term of the validity of forecasts based on extispicy in Assyrian queries to the Sun-god is 100 days.<sup>51</sup> Old Babylonian letters from Mari tell us that the term at that time was normally 30 days.<sup>52</sup> We add that the evil machinations of a witch can take three months, ten days, and half a day — 100  $\frac{1}{2}$  days.<sup>53</sup> A bewitched person can suffer from a disease that lingers on during “three months, 1[0] days”.<sup>54</sup> We read with much interest that “the flesh” of a person who “falls on his right side, and blood flows from either his arm or his foot”, will not be “good” during 100 days: this may not be epilepsy, but the man is “falling”.<sup>55</sup>

The expansion of the validity of extispicy from 30 days (Old Babylonian) to 100 (Neo-Assyrian) seems to be a neat parallel for the equally expanding terms for epilepsy for the same periods but it is better to look elsewhere for its explanation. There is a parallel between a lunar eclipse and the end of every month: the three dark days at the end of every month could be regarded as a monthly “minor eclipse”. If the effects of a lunar eclipse are felt during one hundred days, one can imagine that the Assyrians thought it rational to assume a similar period after the “minor eclipse”, the time when

<sup>47</sup> ABL 359 = LAS 135; 594 = 249; 1014 = 292. See S. Parpola, *LAS Comm.* (1983) p. XXV, in his excursus “The Substitute King Ritual”, and cf. J. Bottéro in his chapter “Le substitut royal et son sort”, *Mésopotamie. L'écriture, la raison et les dieux* (1987) 181 f.

<sup>48</sup> RMA 270 rev. 10, 271:9. See CAD A/1 100b and S. Parpola, *LAS Comm.* (1983) 122 ad no. 135 rev. 6, who adds: “Portents derived from stars were to be realized within a month”. Cf. F. Rochberg-Halton, *Aspects of Babylonian Celestial Divination: The Lunar Eclipse Tablets of Enūma Anu Enlil* (1988) 43, 182. For an omen on the middle watch, see UET VI/2 413:27.

<sup>49</sup> Thucydides VII 50, 4, cf. V 26, 4. Date: 27 August 413 B.C. Note the interesting discussion in Plutarch, *Life of Nicias* 23 (according to others, the period of danger lasted only three days); also, Plutarch, *Moralia* 168A.

<sup>50</sup> Note that according to H.L.J. Vanstiphout, *JCS* 33 (1981) 196–8, we can discover a similar period in *Enūma Eliš* V 15–22. B. Landsberger has pointed out that hemerologies work with a period of 49 days; see *Der kultische Kalender der Babylonier und Assyrer* (1915) 119.

<sup>51</sup> Ivan Starr, *Queries to the Sungod. Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria* (= SAA IV) (1990) no. 43:3, with p. XVI f.; E. Leichty in *Lingering over Words. Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (1990) 301:6.

<sup>52</sup> J.-M. Durand, *AEM* 1/1 (1988) 57–9.

<sup>53</sup> Maqlu V 51.

<sup>54</sup> BAM 3 231 I 18; dupl. 4 332 I 2.

<sup>55</sup> E. Ebeling, *KMI* 55:4–5; dupl. CT 37 46:20–21 (Šumma Alu Tablet 87). — More cases of “100 days” are: a man will be sick (*salā'u*) 100 days, *SpBTU* III 186 no. 99:35, Rm 330:12 (unpubl.); a man will experience trouble (*marušu*) 100 days, CT 39 49:48; a patient has to drink [...] *a zi ik ki* 100 days, *AMT* 18:7,9.



this illness is likely to strike. Practice may have taught them that one month was too short a period to ascertain epilepsy and they established a new term, now in line with another lunar cycle, that of the aftermath of eclipses.

This is the moment to present a little known piece of evidence from ancient Greece: for them, the day of the new moon (*noumēnia*) was a feast day as well as the market-day for slaves and cattle.<sup>56</sup> Hence, in Greek comedy the name *Noumēnios* (Numenius) was used for slaves.<sup>57</sup> The Greeks had a lunar calendar and waited for the new moon to appear before starting a new month. Was this the appropriate moment of buying slaves because at this time epilepsy was more likely to be evident than on other days? One hesitates but finds some support in the magical papyri where we found New Moon and epilepsy mentioned together.

The slave market was international and in a world with expanding horizons one had to agree about sale conditions. Those on the sale of slaves had to be accepted by merchants from all countries and were publicized on the market-place, as a Greek inscription from Abdera shows.<sup>58</sup> Thus, it will not surprise us to find very similar sale conditions in various places and widely different countries; below, we will notice this in the Greek papyri, comparing them with the Babylonian and Assyrian evidence. Having a slave market on the first day of the month might have been one of those international conventions, inspired by certain suppositions on the origin of epilepsy as held by at least some merchants. Is it a coincidence that the 45 day period of warranty against "Hand of the God" in the Nuzi contract involving a slave woman began on the last day of the month (*biblum*)?<sup>59</sup> There is, however, no pattern visible in the days on which Neo-Assyrian slave sale contracts were drawn up according to their datings.<sup>60</sup> This will bring us back to reality!

### 3 In Greek law

Before turning to the Greek papyri from Egypt, we notice that the Neo-Babylonian and Seleucid slave sale contracts from Mesopotamia remain silent on latent defects after the disappearance of the Assyrians. Seleucid texts give a warranty against flight for a term of one hundred days.<sup>61</sup> More important in these contracts is the bonded

<sup>56</sup> Suidas, s.v. *noumēnia*. The references for New Moon as the day for purchasing slaves, collected for me by Luuk de Ligt (Amsterdam-Utrecht), are: Aristophanes, *Equites* 43, scholion e (slaves), cf. *Vespae* 169–171 (asses); Alciphron, *Epistulae* II 36, 1 (purchase of a slave "on the first and new (moon)"; his name is *Noumēnios*), III 25, 2 (Scythian or Colchian female slave, bought on New Moon); Lucian, *De mercede conductis* 23 (sale of slaves *en noumēnias epistāsēs*).

<sup>57</sup> Photius, *Bibliotheca*, ed. R. Henry, VIII (1977) 179 (= 532 f. in the edition of I. Bekker, 1824). "Der Personennamen Noumenios ist nicht selten bei Sklaven zu finden", R. Scholl, *Corpus der ptolemäischen Sklaventexte* II (1990) 569 (only six examples!).

<sup>58</sup> Studied by Trantaphyllopoulos in *Studi E. Volterra* V (1971) 699, 707–718.

<sup>59</sup> G. Wilhelm, *ZA* 77 (1987) 127–135. A period of 45 days has the advantage that there is one clearly definable full month in it.

<sup>60</sup> Th. Kwasman, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents* ... (1988) nos. 13 (day 16), 29 (day 12), 129 (day 25), 149 (day 3), 185 (day 3), 194 (day 26), 238 (day 20), 241 (day 21), 338 (day 3), 363 (day 25), 393 (day 20), 402 (27.V), 411 (day 9), etc. — The dates of the Old Babylonian contracts do not display any pattern, either; see C. Wilcke, *WdO* 8 (1976) 280 f.

<sup>61</sup> H. Petschow, *Die neubabylonischen Kaufformulare* (1939) 63; M.A. Dandamaev, *Slavery in Babylonia* (1984) 181 ff.; M.W. Stolper, *ZA* 79 (1989) 82.

status of the slave. In an Aramaic contract from Samaria (335 B.C.) and one in Syriac from Doura Europos (243 A.D.), the clausula is also lacking.<sup>62</sup>

The earliest Greek contracts from Egypt have no clausula on latent defects.<sup>63</sup> But in the time of Augustus there appears a standard formula guaranteeing that the slave is "without the Sacred Disease and *epaphē*".<sup>64</sup> A very late text from Ascalon (359 A.D.) has an unusual formula in giving the terms: six months for the Sacred Disease, an old physical defect (*sinos*) and a hidden illness; twelve months for running away (*drasmós*).<sup>65</sup>

The Greek expression "Sacred Disease" stands for epilepsy, of course.<sup>66</sup> Among the ancient Egyptians epilepsy was probably known under the name *nsyt*, a disease brought about by a power entering the body.<sup>67</sup> This power is to be driven out of specific parts of the body: the belly, the eyes. Incantations show that the power can be male or female.<sup>68</sup> The therapies are exceptional for Egyptian medicine: anointing the patient with the lichen of a horse, also recommended by Dioscurides (II 43); drinking the blood of a goat (the Egyptians used blood only for smearing); taking the testicle or excrement of an ass in wine, etc.<sup>69</sup> The internal use of blood and excrement was presumably supposed to drive out the demons. A Hieratic papyrus offers descriptions of epilepsy and prescriptions.<sup>70</sup>

The slave also has to be "without *epaphē*". On the meaning of this word in this formula, a never ending discussion is going on among papyrologists and students of Greek or Roman law. The word is to be derived from a verb meaning "to touch (upon)", "to attain" (*epháptomai*), the basic meaning of which reminds us of Neo-Assyrian *šibtu*, deriving from *šabātu* "to seize" (though semantically *liptu*, "touch", perhaps would be a better equivalent). One opinion is that a special legal claim, *manus iniectio*, is meant and the verb can indeed refer to a claim to an object as one's property.<sup>71</sup> This etymology and more or less remote legal parallels seem to be the main supporting arguments. Another opinion favours a hidden disease.<sup>72</sup> The following sequence of latent

<sup>62</sup> F.M. Cross, *Erez Israel* 18 (1985) 7\*–17\*; *Suppl. Vetus Testamentum* 40 (1988) 17–26; J.A. Goldstein, *JNES* 25 (1966) 11–16.

<sup>63</sup> P. Cairo Zen. I 59003, now R. Scholl, *Sklaverei in den Zenonpapyri* (1983) 18 ff., no. 1 (259 B.C.); P. Strasb. 79, where *epaphē* clearly means "manus iniectio" (16–15 B.C.).

<sup>64</sup> For example in M. David, B.A. van Groningen *Papyrological Primer* (1952) 80 no. 41:51 f. (= S.B. 7533), or H. Metzger, *Nachrichten aus dem Wüstensand* (1974) 49 no. 60 (= BGU 2111).

<sup>65</sup> BGU I 316; U. Wilcken, *Hermes* 19 (1884) 416–431, cited by Sudhoff, *AGM* 4 (1911) 365. Cf. F. Pringsheim, *The Greek Law of Sale* (1950) 465.

<sup>66</sup> Note the existence of Demotic *šn-ntr*, literally "divine illness", in a self-dedication (dated to 137 B.C.), between a large number of supernatural beings; the spirit of a drowned man follows immediately. See H. Thompson, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 26 (1940) 78. More recent lit.: F. de Cenival, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 71 (1972) 63 note 88; K.-Th. Zauzich, *Enchoria* VI (1976) 79 f. ("Gespenst") (refs. provided by K. Donker van Heel, Leiden).

<sup>67</sup> B. Ebbell, "Die ägyptischen Krankheitsnamen. IX. Epilepsie", *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 62 (1927) 13–16; H. von Deines, H. Grapow, W. Westendorf, *Übersetzung der medizinischen Texte* (1958) 153–157.

<sup>68</sup> J. Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques de Deir el Medineh I* (1978) 8, S. Sauneron, "Le rhume d'Anyakhté", *Kémi* 20 (1970) 11 with 14 f., note (h): "pas simplement une maladie, (...) mais la cause de cette maladie, c'est la force personnelle qui la détermine". — I owe this lit. to J.F. Borghouts, Leiden.

<sup>69</sup> See Ebbell, 15 f., who takes pains in looking for direct or remote Greek parallels. Above, in the chapter on therapeutics, "Blood", the reader will find examples of similar treatments in Babylonia.

<sup>70</sup> Černý, 5 no. I Verso, second text (2, 1, etc.), and 8, troisième texte.

<sup>71</sup> E. Boswinkel, *Einige Wiener Papyri* (1942) 35, on no. 7:24 (lit.), E. Seidl, *Rechtsgeschichte Ägyptens als römischer Provinz* (1973) 184.



defects in one contract (dated ca. 300 A.D.) suggests such a disease: the slave is "without the Sacred Disease or *epaphē*, and without being seized by a demon (*anepilēptos apò daímonos*)".<sup>73</sup> One does not expect a legal claim amidst these three defects. In the medical papyri the sequence "being seized (*epilēptos*), or in the Sacred Disease" sometimes occurs,<sup>74</sup> the third and the first of those in the contract formula just quoted. The second opinion is preferable, but it raises the question, what disease can be meant by *epaphē*. The word reminds us of its simple form, *haphē*, in Septuagint Greek standing for Hebrew *nēga'*, one of the words for "leprosy" in the Old Testament and in later Rabbinical literature. This Greek translation of the Old Testament, made in Egypt, used this Greek word as equivalent for "leprosy".<sup>75</sup> Some scholars, however, hold it that the Hebrew and Greek words retained their general and more vague meaning "plague" — including leprosy, of course.<sup>76</sup> But if it is accepted that *elēphas* in Hellenistic Greek and Latin is identical with *epaphē*,<sup>77</sup> the translation "leprosy" would be certain. And if we could see a continuous legal tradition connecting the Assyrian pair *bennu* — *šibtu* with the pair Greek Sacred Disease — *epaphē*, we might also be inclined to posit "leprosy" as the meaning of Assyrian *šibtu*, lit. "seizure"; this was Sudhoff's conclusion. "Seizure" is explained as "Hand of the God" in a lexical text.<sup>78</sup> However, one has the feeling that this is just one step too far. It is better to see in the Greek "touch" and the Assyrian "seizure" an affliction caused by a supernatural power, manifesting itself at an unpredictable moment. Under the circumstances, this can be a skin disease of a severe kind. We will see shortly that in Rabbinical, Byzantine and Arabic literature leprosy is seen as a latent defect in slaves or marriageable girls.

Was the Greek formula inspired by the much earlier Assyrian one? The pair *šibtu* — *bennu* certainly resembles Sacred Disease — *epaphē* very much and may have been used in the international slave market. The Assyrian formula is also attested in a contract found in Gezer at a time that Israel was an Assyrian province (651 B.C.).<sup>79</sup>

Following this discussion of the clausula in Greek papyri it will be appropriate to describe what can be found on epilepsy as a hidden disease in slaves in other sources of Greek law. As Pringsheim has shown, the Greek formula in the Egyptian contracts is part of Greek law in specifying the diseases; according to him, it reflects a conscious rejection of Roman law. Plato, using to some extent provisions of Athenian law for his ideal state, lays down a term of twelve months for "the so-called Sacred Disease"; for all other hidden diseases he requires restitution within a period of six months.<sup>80</sup> We

<sup>72</sup> F. Pringsheim; now also L. Dorner, *Zur Sachmängelhaftung beim gräko-ägyptischen Kauf* (Diss. Erlangen-Nürnberg 1974) 118–129.

<sup>73</sup> E. Visser, *Aegyptus* XV (1935) 275 P. 16046 B:5; cf. F. Pringsheim, *The Greek Law of Sale* (1950) 468.

<sup>74</sup> M.-H. Marganne, *Inventaire analytique des papyrus grecs de médecine* (1981) 151, 195.

<sup>75</sup> O. Betz, "Der Aussatz in der Bibel", in J.H. Wolf, *Aussatz – Lepra – Hansen-Krankheit. Ein Menschheitsproblem im Wandel* (1986) 45–62, esp. 49a; M. Stol, "Leprosy: new light from Greek and Babylonian sources", *JEOL* 30 (1987–88) 25 f.

<sup>76</sup> Harald Hegermann, *Jesaja 53 in Hexapla, Targum und Peschitta* (1954) 38 f.

<sup>77</sup> As contended by M. Stol, *JEOL* 30 26.

<sup>78</sup> Note that K. Sudhoff came to a similar conclusion in his article of 1911, in *AGM* 4 353–369. He was of the opinion that leprosy originated in Assyria and that together with the new disease a new terminology entered Egypt.

<sup>79</sup> B. Becking *JEOL* 27 (1981–82) 76–89.

<sup>80</sup> Plato, *Laws* XI, 916A, with Pringsheim, 474.

are on more solid ground when studying a local law from Abdera: again one year for epilepsy and ten or three months, or some days, for other diseases.<sup>81</sup> So Plato's "twelve months" seem to be based on reality.

The Roman market inspectors set a term of six months for any hidden defect in a bought slave.<sup>82</sup> Their approach and formulation was more general and abstract as is seen from the fact that they subsumed all kinds of hidden illnesses under two categories, *morbus* and *vitium*. Already the ancient jurists had problems in understanding the marks of difference between the two<sup>83</sup> and the contract from Transsylvania omits the two and simply says that the boy is "healthy" (*sanus*) and "not epileptic" (*caducus*).<sup>84</sup> Similar contract formulae continued to be used in Egypt in the ensuing centuries and apparently there was no desire to phrase this group of latent defects in a more abstract way.<sup>85</sup>

The Babylonian Talmud preserves a draft of formulae for a slave sale contract, designed by Rab Yehudah (Giṭṭin 85b–86a).<sup>86</sup> Elements of Greek and Roman law can be detected in this draft. We find at the end a warranty against "any physical defect (*mūm*), and old or new *š'ḥin* (a severe skin disease) that appears (*nfq*) until *ṭshr*". This last word, obscure, could be the Persian word "four" (*ṣahar*). So four days, months or years are the period within which restitution of the slave is still possible when the skin disease becomes manifest.<sup>87</sup> Epilepsy has been omitted for some reason.<sup>88</sup> Another passage in the Talmud speaks of the sale of a slave girl with three possible defects: she is mad, epileptic, or dull (Baba Meši'a 80a).

Islamic law also was interested in the latent defects (*'ayb*) of slaves. Malakite law fixes a one year term for returning slaves appearing to have mental disorders or leprosy.<sup>89</sup> No terms seem to be given by Hanafite law.<sup>90</sup> Epilepsy must fall under the mental disorders (*ḡunūn*) caused by the djinn.

<sup>81</sup> Triantaphyllopoulos, *Studi E. Volterra* V (1971) 707–14.

<sup>82</sup> Dig. 21, 1, 1 pr., cf. P.F. Girard, *Textes de droit romain* (1937) 171.

<sup>83</sup> Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* IV, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Girard, 849: *eum puerum sanum traditum esse, furtis noxaeque solutum, erronem, fugitivum, caducum non esse*.

<sup>85</sup> Dorner, 100–109.

<sup>86</sup> Discussed by A. Gulak, *Das Urkundenwesen im Talmud* (1935) 102–114. Gulak's translation is as follows: "In Rede stehender Sklave ist hörig, ledig und bar der Rechte eines Freien, und auf ihm lasten keinerlei Ansprüche noch Forderungen von Seiten des Königs oder des Staates, noch ist ihm das Zeichen eines Besitzers aufgedrückt; ferner ist er frei von jeglichem körperlichem Gebrechen und neuem und altem Aussatz, der bis 'Ṭsahr' zutage treten würde". — Note the article by S. Rubin, "Ein Kapitel aus der Sklaverei im talmudischen und römischen Rechte", *Festschrift Adolf Schwarz* (1917) 211–229 (p. 221–225, § 8. Die Haftung für Mängel), with S. Krauss, "Nachträgliche Bemerkungen" (p. 572–4). Cf. S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie* II (1911) 87–89, with 493, note 599.

<sup>87</sup> Gulak, 106–8, compares this clausula with that on the "old physical defect" (*sinos palaiós*) in the papyrus from Ascalon, and writes: "alter Aussatz (*ulcus vetus*)". For our passage, see also J. Preuss, *Biblisch-Talmudische Medizin* (1911) 397, below.

<sup>88</sup> According to Gulak, 109, because the Jews considered it a mental disease and had no superstitious fear of epilepsy. — Not very convincing.

<sup>89</sup> R. Lohrker, *Der Handel im malakitischen Recht. Am Beispiel des K. al-buḡy' im Kitāb al Muwaṭṭā'* (1991) 39.

<sup>90</sup> G. Wiedensohler, *Mängel beim Kauf nach islamischen Recht* (1960) 50 f., cf. 92.



## In marriage

Latent defects also play a rôle in marriage law. The evidence given here mainly applies to hidden illnesses in the woman who has been taken as a wife, not the man. In this respect the acquisition of a wife can be compared with the purchase of a slave and this throws some light on the way they viewed the gentle sex. A wife had to be "good" in terms of health and fertility. A survey of some of the later legal material is sufficient to give an adequate impression even though the selection is arbitrary.<sup>91</sup>

Looking at the Rabbinical sources first, we see that the Mishna tractate *Ketubboth* discusses defects in a betrothed or married woman (VII 7-8) and in the man (VII 9). The Talmud adds that epilepsy is one of the latent defects in a woman if the attacks occur at certain intervals: this defect remains hidden because the woman every time can withdraw when it is going to happen. Normally, everybody knows that a girl has this disease (Keth. 77a, top). The general advice is, never marry a woman from a family of epileptics or lepers (Yebamoth 64b).

The Byzantine legal compendium *Ecloga* of 741 A.D. speaks of leprosy and possession in a married man or woman. It gives only leprosy (*lōbē*) as one of the few valid motives for divorce, both for women and men. Being possessed by a demon is no ground for divorce according to the next article, as it is written in Scripture: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).<sup>92</sup> One reads between the lines that in secular justice both leprosy and mental illness (= lunacy, possession; under the circumstances: epilepsy) are the two physical defects allowing divorce — the same criteria for returning a slave.

The Arabic version of the *Ecloga*, written in the fourteenth century and used in the Coptic Church, is more strict in excluding leprosy as a good motive for divorce.<sup>93</sup> The same version has some provisions in case the woman appears to be mentally ill (*tu'tarā rūh sū*, lit. "possessed by an evil spirit") or epileptic (*tu'sra*). It was forbidden to marry such people, but when she had not told her husband about her ailment and he married her, she can be divorced, provided no children have been born.<sup>94</sup> These rules are lacking in the original *Ecloga* and have been added by the Copts. Some of the Syriac Law Books, discussing the problem that a man is married to a woman possessed by a demon (*šidā*), give opinions as to what has to happen with the marital gifts after divorce.<sup>95</sup>

Reverting to the time of the Sumerians and Babylonians, we discover that some articles in their "law books" are dedicated to the problem of a married woman contracting a terrible disease. No word is said on a latent illness, concealed by the woman. The problem is always, what to do with the diseased woman after the husband has taken a second wife; the law books seek a reasonable and human solution for the first wife. What interests us here is the identity of those diseases making a happy mar-

<sup>91</sup> Cf. also Kottek (see the Bibliography), 6.

<sup>92</sup> Ludwig Burgmann, *Ecloga. Das Gesetzbuch Leons III. und Konstantinos' V* (1983) 182 f. § 2.9.2-4.

<sup>93</sup> Stefan Leder, *Die arabische Ecloga* (1985) 54 f. § 10, cf. 126 f. § 14.

<sup>94</sup> Leder, 44 f. § 6, with emphasis on mental illness; 124 f. § 6, on epilepsy, with rules for the financial settlement.

<sup>95</sup> E. Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, Band I, *Leges Theodosii Leonis* (1907) 39 R I § 75; cf. R II § 83 and R III § 115 (the next article deals with a disease in the wife making consorting impossible). More in the indexes of Band II, 208, and III, 377.

riage impossible. The Lipit-Ištar Code says that the wife “has changed her appearance or has become physically disabled” (§ 28),<sup>96</sup> the Hammurabi Code that *la'bum* has “seized” her (§ 148). This word often is translated as “fever”.<sup>97</sup> Two litigations in court make a settlement for such situations. The first, written in Sumerian, concerns a married woman “hit” by the demon *asakkum*,<sup>98</sup> a kind of paralysis.<sup>99</sup> The second, in Old Babylonian Akkadian, is more interesting.<sup>100</sup> A widow, together with her son, enters the house of a man, i.e., marries him. Then, the “attainment by the god” “attains” (*kašādum*) her and they go to see the judges who “say to divorce her”. The son has no right to inherit from the estate of his mother’s second husband. The expression “attainment by the god” (*kišiti ilim*) is unique. Without new evidence we cannot say what it stands for; the expression has been compared with “touch of the god” (*lipit ilim*), an epidemic among cattle. We have one question: did the widow suffer from one of those “latent defects” that concern the later law books so much, and did she conceal this when remarrying? That would explain the divorce procedure in our text. And epilepsy would be a very good candidate.

### Testing

In the slave trade it is advisable to check the slave’s health by a physical inspection. The medical author Rufus of Ephesus wrote a handbook for this purpose, known to us from a few quotations in Arabic literature.<sup>101</sup> This book is a product of the ancient science of physiognomy. Many handbooks of this kind, specialised in reviewing slaves, were known in the medieval Arab world but an available summary of their contents remains silent on the diagnosis of epilepsy.<sup>102</sup>

One method was extensively used in Antiquity and later: fumigation through jet. Jet is a hard compact black form of ‘brown coal’ or lignite, capable of receiving a brilliant polish. It is used in making toys, buttons, and personal ornaments, and has the property of attracting light bodies when electrified by rubbing — thus the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The Greeks and Romans named it *gagates*. Burning storax, frankincense, bdellium, jet, bitumen, or stag’s horn will provoke an epileptic fit, said Soranus;<sup>103</sup> “the smelling of heavy odours, like that of jet, will throw him on the ground”, wrote Aretaeus.<sup>104</sup> The number of references is abundant and the fumes of jet always are the most

<sup>96</sup> Following M. Civil, *Afo* 25 (1974–77) 70, on line 12. The text can be found in Civil, *Studies B. Landsberger* (1965) 2.

<sup>97</sup> Recently evidence has been adduced for identifying it with a skin disease; I. Tzvi Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature. Case Studies* (1987) 68–73. Cf. M. Stol, *JEOL* 30 (1987–88) 31 (“no skin disease”).

<sup>98</sup> A. Falkenstein, *NSGU* II (1956) 8–10 no. 6.

<sup>99</sup> J.J.A. van Dijk, *La sagesse suméro-accadienne* (1953) 16 note 37. Again it is a woman who suffers from the crippling *ā.sāg* (*asakku*) disease in the Sumerian literary letter B:17; see W.H.Ph. Römer, *TUAT* II/5 (1989) 715–717. Note that the woman “who had a Spirit of infirmity” was “bent over and could not straighten herself”; she was “bound by Satan” (Luke 13:10–16). — A princess: Rim-Sin I, inscr. 18=23:32.

<sup>100</sup> *BE* 6/1 59 (= *VAB* 5 no. 232); see R. Westbrook, *Old Babylonian Marriage Law* (1988) 112 f. (text), 77 f. (discussion).

<sup>101</sup> M. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (1970) 74 (sub 17), 192.

<sup>102</sup> Hans Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs nach arabischen, persischen und türkischen Ratgebern vom 10. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (= *Islamkundliche Untersuchungen*, Band 57) (1980).

<sup>103</sup> Caelius Aurelianus, *On Chronic Diseases* I § 67; ed. I.E. Drabkin, 482 f.

<sup>104</sup> *CMG* II (1923) 3 I 5, 2.



important means to prove the presence of the illness.<sup>105</sup> This was not only medical lore but also daily practice in the slave trade; Apuleius tells us that by burning the *gagates lapis* it could be shown that a slave was *caducus*, epileptic.<sup>106</sup> A medieval book on stones informs its readers that a merchant can fire jet in order to see whether a *caducus* or *lunaticus* slave falls down on smelling the fumes.<sup>107</sup> — Other stone books have it that burned *gagates* and stag's horn chase away creeping animals (*herpeta*), like snakes.<sup>108</sup> Xenocrates' lost book, partly preserved in Arabic translation, says it provokes *mut'arā* "possession".<sup>109</sup>

The Babylonian texts remain silent on all this (but see p. 104).

### Social ostracism

The esteem, tinged with some awe, that modern people can have for epileptics like Dostoyevsky,<sup>110</sup> is new. The idea that melancholy (and epilepsy) can be akin to genius, is a legacy of the Renaissance, and based on a famous chapter in Aristotle, cited earlier in this book. In Antiquity and during the Middle Ages, the common attitude was quite different. The Christians were of the opinion that an epileptic was possessed by an evil demon and some held that this was a punishment for a sin.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, Rabbinic literature ascribes it to indecent behaviour in cohabitation by the patient's parents.<sup>112</sup> In Classical Antiquity the medical author Aretaeus says:<sup>113</sup>

- The sight of a paroxysm is disagreeable and its departure disgusting, with spontaneous evacuations of the urine and of the bowels. But also it is reckoned a disgraceful form of disease; for it is supposed that it is an infliction on persons who have sinned against the Moon, and hence some have called it the Sacred Disease, and that for more reasons than one.

The patients were spat at in order to keep away the demon: the illness was considered contagious, in our terms.<sup>114</sup> The apostle Paul, speaking of the "thorn in his flesh",

<sup>105</sup> C. Hude, note on the Aretaeus passage, on line 15; R. Halleux and J. Schamp, *Les lapidaires grecs* (1985) 312 on p. 108; M. Wellmann in *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin* IV, Heft 4 (1935) 118 f. (= [458 f.]). Also Didymus apud Aetius, *CMG* VIII/2 (1950) 155, the Oribasius collection, *CMG* VI 2, 2 (1933) 186, and Theodorus Priscianus, *Physica* II 5, ed. Valentine Rose (1894) 253. — See also O. Temkin, 10 f., and J.H. Waszink, art. "Epilepsie" in *RAC* V (1962) 823 f. *Gagates* in Arabic lit.: M. Ullmann, *Der Islam* 50 (1973) 247 f. (*sabağ*).

<sup>106</sup> *Apologia* 45, 3.

<sup>107</sup> R. Halleux and J. Schamps, *Les lapidaires grecs* (1985) 259.

<sup>108</sup> Xenocrates in Arabic translation; see M. Ullmann, *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 8 (1973) 67–9; also, Ullmann, *Der Islam* 54 (1977) 56 f., 59. The word *gagates* was borrowed in Arabic but the originally Persian word *sabağ* was also used; Ullmann, *Der Islam* 50 (1973) 247–8.

<sup>109</sup> Not "Schüttelfrost" (thus M. Ullmann).

<sup>110</sup> Cf. James L. Rice, *Dostoyevsky and the Healing Art. An Essay in Literary and Medical History* (1985).

<sup>111</sup> E.J. Dölger, *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934) 97 f. (Origen; St. Jérôme); Temkin, 96 with note 58 (Stephanus).

<sup>112</sup> J. Preuss, *Biblisch-Talmudische Medizin* (1911) 343; J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (1939; reprint 1970) 186; Kottek, 5.

<sup>113</sup> *CMG* II (1923) 38 III 4, 2; in Fr. Adam's translation.

<sup>114</sup> There are numerous references to this spitting; see Temkin, 8–10, Waszink, *RAC* 5 829 f., Schneble, 36–8. The fear of contagion is expressed by Pliny, *NH* 28 35; see also O. Böcher, *Dämonenfurcht und Dämonenabwehr. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe* (1970) 179 f., 218–220; Kottek, 7. — Spitting at a lunatic slave "to (his) health" (*saluti fuit*) in Plautus, *Captivi* 555, seems to be irony.

adds that an angel of Satan "slaps" him (2 Corinthians 12:7). It is often thought that he is referring to epilepsy and Paul's sudden conversion on the road to Damascus is explained as a seizure.<sup>115</sup> Now, Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians: "You did me no wrong; you know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first; and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me ..." (4:12-14). For "despise" the text offers literally "to spit out" (*ekptūō*) which reminds us of spitting at epileptics.<sup>116</sup> We admit that the prefix "out" does not fit well into this ancient habit. The disgust with which an epileptic was looked down upon may to some extent explain the apostle's low self-esteem, sometimes looking like self-hatred. The word "scorn" in the passage just quoted literally means something like "to oust as being nothing (*oudén*)". Elsewhere, Paul is reproached for "madness", one of epilepsy's sisters (Acts 26:24).

Persons suffering from epilepsy were not admitted to sacred offices or precincts. Some scholars assume that the categories of persons "possessed" and "bewitched" (?),<sup>117</sup> forbidden access to the festival of the god Khnoum in the Egyptian city Latopolis (Esna), comprise all those who fall within the sphere of "crisis of dementia and epilepsy".<sup>118</sup> This proscription was meant for those living outside the temple, seeking a cure or acting as clairvoyants. The Egyptians were always aware of the danger of ritual pollution of a temple by strange outsiders.

The Babylonian cultic texts give short lists of bodily defects preventing a person from becoming a cult official, but they are too fragmentary or obscure to detect epilepsy among them.<sup>119</sup> The Mishna, elaborating on the blemishes making one unfit for being a priest according to Leviticus 21:16 ff., checks the body, going from head to foot. After chest and belly and before the genitals we find as impediment "If he suffers from falling sickness (lit. "is *nikpèh*") even but rarely, if ... (*rū<sup>a</sup>h q<sup>e</sup>šārūt*) comes upon him" (Bekhoroth VII 5). Did the Rabbinic authorities think of epilepsy as originating in the gastric region? Is *rū<sup>a</sup>h q<sup>e</sup>šārūt* a concomitant illness?<sup>120</sup>

The Christian church considered epileptics to be possessed by a demon and for that reason unfit for the holy communion or priesthood; moreover, its contagious nature was feared.<sup>121</sup> The Byzantines shunned them as much as lepers and gave leprosy

<sup>115</sup> The literature certainly is abundant. We mention J. Klausner, *Von Jesus zu Paulus* (1950) 307 ff.; Sch. Ben-Chorin, *Paulus. Der Völkerapostel in jüdischer Sicht* (1970) 33 ff..

<sup>116</sup> Otto Böcher, *Christus exorcista. Dämonismus und Taufe im Neuen Testament* (1972) 73 f., 102 ("das Ausspucken vor einem Kranken oder Besessenen").

<sup>117</sup> Cf. J.F. Borghouts, "Divine intervention in ancient Egypt and its manifestation (*b3w*)", in R.J. Demaree, Jac. J. Janssen, *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina* (1982) 1-70; esp. 30 and 63 f. note 152.

<sup>118</sup> S. Sauneron, "Les possédés", *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 60 (1960) 111-5, following F. Cumont.

<sup>119</sup> H. Zimmern, *BBR* 24:30-33, with R. Labat, *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (1970) 276; R. Borger, *BiOr* 30 (1973) 165 and 172, I 29-44. — The Greek Gnomon of the Idios Logos from Egypt is also fragmentary at this point, § 90 (205).

<sup>120</sup> See also the Babylonian Talmud, Bekhoroth 44b. Identifications by J. Maier, *RAC* 9 (1976) 681 (24) "Epilepsie", 686 (105) "Kurzatmigkeit (Asthma?)". — Hebrew *nikpèh*, "epileptic", literally means "bent (down)", see Jacob Lewy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* II (1924) 376 f. s.v. *kpi*.

<sup>121</sup> F.J. Dölger, "Der Ausschluss der Besessenen von Oblation und Kommunion nach seinen kultur- und religionsgeschichtlichen Grundlagen untersucht", *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934) 130-137; C.D.G. Müller, *RAC* 9 (1976) 781.



the name "sacred disease", perhaps because they saw an analogy between the two.<sup>122</sup>

Turning now to the Babylonian world we have to admit that we know next to nothing about how they viewed and treated their fellow-man suffering from the falling sickness. It may be indicative that they wished their enemies "a *miqtu* that does not go away"<sup>123</sup> and witches "May the demons visit you, may the spirits of the dead turn to you, may a bad *bennu* fall upon you, may the Provider-of-Evil stand ready for you"<sup>124</sup>, or: "May *bennu*, confusion (and) trembling throw her down".<sup>125</sup> A fragmentary magical ritual, discussed earlier, prescribes that the clothes should be taken off and whoever "takes" them (again), will contract a *n.t a.š u b. a*. A fear of miasma or contagion may be seen in this.<sup>126</sup>

The birth of an epileptic child portended ill to his family; in Babylonian standard terminology: "the house of his father will be disrupted" (*bīt abišu issappah*). The first entry of Tablet XXIX says that this will happen "by the feet" of a baby born with Lord of the Roof; that same is said elsewhere on a baby having *miqtu*.<sup>127</sup> A patient suffering from "Spawn of Šulpaea", a raving epileptic, as we have seen, is to be killed; he means disaster to his family.<sup>128</sup> All this is in line with the harsh attitude of the Babylonians towards the handicapped: the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb.<sup>129</sup> That their existence is harmful to the family is clear from this omen: "If an idiot (*lillu la šemū*) is born in the house of a man, that house will be disrupted".<sup>130</sup> "That house(hold) will be disrupted", a well known forecast in omen literature, is rarely attested in the diagnostic texts. There, it concerns people with symptoms that were socially unacceptable; "Spawn of Šulpaea" is one example. A thick-lipped person with an ever changing face, "dark like a dead body", but still claiming "I am not ill" will die and his house will be disrupted; the house of a person deaf on both sides, too.<sup>131</sup>

At the end of the presentation of this material showing how despised an epileptic was, it will dawn upon us why we find epilepsy and "leprosy" so often paired in the ancient texts. Both illnesses evoked uncanny feelings of disgust, a disgust mixed with awe, and this may explain the qualification "sacred" (*hierós*), a word which has many shades of meaning in Greek. "Sacred" points at a supernatural origin of both diseases and it also conveys the *tremendum* that overcame the Greek when confronted with a sufferer. It has been shown that in later times "sacred" was used for a number of frightening afflictions, all God-sent.<sup>132</sup> One may compare the Babylonian qualification "not going away"

<sup>122</sup> Note, however, the "spiritual" explanation by A. Philipsborn, *Byzantion* 33 (1963) 227. He discovers in the adjective "sacred" a positive meaning which only applies to leprosy: "das unheilbare Leiden [leprosy] galt jetzt als eine von Gott auferlegte Prüfung, der Dulder als göttlicher Gnade teilhaftig und besonders als Gegenstand menschlicher Nächstenliebe. Dagegen sah man in den Epileptikern und anderen Geisteskranken nach wie vor die von einem bösen Dämon Besessenen, auf welche die neue Bedeutung der Heilige Krankheit nicht mehr passte". Cf. Temkin, 19.

<sup>123</sup> K. Watanabe, *Baghdader Mitt.* Beiheft 3 (1987) 38 (5).

<sup>124</sup> Maqlu II 210-4.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.* VIII 41.

<sup>126</sup> *SpTU* II 192 no. 48, with W. Farber, *WdO* 18 (1987) 41. See p. 101.

<sup>127</sup> See Chapter IV, under Tablet XXIX (p. 89).

<sup>128</sup> *STT* 1 89:174-186; see p. 15 and 96.

<sup>129</sup> E. Cassin, "Le droit et le tordu - II", in her *Le semblable et le différent* (1987) 72-97, esp. 81-89.

<sup>130</sup> W. von Soden, *ZA* 71 (1981) 114 A III 24.

<sup>131</sup> *TDP* 72:21-24 and 70:12. — See also 214:21 (read *É-sà BIR*), cf. 22, 23; 230:111, cf. 110.

<sup>132</sup> Sticker 1933.

with Greek "sacred": it is only used for epilepsy (*bennu* and *miqtu*) and "leprosy",<sup>133</sup> indicating that these two diseases can be incurable and suggesting that a divine will is behind them.

Thinking in more sophisticated terms, one might say that epilepsy and leprosy (or any other severe skin disease) can be considered as internal and external manifestations of the same affliction. Then, it is logical that the same plants were used against both: the hellebore by the Greeks, the *urānu* by the Babylonians. The Greeks saw as their common natural cause the black bile.

<sup>133</sup> *AHW* 1343b, *tēbū*, 8. — Once said of *simmu*, a general word for a disease with symptoms immediately visible, like any skin disease.





## XI EPILEPSY AND ANIMALS

Animals can suffer from epilepsy. Greek and Roman books on the cure of asses and horses, the "hippiatric" texts, discuss this illness and its treatment. They speak of "cramps" (*sphakelismós*) and "Sacred Disease".<sup>1</sup> It has been said that the prescriptions were taken over from those used in human medicine.<sup>2</sup> In Apuleius' book "The Golden Ass", the weakened ass is *caducus* by a "detestable disease", apparently epilepsy.<sup>3</sup>

Epilepsy has a special relationship with the goat. This is true not only in the Greek and Roman world but also to some extent in that of the Babylonians and it is also reported about people in the Malayan archipelago.<sup>4</sup> Plutarch may already have given the correct reason for this common belief: the "initial cry" of a patient suffering an attack can be very much like the voice of a goat.<sup>5</sup> We will now present some of the evidence from the ancient world.<sup>6</sup>

Hippocrates wrote in the thetic section of his treatise that among animals goats are particularly susceptible to this disease.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, in the polemic part, his first example of superstitions about the symptoms of the Sacred Disease is this: "If the sufferer acts like a goat, and if he roars, or has convulsions involving the right side, they say the Mother of the Gods is responsible".<sup>8</sup> The goat is the animal of this goddess. The Romans thought that eating goat meat enhanced the chance of getting a fit and the priest *flamen Dialis* was forbidden to eat it. Hippocrates, at the beginning of his treatise, says that the Greeks had the same food taboo; moreover, not using goat skin blankets and not wearing goat skins were preventive measures against the disease. In later scientific literature we read that epilepsy could be diagnosed by confronting a person with the horn of a goat. The Greek poet Callimachus gave the following description of a girl: "But in the afternoon an evil paleness seized her: her seized the disease which we send away to the wild goats, falsely calling it 'sacred'".<sup>9</sup> According to the lexicographer Hesychius, "to the wild goats" was a proverbial expression, especially used for the Sacred Disease, as the place where the diseases have to go. The epileptic patient Democrates was advised by the Pythian oracle of Delphi to take worms creeping out of the nostrils of a goat and wrap them in wool. Presumably, they came from the brain.<sup>10</sup> Already Hippocrates observed that the brain of an epileptic goat "is wet, full

<sup>1</sup> Michael Skupas, *Altgriechische Tierkrankheitsnamen und ihre Deutungen* (Inaugural-Dissertation Hannover 1962) 16, 55; *Corpus Hippiatricorum Graecorum* (= CHG) I 368 f., with Dieter Göbel, diss. München 1984, 123–5; CHG II 286; *Mulomedicina Chironis* IV § 311, with Christine Guggenbicher, diss. München 1978, 18 f.; X § 963, 967a, with Carola Enderle, diss. München 1975, 19, 25.

<sup>2</sup> A.-M. Doyen-Higuet, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984) 119a, who contends that epilepsy is unknown among horses.

<sup>3</sup> Apuleius, *Metam.* IX 39.

<sup>4</sup> H. Schneble, 40: "Die Bewohner der malaiischen Inseln Leki, Moa und Lakor halten noch in unseren Tagen den Epileptiker für einen vom Geist einer Ziege Besessenen".

<sup>5</sup> *Quaest. Romanae* CXI 290A–B.

<sup>6</sup> See the collection and discussion of the material by G. Lanata, *Medicina magica e religione popolare in Grecia fino all'età di Ippocrate* (1967) 57–60. Also, Temkin, 11 f., and Schneble, 39 f.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. Littré VI 382, Grensemann 78, Jones 168.

<sup>8</sup> Littré VI 360, Grensemann 64; Jones 146.

<sup>9</sup> Callimachus, *Aitia* fr. 75:12–14. — According to Temkin, 18 f., not epilepsy but quartan fever.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander of Tralles, ed. Th. Puschmann I (1878) 568–571.



of fluid and foul-smelling, convincing proof that disease and not the deity is harming the body".<sup>11</sup>

A Sumerian text sums up a number of diseases that sheep and goat can contract; its editor identified one of them, *dugud*, as epilepsy.<sup>12</sup> The Babylonian diagnostic text translated in Chapter V compares the initial cry (?) with a variety of animal voices: that of a dog, an ass, an ox, a dove.<sup>13</sup> In a therapeutic text giving the symptoms of "Hand of *Bennu*, demon, deputy of *Sîn*", appears "he shouts like a goat".<sup>14</sup> We have already seen that a slaughtered he-goat played an important rôle in a fumigation ritual against epilepsy.<sup>15</sup> Hemerologies prohibit the consumption of goat meat on certain days but do not give epilepsy as the disease following eating this: it is migraine.<sup>16</sup> A late horoscope forecasts that a child born under the zodiacal sign "Goat-Fish" will be seized by *bennu*, incubus, migraine.<sup>17</sup> The name "Goat-Fish" (SUHUR.MÁŠ.KU<sub>6</sub>), our Capricornus (*capra* = goat), looks promising but probably is not: the Babylonians had the unequivocal name "Goat" for the constellation Lyra which has nothing to do with epilepsy. Elsewhere we find that the demons "Lurker" and "Oath" have the face of a goat.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Littré VI 382, Grensemann 78, Jones 168.

<sup>12</sup> S.N. Kramer, *RA* 84 (1990) 145:22, 30, with p. 148.

<sup>13</sup> *STT* 1 89:134, 144, 148, 152; see Chapter V.

<sup>14</sup> *BAM* 3 311:51, dupl. 202 rev. 5. (see p. 6)

<sup>15</sup> *TCL* 6 34 (p. 107).

<sup>16</sup> R. Labat, *HMA* (1939) 168:22 (day 2.VII, fear of migraine), 172:46 (day 5.VII, the same), 178:18 (day 4.VII, the same).

<sup>17</sup> *LBAT* 1593 rev. 9; see p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> *SphTU* 1 47:14.

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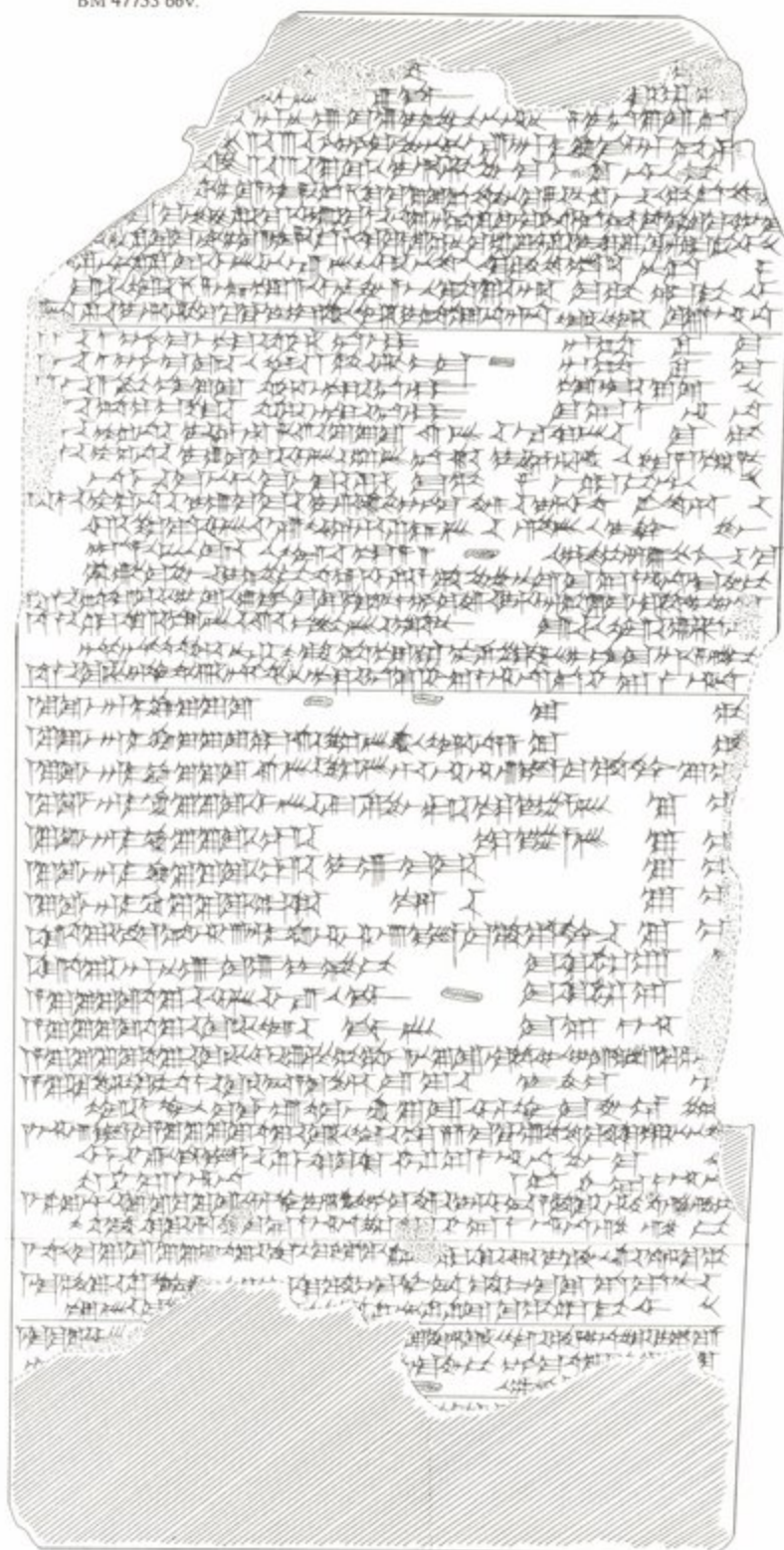
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*TCL* 6 34 25, 106f.  
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*TDP* 216-231 10, 34f., 37, 98  
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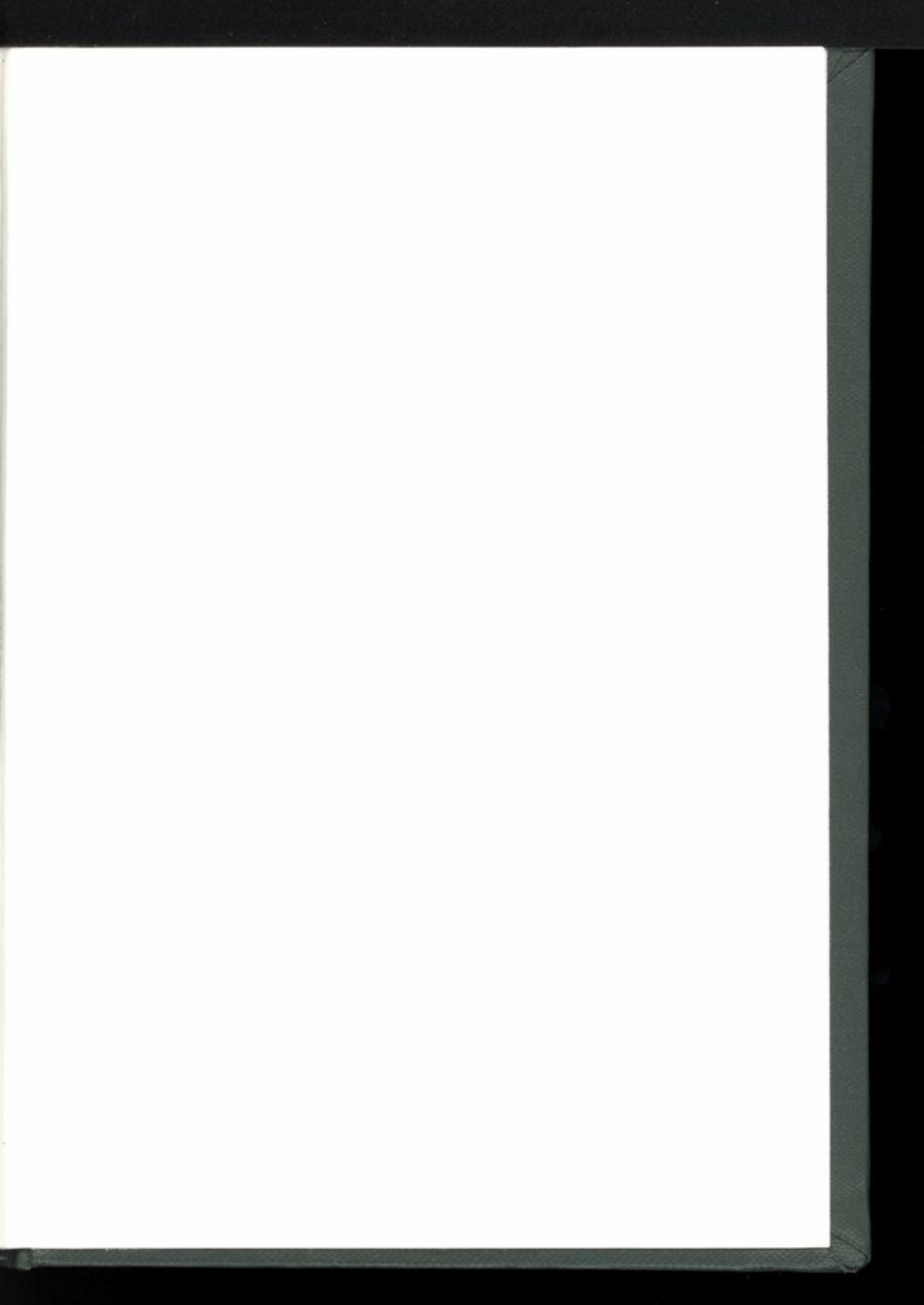






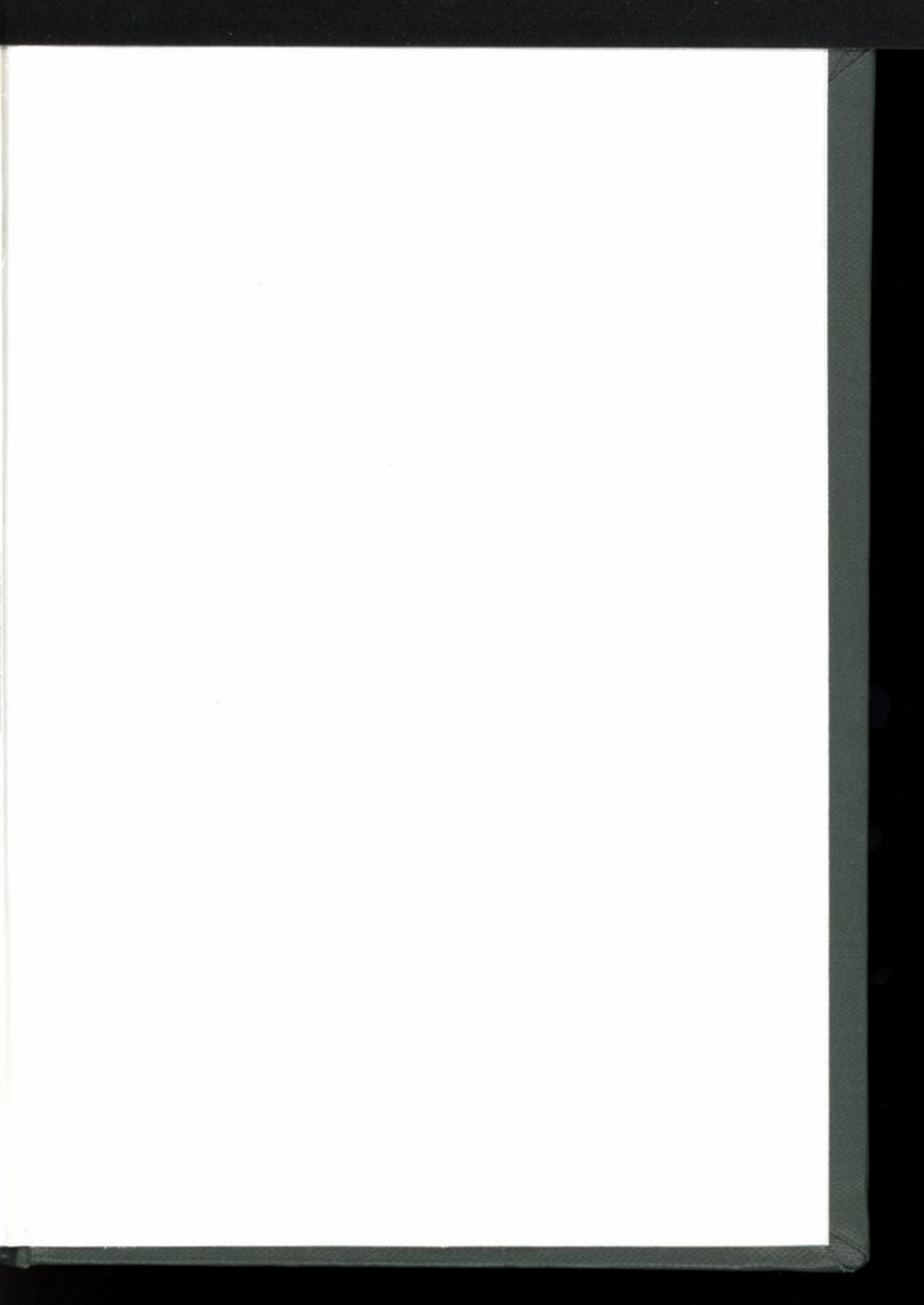
















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